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**CONGRUENCE BETWEEN A BRAND IMAGE AND A FILM SCENE:  
THE INFLUENCE OF PRODUCT PLACEMENT CONGRUITY IN CREATION OF  
CONSUMER ATTITUDES AND EMOTIONAL VALUE**

Master's thesis 2019

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## **ABSTRACT**

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<b>Title</b>	Congruence between a brand image and a film scene: The influence of product placement congruity in creation of consumer attitudes and emotional value
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The goal of this study is to explore the congruence of a brand image and a film scene from the perspective of product placements to discover their influence on consumer attitudes and emotions. The current product placement literature focuses primarily on the prominence of these placements and lacks significantly when taking the perspective of brand images into account.

The empirical study was conducted as an online survey. 20 Finnish consumers who were aged between 20-30 and identified themselves as film viewers took the survey, which contained film clips, questions about these clips and additionally structured and semi-structured question. All these questions addressed the concepts of product placements, brand image and congruence.

This study provided evidence that product placements' brand images and their congruence with a film influence consumer attitudes and the creation of emotional value. This influence occurred through the elements of fittingness with the character and the overall setting of the scene and the perceived distractiveness of a product placement.

## TIIVISTELMÄ

<b>Tekijä</b>	Kimi Tiinus
<b>Otsikko</b>	Brändikuvan ja elokuvakohtauksen yhtenevyys: Tuotesijoituksen yhtenevyyden merkitys kuluttaja-asenteiden ja tunnearvon luomisessa
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<b>Hakusanat</b>	brändikuva, tuotesijoittelu, yhtenevyys, elokuva, kuluttaja-asenteet, tunnearvo

Tämän tutkimuksen tavoitteena oli tutkia brändikuvan ja elokuvakohtauksen yhtenevyyden merkitystä tuotesijoitusten näkökulmasta löytääkseen tämän vaikutus kuluttaja-asenteisiin ja tunteisiin. Tämänhetkinen tuotesijoittelukirjallisuus keskittyy pääosin näiden sijoitteluiden yleiseen merkittävyyteen ja on vailla näkökulmaa brändikuvan merkittävyyden osalta.

Empiirinen tutkimus suoritettiin nettikyselynä. 20 suomalaista kuluttajaa iältään 20-30 ottivat osaa kyselyyn. Lisäksi heidän piti kokea olevansa elokuvia katsovia kuluttajia. Kysely koostui elokuvaklipeistä, joista esitettiin kysymyksiä, sekä strukturoiduista ja epästrukturoiduista kysymyksistä. Kaikki kysymykset käsittelivät tuotesijoitteluiden, brändikuvan ja yhtenevyyden konsepteja.

Tämä tutkimus tarjosi todisteita, että tuotesijoituksen brändikuvalla ja sen yhtenevyydellä elokuvan kanssa on merkitystä kuluttaja-asenteiden ja tunnearvon luomisessa. Tämä merkittävyys tapahtuu kolmen osatekijän kautta: henkilöhahmon ja brändikuvan sopivuuden, elokuvakohtauksen miljöö ja brändikuvan sopivuuden sekä koetun tuotesijoittelun häiritsevyyden kautta.

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Five years and the graduation is one submission away. Five years ago I almost applied to study animation because I was certain that I had failed the entrance exams to study economics the second time in a row. It turned out I did not and here I am. As it was so close that I would have ended up doing films, I decided that I will use every opportunity to try to combine the thing I love with the field of study that could potentially lead me to a path I never knew existed. Five years later and I am about to leave the university with a master's degree in economics and business administration – both achieved with theses about films. I am so happy that choosing one path did not delete the other and I must admit that I am proud of myself that I managed to do all this with all my heart and still remain true to myself about who I am – a movie guy.

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# 1 INTRODUCTION

This master's thesis offers theoretical and empirical insights into brand image, product placements in films and the congruence of these two and the way these impact on consumers. Brands and films have belonged together in one way or another for decades now. The most common way to see this is through product placements, those real-life products or services that are implemented to the fictional world of films. As editorial content producers like film makers seek to find ways to capture audiences with stories that often require ever increasing budgets, product placements are gaining popularity at the same rate to finance this trend. As product placements become more common among content creators, the impact they have on consumers and their attitudes and overall emotional response towards the placement itself and the film in turn becomes increasingly relevant for the placed brands and for the film viewing experience.

This chapter offers an introduction to this master's thesis. First, background for this thesis is discussed to give an idea and reasoning for this thesis' existence. Second, a literature review is conducted to show what kind of different approaches have already seen in the literature of this thesis's research field. Third, research aim and research questions are stated to guide the purpose for the thesis. These sub-chapters are then followed by theoretical framework, definitions and delimitations, research methodology and finally the structure for the whole thesis.

## 1.1 Background of the thesis

In the evening when consumers walk into the cinemas and the film starts to play, they don't need to wait for long before stumbling upon a product placement. The same consumers have walked into that cinema wearing clothing brands they like or even love, engaging with a smart phone brand they prefer and arriving to that film theater with the car brand they have always wanted. These consumers go that theater with a package of brands they have deemed to their own in their mind. Brands belong to films in one

way or another and their full influence as product placements is still yet to be fully discovered.

The increasing usage of product placements can be seen in a research conducted by PQ Media (2018) that stated that the annual product placement market in the United States was worth \$8,78 billion in 2017. This was 13,7% growth from the year before and the same double-figure growth was expected in 2018. Specifically in films, product placements generated over \$1 billion in revenues in the U.S. in 2017. The research mentions some examples with Lexus' LS 500 F Sport in Marvel's Black Panther and Microsoft's Surface tablets in Get Out.

Young (2011) suggested that the rise of product placement usage derives from the fragmentation of audiences and the rising expenses in content producing. Brands appear in films through product placements, or as brand integrations. Brand image of these placements is however poorly valued, noticed or researched in the literature and in the industry in general. At first, the brand image of a placement does not seem that important. Only after offering an extreme example we tend to notice how influential it is. This type of extreme example was one of the reasons why this thesis began to take its topic. This example was Heineken and James Bond. A partnership between these two parties was landed and suddenly this martini-drinking spy was a beer guy (BBC 2015). James Bond has a very specific and well-known brand image and this average joe type of habit fought against the image we normally tend to familiarize with ourselves with James Bond. As product placements are usually researched due to their prominence in the screen, this was not about prominence but about brand image.

Placing brands in films as product placement has a significant impact on the likes of brand attitude, brand recall, brand awareness, brand memory and the way the film is overallly financed. (Cha 2016, 96; Wiles & Danielova 2009) Films serve as an efficient platform for brands compared to other medias as consumers are already engaged to the content they are seeing (Gubbins 2012). Also, skipping the commercial is not an option with films at least not in the film theatre. Films tell stories and aim to evoke certain emotional responses depending on the genre. It has been researched how product placing can cause negative attitudes and emotional responses towards the film and the brand (Belch and Belch 2015; Russel 2002) if done in a wrong way. For

film viewers this can lead to diminished viewing experience which in turn in principle can cause negative word-of-mouth and decreased box office revenues among other indirect consequences. Brands in turn can get even negative results from misplaced product placements and fail to gain the desired effect from this marketing action; gaining awareness, recognition, recall or even illustrating the use of a new product. It is why attaching brands into films must be done correctly including how they are placed and to what kind of films they are placed.

Product placing has been quite a researched subject already in the marketing literature but only through similar perspectives leaving the brand image of those placements in the background. As earlier mentioned, as the trend of using product placements keeps on expanding, the more it needs to be researched in order to be able to find the correct ways to benefit from it. In the current literature, product placements are mainly researched through their prominence, how they are placed visually or auditory. Some researchers like d'Astous and Séguin (1999) and Reijmersdal, Neijens and Smit (2007) address brand images in films but the impact they have on consumers stays unclear. Outside of films, the vaster issue is about how brand image impacts consumers in the specific context and how the congruency between this brand and that context impacts the result. As brand owners are eager to find increasingly more and different platforms and media to place their brands into, it becomes even more important to research the impact the brand image and its context have on consumers.

## **1.2 Literature review**

This literature review examines the wider concepts of what has been written about a brand image, branding in a specific context and consumer's emotional behavior as well as more film industry related subjects. These include congruence of a brand and a film, film advertising, inducing mood in films and tv programs with product placement and the effect of congruence on consumer behavior in the film context.

The literature on the congruence of a brand and a film examines largely the issue of product or brand placements in films. A vast amount of these studies explore how

a brand is affected recognition, attitude or awareness wise in a congruent or incongruent film, tv program or advertisement context. Yvonne Groenveld (2012) wrote a master's thesis on "Effects of congruence between brand and film image in brand placements on brand recall and attitudes" which studies the issues mentioned but doesn't take into account the affect this congruence could have on the consumer's perception, attitude and overall emotional value towards the context, i.e. the film, to which the brand is attached. The congruence of a film and a brand placement in Hindi Films has been examined by Tapan Panda (2004) where he found that the stronger the congruity between the brand and the film the stronger positive attitude towards the brand. Again, no perspective has been taken on the attitudes towards the film resulting from this congruity.

Dens, De Pelsmacker, Wouters and Purnawirawan (2012) too studied the effectiveness of product placements in films on brand recognition and attitudes from the perspective of the interaction between prominence of a brand in a film and plot connection. They wrote how the brand recognition and attitude have different patterns how they form in product placements. Belch and Belch (2015, 471-472) stated the fear of moviegoers starting to see films as advertisements due to increasing product placements. They also concluded how viewers start to create negative attitudes towards an intrusive brand, but how in general product placements have gain a public acceptance.

In another industry, the congruence of the ad and its platform has been researched from the perspective of the contextual fitness of the two. Moorman, Neijens and Smit (2002) studied the effects of context-induced psychological responses and found out that ads in positive minded magazines had a positive impact on attitude towards the ad. They also noticed how the congruence between the ad and the magazine were better remembered than incongruent ads. The fundamentals of this discovery could be transferred to a context of a film instead of a magazine. The research in the context of magazines is also studied by Youjae Yi (1990) in the "Cognitive and Affective Priming Effects of the Context for Print Advertisements". The findings stated how the emotional context, the emotional nature of the magazine, to which the brand is implemented in has an impact towards the brand too. Again, the effect the brand has to a forum, the magazine, is not studied. The role of context in branding has been studied also by

Buchanan, Simmons and Bickart (1999). They researched the affect of brand placements in retail stores and concluded that there is a negative impact on brand equity due to brand expectations in certain contexts, a result which can give insight for a film industry as well.

Some studies have examined the affiliation of the tv program and its commercials including Goldberg and Gorn (1987) and Tafani, Roux and Greifeneder (2018). The relevance of these studies for this thesis is the idea of the consumer affiliating the mood and behavioral actions from the program to the products presented during a commercial break. Transferring something from the program, or a film, to a product, or a brand, supports the hypothesis of the importance of the congruence between the two in creation of emotional value.

Emotional value in films has been researched from different perspectives in the film industry as well. Singh and Gaurav (2018) studied the effect of the intensity of movie trailers on the financial success of the film. They found out that a more emotional tone of voice made by a score or another factor, could result in high financial returns. Film trailers were seen as more favorable if they carried an emotional message compared to non-much emotionally intense ones. Nanda, Pattnaik and Quiang (2018) in turn studied how a social media strategy of a film can create financial success. They utilized this strategy to create emotional content where a consumer relates to a protagonist by self-identification. Self-identification with a film and its sub-parts like its protagonist is a crucial part of the emotional value creation in films like mentioned by Oatley (1999). Zupan and Babbage (2017) explored the matter from a whole new different angle. They aimed to find a conclusion where a consumer could be targeted with a specific film clip (stimuli) which then causes a specific intended emotional response.

### **1.3 Research aim and questions**

This research aims to find a relationship between the congruence of a brand and film. The context is the key factor here as a brand fit to a certain film scene is studied from the eyes of the context of the film scene. The aim is to discover if the matching brand

image and film context create emotional value for a consumer and what are the factors resulting this.

In order to find out the possible relationship of the congruence of a brand and a film scene, the main research question for this thesis is stated as follows:

*How the congruence of a brand image and a film scene influences the creation of an emotional value for a consumer?*

To support the main research question and to understand the concepts behind it the following sub-questions are researched:

1. *Which brand image elements appear important for a consumer?*

2. *How product placements effect on consumer emotions in the film context?*

The sub-questions create a step by step research process leading to answering the main research question. First, by examining the formation of brand image and its important elements and secondly, by researching the instrument of product placements through which brand images are presented in films and how they influence consumers, the combining effect of the congruence between a brand image of a product placement and a film scene can be discovered.

## **1.4 Theoretical Framework**

The theoretical framework for this thesis aims to find relevant concepts, tools and structures that lead to effect on consumer's emotions and attitudes. The main research question studies if the congruence of a brand image and a film scene influences emotional value and if so, how. The formation of brand image is therefore examined as well as how emotions are evoked in films through brands and other elements and procedures. Brand is also studied in a film context in a form of product placements which is

one of the key concepts in this thesis. When these subparts and their effects on emotional value and consumer attitudes have been studied, further conclusions are drawn if these have a practical effect on consumer behavior.

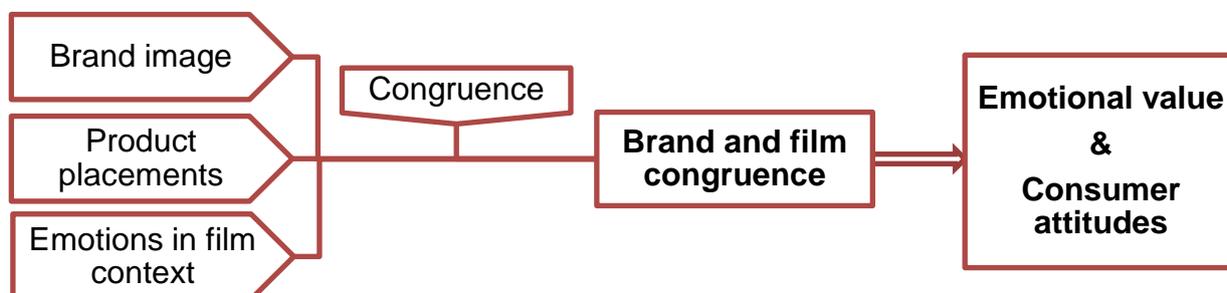


Figure 1. Theoretical framework

## 1.5 Definitions and delimitations

This thesis focuses on the concepts of brand image, product placements and congruence. Five major delimitations have been made in this thesis to narrow down the topic and put more focus on the researched concepts. After these delimitations this thesis gives a valid input to the product placement and brand image literature in a film context and offer practical suggestions in those industries of brand management and film advertising.

### 1.5.1 Key definitions

**Brand image** can be defined as the way consumers see the brand. Brand image indicates the perceptions a consumer has towards the brand. (Pickton & Broderick 2005, 662)

**Product placement** is a way to bring an actual real-life product or brand into a fictional world like films. (Muzellec, Lynn & Lambkin 2012, 815) Companies use product placements to demonstrate products and their use in the editorial content.

**Congruence** is defined in this thesis as a way to express fitness between two elements, which is a definition derived from the definition by Cambridge Dictionary (2019) which states congruence being “the quality of being similar to or in agreement with something”.

**Attitude** indicates the valence towards an object which effects the way a person behaves towards this object. The valence is either negative or positive and can be often seen as a consumer preference. (Hollensen 2015, 126)

**Emotional value** is the perceived utility deriving from the capability of a product or a service to produce feelings and psychological states like happiness and sadness, like and dislike. It is a value we perceive that derives from emotional factors. (Sheth, Newman & Gross 1991, 161)

### **1.5.2 Delimitations**

The first delimitation is about brands. A concept of a brand consists of numerous different sub-parts and elements and therefore brand image solely has been researched more in-depth. However, as the product placement literature discusses mainly on brand recall, brand remembrance and brand awareness, these terms are also mentioned shortly in the theoretic part of this thesis.

The second major delimitation in this thesis is the absence of research about consumer emotions and attitudes. The goal of this thesis is to find out whether some concepts influence those emotions and attitudes or not, so the focus in this thesis is on those affective elements. Therefore, emotions are only researched in a film context to give a general view on emotions in films as a phenomenon and on the creation of emotions in that context.

The third delimitation concerns product placements. In this thesis placements are majorly researched through films as TV series and other medias are left outside of this study. The reasoning here is that the way we watch films differs from the way we watch TV shows or other medias as the role of advertising and commercialism in those is

different than they are in films due to commercial breaks and also as the way we watch films differs the way we watch TV shows due to running time and the extent we immerse ourselves in a content. The exclusion is also due to a potential issue that consumers may have different reactions towards product placements in TV shows than they have in films.

The fourth delimitation concerns the context of films. In the empirical part of this thesis a brand is only placed and shown in a film through a short clip instead of seeing the product placement and the brand in a whole film context. This is because the objective here is to research brand image instead of brand prominence in a film which is the most common research topic in the current literature. Therefore, as viewers are encouraged to put their focus on brand image and its suitability to the context of that film character, mood and overall context wise, there is no need to see the entire film if one scene gives an overall idea of this already. This decision can decrease viewers possibility to reflect film's bigger themes and values which could influence the way viewers view the congruency between a brand and film, but it should enable viewers to concentrate more on researched concepts instead of just brand prominence in a film.

The fifth delimitation is leaving the further causations outside of this thesis. If consumers' emotional values and attitudes should be affected through the researched concepts, what happens next is a question for further studies. Word-of-mouth is briefly discussed in the empirical part of this thesis as a potential way of how these results could practically manifest themselves after a film viewing experience.

## **1.6 Research Methodology**

This thesis is done as a qualitative research. The nature of the thesis is exploratory as the aim is to provide a holistic view on the researched matter surrounding the concepts of brand image, product placements and congruence. (Hollensen 2015, 627) The main goal of this thesis is to explore the influence a congruence between a brand image and a film scene has on consumer attitudes and the creation of emotional value for the film viewers. This type of research problem requires a method that enables the analysis of

the reasons behind those potential aspects that influence the main problem. By exploring the theory of brand image, product placements and congruence, a better insight base can be established that then serves as a platform for the empirical part. Finally, the combination of these two parts improves our understanding on the researched topics.

The empirical data is collected through an online survey which is based on open and closed-end questions. Open questions provide the data that ultimately answers the research problems and closed questions provide respondents the necessary information that lead them to answer open questions within the scope of this thesis by offering the right terminology. Open questions are used to analyze the reasons behind those closed-end questions that are multiple-choice questions with some multiple-choice questions being asked to provide clarity on unclear individual topics arised in the theoretical part of of this thesis.

The size of the focus group is 20 respondents and consists of Finnish citizens aged between 20-30 years. Nationality and age have been taken into account because those can be influential variables that effect the outcome of the collected data partially based on theory (Craig-Lees, Scott & Wong 2008, 522). The collected data is analyzed subjectively as it is based on different themes and concepts which requires subjective analysis. The results are then discussed and ultimately conclusions are drawn from it.

## **1.7 Structure of the study**

In the introduction chapter the aim is to give a background to this study subject and discover the research gap to justify its significance to the science community and the importance for managerial purposes. The common definitions and delimitations are explained and a short literature review about the topic is also provided. Theoretical framework and research questions are also presented to give a clear structure for the theoretical and empirical parts of this thesis. In the first theoretical chapter the concept of brand image is explored and the elements influencing it. In the second chapter a film context is brought to study as it goes through how brands and emotions are imple-

mented and created in that context. This is largely done through the concept of a product placement. The third theoretical chapter opens the concept of congruence with insights on brands and films. In the fourth main chapter I will go through the empirical research. The fifth main chapter presents the empirical part of this thesis, focusing on research design and overall methodology. The sixth chapter then provides the empirical findings of the survey and provides analysis about them. Finally, the seventh chapter contains the further discussion about the results based on the empirical and the and theoretical part of this study while giving managerial and theoretical implementations with suggestions to further research. Lastly, general conclusions are provided.

## 2 BRAND IMAGE

Brand is defined by Hollensen (2015, 417) as a promise to the customers. This promise is aimed to be created as relevant and distinctive for the customers and company's task is to keep that promise to create brand loyalty and repurchases. A brand has tangible and intangible values and brand image consists of those intangible values and expectations the consumer has towards it. Brand image has been defined in numerous ways and a coherent definition still lacks in the topic's literature, but different writers tend to circle around the idea of how people see the brand. (Dobni & Zinkhan 1990, 110-111) Brand image is formulated in the consumer's mind based on all points of contacts the consumer might have been exposed to due the company's marketing communication or the other types of interactions. Brand image indicates the perception the consumer has towards the brand and these perceptions can result from brand's attributes, benefits and advertising among other factors. (Pickton & Broderick 2005, 662) In a context of the topic of this thesis, as brands are put to a film context the factors like packaging and logos are also important as visual attributes to consumer's perception.

Pickton et al. (2005, 662) stated how marketers' main goal is to create a congruent image of the brand based on brand image and brand identity, which in turn is a perception a company wants its consumers to have on its brand. Kevin Lane Keller (1993, 3) described brand image also through perceptions "as reflected by the brand associations held in consumer memory". These brand associations form the meaning of the brand for consumers and include product or non-product related attributes, functional, symbolic and experiential benefits and brand attitudes (Keller 1993, 5). Hollensen defines brand image more narrowly as a combination of rational and emotional elements that guide consumers purchasing decisions (2015, 418).

It could be argued that Hollensen's proposition withholds the same principles as Keller's, but the latter's suggestion explains the concept of emotionality a bit further with the separation of attitudes into its own subsection. As brand image is a product of brand associations, which in turn can be categorized into attributes, benefits and attitudes, this trio, with an addition of advertising aspect presented by Pickton and Bro-

derick (2005, 662), is further examined to explore the formation of brand image. Afterwards the concept of brand storytelling is examined as it suits to the context of films as some authors view that a brand can be described as a narrative story (Kotler & Keller 2012, 314), similar to stories in films.

## **2.1 Brand attributes**

Brand attributes are the basic characteristics of the product or service. They serve as a base behind consumers thoughts about the product or service and all the additional aspects involved in buying or consuming it. Brand attributes can be either product-related or non-product related, the former meaning those physical properties of a product or requirements of a service to perform the functions that consumers are looking for, as the latter is related to externalities concerning the product or service, including price, packaging, user imagery and useage imagery. (Keller 1993, 4)

Some biggest companies in the world have brand attributes that can be distinctively recognized. For example, The Coca-Cola Company's brand attributes involve the likes of refreshness, excitement, sociability and the color red, McDonald's the likes of trust, convenience and value as Nike has attributes like performance, achievement, individualism and attitude. (Hollensen 2015, 418)

## **2.2 Brand benefits**

Brand benefits consist of things the consumer thinks the brand can do for him or her. Keller (1993, 4) distinguished three sub-categories of brand benefits with functional benefits, experiential benefits and symbolic benefits. Functional benefits usually relate to product-related attributes and consists of those basic level advantages that consumption of a product or service brings. Experiential benefits are too majorily linked to product-related attributes and implicate "what it feels like to use the product or service". (Keller 1993,4) Symbolic benefits are in turn related to non-product-related attributes and consist of more external benefits of a product or service, accounting for a "need of social approval or personal expression and outerdirected self-esteem". (Keller 1993, 4) Therefore in a context of this thesis, a film as a product, a functional benefit

could be a fulfillment of a need to relax, an experiential benefit could be the satisfaction of a need to experience thrills and a symbolic benefit could be the fulfillment of a social need to meet friends accordingly.

### **2.3 Brand attitudes**

Brand attitudes indicate consumer's opinion on how well a brand can meet a certain need, or a promise as mentioned earlier in this thesis. (Kotler & Keller 2012, 505) They guide consumer behavior thus serving as an integral part of a brand evaluation. Keller mentions (1993, 4) how many models exist explaining brand attitudes but concludes how the most widely accepted one states that brand attitudes are a multiattributonal format based on brand attributes and benefits. Brand attitudes consist of positive and negative evaluations that affect how consumers behave towards brands and how attached they are towards brands. It also affects overall purchase levels and word-of-mouth valence and quantity towards brands (Chung, Lee & Heath 2013, 434).

### **2.4 Brand advertising and engagement**

Advertising is perhaps the most visual factor in the creation of a brand image as its main task is to influence our perception of a brand to thrive us to make a certain action like purchase. A basic advertising strategy is a two-dimensional concept as it is formed by, first, creating advertising messages and, second, selecting advertising media. In the past the key was to make good advertising content but nowadays with increasing amount of distribution channels the right media can be even more crucial. The relationship between advertising media and its messages is transforming increasingly closer to one another as consumers have more and more influence on the brand content companies are delivering. Creating and managing brand content in various channels is therefore the main object for modern advertising strategies regardless who is the original owner, creator or sharer of that content. The ability of advertising to engage consumers derives from proper advertising messages and content. (Kotler & Armstrong 2018, 457) The ability to engage in turn derives from different experiences consumers have towards the brand. One of these experiences relevant to this study is transportation. According to Calder and Malthouse (2008, 6) transportation experience

happens when consumers want to “transport their mind to into a different state, from bored to happy for example” or if they want “to be transported into taking part in an activity.” The same writers (2008, 7) mention how the latter is crucial in the case of media as it holds the ability to be absorbed into a story and forgetting the outside world thus magnifying the overall experience.

## **2.5 Brand storytelling**

As brand image is the sum of rational and emotional elements, successful brands are continually concerned about that emotional side by updating their stories. Using narratives and evoking emotions helps companies to compete in a changing business environment. Brand storytelling can evolve according to changing society, but the core values tend to last. The core value of a brand story is about what they ultimately stand for which is one the fundamental aspects about the brand and therefore difficult to modify. (Hollensen 2018, 418) Instead of highlighting the functional benefits or attributes of a brand, storytelling aims to hit consumer in an emotional level, like Audi did with their Super Bowl 50 ad. Instead performance related attributes of a car product, Audi played with the emotions of nostalgia, sentiment and father-son relationship. This type of emotional branding through storytelling inserts a certain emotion to a brand image in a manageable way. This also adds value to it with an idea that consumers feel before they think, thus giving advantage against those without an emotional story on their side. (Kotler & Armstrong 2018, 434)

Self-referencing is a crucial part of the storytelling concept. Advertising materials, like brand commercials, are aimed to draw consumer’s attention and enable them to relate to the product or service. The effectiveness of an advertisement is rated higher when a consumer relates this commercial information to themselves. Self-referencing is therefore “a cognitive process in which individuals associate self-relevant incoming information with information previously stored in memory in order to give the new information meaning.” How extensive this self-referencing is towards a new information, like a new product or service, depends on the self-relevance of the information, its usefulness and to what extent consumers can see themselves with the object of this information, product or service. (Debevec & Romeo 1992, 84, 90-91)

In their study Debevec and Romeo (1992, 97) found out that if products are visually presented in advertisements, the product gets more favorable intentions compared to non-visual ad. This relationship between a product and a consumer can however be interrupted and turn to a negative direction if a product is presented with typical users in an advertisement as a consumer might not see the similarity between them and this presented user. In the film and brand context this research result could be seen through product placement and brand integration and whether viewers can see themselves as a film protagonist. Escalas (2007, 425) points out how self-referencing improves brand evaluation by decreasing the weight of an ad message evaluation and how narrative self-referencing leads to narrative transportation extensively by more compelling stories, ultimately leading to deeper emotional experience.

In conclusion, storytelling affects consumer's evaluation of a brand by transportation. This emotional attachment belongs to brand image and makes us view brands more than only product and service providers. Examples of this can be found by known multinational companies: Nike is about winning, competitiveness and achievement as Coca-Cola is about the originality and the feeling of togetherness (Hollensen 2018, 418).

### 3 BRANDS AND EMOTIONS IN FILMS

This chapter studies how brands are becoming a part of films through product placements and how emotions are being created and visualized in them. The latter is being examined in a broader fashion to give an overall image about this specific context in which brands are put in. Brands have been featuring in films for decades already and the trend will most likely carry on and even increase in intensity in the future as companies want to lower the barrier between them and content makers and audience. Companies see films as a platform for their brands to be presented in a way that improves their desired brand image and that this can't be done as efficiently in other medias. (Gubbins 2012, 88)

Traditional feature films tend to pursue for universally applicable emotional responses. Those are therefore possible to divide into a specific genre depending on the universal emotions they try to evoke, like fear in horror films, joy in comedies or excitement in adventure films. (Tan 1996, 47-48) Films tell stories that try to evoke emotions in different ways. In general, a single film holds a wide range of emotions that can vary between different scenes or acts. A horror film can cause viewers scream in fear as a man with a knife chases the protagonist or transport them to a relaxed and romantic state of mind as in another scene a group of youngsters fool around on a summer camp in a nice place called Camp Crystal Lake. As emotions can vary significantly during a feature film, in this study I focus exploring emotions derived from individual scenes instead of the overall feeling given by a film.

Wang and Calder (2006, 160) consider the concept of transportation as an influential factor in consumer behavior towards advertising. If an ad is intrusive, the transportation is disrupted which creates negative advertising experience and positive in an opposite situation. This result is highly relevant in the film industry where advertising is made through the likes of product placements and brand integrations. Wang and Calder (2006, 160) also suggest that ad involvement can increase the level of transportation. It could be argued that product placements and brand integrations demonstrate that involvement in films which influences the emotional response a viewer experiences in them.

### **3.1 Product placement in films**

Product placements are becoming a crucial part of modern film-making due to its influence on financing films and brand owners increased willingness to add their brands into fictional stories. Product placements and brand integrations, or brand placements, both fall under the umbrella term “branded entertainment” according to Antony Young (2011, 138). Product placement is a way to bring an actual real-life product or brand into a fictional world like films. (Muzellec, Lynn & Lambkin 2012, 815) The exact definition varies per researcher and as Young (2011, 138) considers product placements and brand placements as separate identities, Kotler and Armstrong (2018, 459) in turn suggest that product placements are in fact a just sub-category of brand integrations or branded entertainment. As mentioned earlier, in addition to financial reasons, product placements are often implemented and researched based on advertising purposes with major focus on brand recall, brand awareness, brand memory, intention to buy and brand preference. (Cha 2016, 96; Wiles & Danielova 2009)

Product placements have been used for decades now and the trend is still ongoing strong. According to a research by PQ Media (2018) the annual product placement market in the United States was worth \$8,78 billion in 2017. This was 13,7% growth from the year before and the same double-figure growth was expected in 2018. Specifically in films, product placements generated over \$1 billion in revenues in the U.S. in 2017. The research mentions some examples with Lexus’ LS 500 F Sport in Marvel’s Black Panther and Microsoft’s Surface tablets in Get Out.

#### **3.1.1 Motives for using product placements**

Young (2011, 138) suggests that one reason behind the prominent growth of this type of placements is the result of fragmented audiences and the motivation by broadcaster and content creators to subsidize or transfer costs because of it. This type of fragmentation can be derived from the current and future trend of fragmented media; film theaters, TV channels and the increasing number of streaming sites may result to the situation where fewer and fewer films have a significant opportunity to find enough

audience. Young also mentions (2011, 138) how the preference to use product placements comes from the fact that a situation where an audience is already receptive to receive information, as they are when watching a show, is also an engaging situation to use placements. Jin and Villegas (2007, 245) also share this thought by mentioning that companies use product placements to demonstrate products and their use in order to give “positive message in a noncommercial setting”. It has been mentioned that the emotional goal of a placements is to be positive and fitting to the the context as an intrusiveness evokes negative emotions (Belch & Belch 2015, 471-472). Balasubramanian, Karrh and Patwardhan (2006, 115) state how within a film brands execute certain cinematic function: “Within a movie or television show, brands often lend verisimilitude to a drama, help set its time period, or convey characters’ personality traits.”

### ***3.1.2 Evaluating product placements***

Several factors influence on how product placements are seen within the editorial context of films. Characters themselves play a prominent role on how these placements are seen, as viewers assess them as the way characters assess them in the film due to viewers’ attachment to protagonists (Russel & Stern 2006, 7). Film characters could be therefore seen as fictional brand ambassadors that influence viewers’ perception of brand image for better or worse. This influence of the user, even though fictional, is in line with the previously mentioned research by Debevec and Romeo (1992).

How product placements are integrated to the editorial context impacts viewers’ brand memory and their brand attitude. Russel (2002, 313) showed that if the placement’s auditory and visual implementation is in line with the plot with high congruency, viewers see it in a more positive matter. However, an incongruent placement was better remembered, although more negatively embraced. Verhellen, Dens, and De Pelsmacker (2016) supported Russel’s views and focused on the relation of a plot and the placement as well, stating how the coherence between them creates positive brand attitude by giving a placement more meaningful role. They also mentioned how this heightened congruence created positive effects on both contexts, film and a brand. The effect of brand familiarity was also under study as they concluded how plot connection has only significance with subtle placements, but not with prominent placements. The impact is

an opposite one with unfamiliar brands. (Verhellen et al. 2016, 469) Tapan (2004, 19) also viewed the congruent placements as a positive influencer to the brand due to a viewed appropriateness of the placement.

d'Astous and Séguin (1999) researched the reactions consumers have towards product placements in TV programs, although they used the term sponsorship. First, they found that the type of the program influenced consumer evaluations. They used three type of programs in their study; mini-series/dramas, quiz/variety shows and information/services. Placements in dramas were the most negative. The result is a logical one as dramas aim to captivate viewers to the story and any commercial indicators could be seen disturbing the transportation to the fictional content. Second, they found that implicit placements are seen more negatively ethical compared to explicit ones. Third, consumers react more positively when there is congruency between the placement and the program, except in the case of dramas. They speculated that the reason is the nature of dramas being unaccepting to firm linked activities and that if the placement would be more philanthropic than commercial, the assessment would be more positive. The most interesting output of their study for this thesis, is their fourth analytical result. They (d'Astous & Séguin 1999, 906) resulted that "Contrary to what was predicted, a more positive image of the sponsor does not lead to significantly better consumer reactions to PPLs (product placements)." They speculated that the influential weight of the brand image was not strong enough to effect consumer reactions. The other reasoning was based on Petty's and Cacioppo's (1986) Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM):

*"According to the ELM model, when personal involvement with an issue is low (low elaboration likelihood), consumer attitudes are determined primarily by peripheral cues. When it is high (high elaboration likelihood), attitudes are based primarily on argument quality. In the case of product placements, one can argue that the sponsor is the central argument and factors such as type of program and type of PPL are peripheral."* (d'Astous & Séguin 1999, 906)

This post hoc thinking by d'Astous and Séguin does not editorialize what would it take from the viewer to be influenced by the brand image. Some potential influencers could be the exposure frequency to the brand and the level of integration to the editorial

content of a film. This is later examined in this thesis. Despite the study by d'Astous and Séguin (1999), how the brand image of a certain product placement affects the perceived congruency it has in a certain editorial context like films, still lacks a significant depth in the product placement literature.

Cultural and country-of-origin factors can also affect on how viewers create emotional connections with the film. Craig-Lees, Scott and Wong (2008, 522) mention how the US audience is more used to extensive advertising methods like product placements than other countries so the cultural differences may serve as a partial explanation to the difference of experienced intrusiveness and the feeling of congruence between viewers. In the UK and in Australia there are regulations and common resistance towards product placements as for instance to some extent product placements are even prohibited in TV programmes in the UK. Country-of-origin of the film may also affect on the emotional response a viewer has towards the film. If viewers perceive a brand image and a product close to them country wise, it can increase the feeling of realism or decrease it if the brand seems unfitting based on its origin. By watching a film, viewers are transferring themselves to the story and making connections to their own lives which can be interrupted through cultural differences. (Gould, Gupta & Grabner-Käruter 1997, 44, 55)

### **3.2 Brand integration in films**

Compared to product placements that can be considered as a film prop without a greater influence on the film narrative itself, brand integrations in turn are purposefully scripted into a movie. (Kotler & Armstrong 2018, 459) However, as the concept of product placements is more widely used, and it seems that instead of mentioning brand integrations, researchers tend to use the former concept with its level of integration. This choice is replicated in this thesis. Some examples of a pure brand integration are GoPro from the film *The Martian*, Twinkies in *Zombieland*, General Motors in the *Transformers* franchise and of course the beloved Wilson volleyball as Tom Hanks's compatriot in the film *Cast Away*.

### 3.3 Brands as product placements in different genres

Perception of intrusiveness and appropriateness may differ in different genres. In general some genres could be a more appropriate platform to place commercial content into, which can be seen in a research conducted by Sung and de Gregorio (2008), and some genres may generate better brand recall and affect differently on women and men as found by Park and Berger (2010). Park and Berger (2008, 438) concluded that dramas generate the best brand recognition and they noticed also how men consistently recognized brands better in action, drama and comedy films, but also that the difference was not a significant one and required further examination. Sung and de Gregorio (2008, 95) noticed how comedies are the most appropriate genre for brand placements, followed by action, drama, romance, adventure and crime. The most inappropriate genres were animation, science fiction, political and historical films. They did not research the reasons behind these results but stated their assessment that the reason behind the inappropriateness of animations lies in negative attitudes towards commercialization directed to children due to their innocence. These finding clearly illustrate how certain genres are seen unfit for commercial content like political and historical films, but the inclusion of science fiction genre is interesting. Perhaps viewers connect those films to factual scientific contents and are therefore reluctant towards commercialization as well.

Brand liking, which could be a logical indicator whenever a viewer has liked the placement or not, is often seen best influenced by in comedies. Brands in general want to express positive feelings so comedic films offer a context where, through transportation, brands can attach themselves to viewer's mind in a desired manner. However, like the well referenced (Lehu 2009, 72; Rovella, Geringer & Sanchez 2015, 38) master's thesis by David Garza (2003) suggests, comedies don't necessarily have a significant advantage compared to other genres as Garza found out that it is in fact science fiction genre with the the influence on brand liking, recall and attitude towards brand placement. Garza's findings show that the genre related product placement literature still lacks coherent conclusions.

### 3.4 Emotion in films

As it has been established, brands and product placements can cause different reactions on consumers. Brands can be an essential part of the story as full integrations or just supporting instruments as high-or low-level product placements. As the aim of this thesis is to find whatever brand image of the placement affects on viewers emotional experience of the film, it is important also to realize the basics of how emotion is created in films without the effect of an external brand. In general, films move viewers through a cluster of different factors that together aim to create a certain emotional effect. Arguably the most common factors are the content itself, narrative, cinematography and musical elements like feature score.

Brown (2016, 2) explains that a cinematography and its techniques and methods are aimed to “add layers of meaning and subtext to the content of the film: the actors, sets, dialog and action.” As previously mentioned with brand storytelling, storytelling makes viewers see beyond practical functionalities and instead react based on feelings. In films, visual storytelling has a crucial part in creating the right tone to the film and support the narrative and other content (Brown 2016, 3). Brown (2016, 11) also calls filmmaking a mix of artistic, technical and businesslike elements. It is easy to see how these businesslike elements could appear as product placements. In his book, Brown (2011, 11) quotes Rodrigo Prieto, renowned cinematographer known for films like *Brokeback Mountain*, *Babel* and *Silence*. Prieto says how every decision in filmmaking is emotionally important, decisions in things like lighting, cinematography and camera placement, and how films can be seen as portrayed emotions.

In cinematography, Dayan, Barliya, de Gelder, Hendler, Malach and Flash (2018, 1) highlighted the importance of film’s ability to play with viewer’s emotions by stimulating and entertaining them, ultimately finding success because of this. In addition to apparent emotional stimuli like the content itself and narrative, they view that the motion of a camera itself can affect on the creation of viewer’s emotional response. Changes in large camera movements, global motions, was found to be more emotion evoking than changes in smaller, character and object related movements, local motions. Their results (Dayan et al. 2018, 7) indicated also that wider shots, those global motions, were able to modify the emotional responses caused by other factors like the content or

narrative. These results by its own, indicates clearly how product placements and their brands images with their own emotional spectrums could be affected by these in-dept filmmaking methods.

Wiley (2003, 172) researched emotions in films and suggested that emotions we experience in films differ from the ones we face in real life. Wiley established seventeen different traits of emotion, including risk, distance, attention, effects, context and discussable among 11 others. Context trait of emotion for example explain how emotions in films tend stay in that context without affecting other contexts outside of that film experience. In turn, in real life different emotional happenings can affect our actions in variety of different contexts. Wiley (2003, 181) concludes how the environments in film and reality differ in their limitations, controllability and vastness concerning experienced emotions.

How we interpret negative or positive emotions in films depend on our own state of mind and social situation. Mares and Cantor (1992, 475) showed how lonely elderly preferred sad portrayals compared to positive ones as they could relate themselves to the character and considered that the fictional character is doing worse, thus improving their own "bad" situation. Positive and social elderly in turn preferred positive portrayals, so there is not a coherent conclusion whether positive or negative portrayals always triumph in comparison. Wirth, Hofer and Holger (2012, 424) supports this view that negatively valenced films couldn't result in a positive effect as they concluded how sad and melancholy films "activate not only cognitions about, but also positive evaluations of central issues not only in one's own life but also in the lives of depicted characters." These findings in mind, placing a brand into a negative film context may indeed be the correct decision if the company's target group suits to that context.

As Chang, Ivonin, Chen and Rauterberg (2014, 539) put it, storytelling is what makes us watch some film classics over and over again. They predict that more interactive form of storytelling will become more common meaning that the emotional state that viewers are experiencing will influence how the overall story will turn out. This is becoming increasingly popular in video games (Until Dawn, 2015; Beyond: Two Souls, 2013) but also in films, with Netflix's *Bandersnatch* (2018) leading the way and more to come (Variety 2019). Chang et al. (2019, 539) propose a concept of an emotion-

driven storytelling which means that every interactive choice we make with the content, derives from the viewers emotional state. Viewers partially create the story and its emotional ark, which creates possibilities for product placers to choose the storyline where their products should be. With this kind of content, by targeting the specific viewer group, an unpopular emotional storyline can be left untouched leaving the product placements without an audience as well.

In conclusion, emotions are created in films by multiple functional methods through the likes of cinematography and camera placement as well as the content of the film, but no coherent generalizations cannot be made on how we interpret those emotions. Viewers responds to different emotions differently than they do in real life as those emotions are experienced differently and because the emotional state of an individual viewers affects the outcome. As the ability to create emotions is crucial for film's success, the art of storytelling will keep on rising in importance as it will take different forms through interactiveness.

### **3.5 Mood and brand image transition**

If consumers can connect a brand and a product they see, for example on film, their mood can influence the perception they have towards this relationship and ultimately towards the product. In a situation where a consumer has a positive attitude towards the brand, they view its possible extensions like new products more likely as a same category as the original ones and transfer their positive mood to the new one. (Tafari et al. 2018, 126) Tafari et al. (2018, 137) researched how the mood affects on the way viewers of a TV program evaluate products in an editorial content. They concluded that in a positive mood state, brand attitude plays a major role on evaluating the product, whereas in a negative mood state, the evaluation process leans on the information a viewer has on the product.

Rovella et al. (2015, 46) studied how viewer's mood affects on product placements and transfers into it. First, they showed that a viewer in the aroused or negative state affects positively on reactions towards the placement. Second, product placements are viewed more positively if there is a positive change in viewer's mood. The conclusion

by Tafani et al. (2018) might explain this conclusion. If a negative mood makes viewers appreciate product information, perhaps a product with positive practical attributes gains the type of positive reaction towards it as a placement, suggested by Rovella et al., as a result.

Meenaghan and Shipley (1999) present a research by Jones and Dearsley (1990) who found that by sponsoring football with bad reputation, Barclays bank was able to transfer its good image to the sport. In the same study, the research by Kohl and Otker (1985) is presented to illustrate this media effect of sponsorship. Kohl and Otker examined the sponsorship between Philips and Dire Straits and found out that Dire Strait's signature high sound quality brand image was transferred to Philips in the process. These findings support the idea that a brand image's valence could be transferable to the film context it is placed to as a product placement or brand integration.

Reijmersdal, Neijens and Smit (2007, 415) studied the effect the direction of the television program has on brand image through placements and found the brand image changing towards the image of the program itself. They viewed the exposure frequency as an important factor and concluded that two or more incidents causes a shift in brand image. Additional finding was that brand image is not affected by brand memory as a positive increase in brand image was affected both by explicit and implicit memory. In other words, it didn't matter whether a viewer remembered seeing the placement or not. Reijmersdal et al. (2007) noted that their placement was highly integrated to the program and therefore this result might be questionable with low integrated product placement.

## **4 CONGRUENCE – BRANDS AND FILM**

Many studies have been conducted examining the congruence between two factors. Product placement literature suggests different potential outcomes on congruency, stating how a negative one causes viewers to note the placement better thus increasing its influence on brand related actions after the viewing, but also how this negative congruency disrupts the viewing experience resulting in negative brand attitudes (Russel 2002). Therefore, in order to understand the full effect a congruency has towards a brand and a film; its fundamentals are opened in this chapter by first examining the concept of congruence and its overall extent of effectiveness, followed by exploring how congruency as a concept affects in the context of a brand individually before studying the effect of congruity with these two contexts, brand and film, together.

### **4.1 Congruence as a phenomenon**

Congruence as a term is relatively a new one in the marketing literature, as researchers more commonly use the terms like fit, similarity and typicality. (Yoon 2013) Mandler (1982) saw congruity affecting the emotional responses and their nature of valence among consumers. As earlier mentioned by Russel (2002), incongruency seemed to have a bigger impact on remembrance; a result supported by many researchers, but as already seen by Moorman et al. (2002), the triumph of incongruency in recall is not an obvious one. Congruency can also be examined from the perspective of relevancy and expectancy. Heckler and Childers (1992, 489) concluded how expected and relevant products were better remembered than expected and irrelevant products. However, supporting the more common opinion, relevant products were not triumphant if they were unexpected, which could be the case with films, compared to commercials for instance. They also noted how unexpected and irrelevant products were better remembered, which also supports the more common opinion. According to Meyers-Levy and Tybout (1989, 40) Mandler (1982) explained that the reason incongruency creates more recall, is because it creates extremity in evaluation which causes increased arousal and cognitive activity. Using Mandler's research, Meyers-Levy and Tybout (1989, 40) defined incongruity as "the extent that structural correspondence is

achieved between the entire configuration of attribute relations associated with an object, such as a product, and the configuration specified by the schema.” This *schema congruency* is a widely used term in the marketing congruency literature as well (Lange & Dahlen 2003; Yoon 2013; Meyers-Levy & Tybout 1989) The level of congruency or incongruency affects its evaluation process as moderate levels tend to have more positive impact on recall, evaluation certainty and overall cognitive activity compared to more extrem levels as with these kind of levels the focus turns from the examination of the desired object to the congruency itself. (Meyers-Levy & Tybout 1989, 40, 52).

## 4.2 Brand congruence

Brands benefit from emotional attachments and could be seen as emotional constructs. The importance of the congruence of these emotions can already be rationalized through the principle of cognitive consistency, which explains how consumers favor known elements which then create “harmony among their thoughts, feelings and behaviours”, which consumers aim to preserve (Solomon, Bamossy, Askegaard & Hogg 2013, 300). Hammond (2008, 21) mentions how a brand without an emotional ingredient is just a commodity and the planned emotional part of the brand is the initial platform for further brand ingredients. Brand emotion is therefore also an essential part of a brand congruence, or brand coherence as it is also used.

De Chernatony (2002, 117) saw brand as a triangle formed by promised experience, emotional values and functional values. The congruence between those factors in turn decided the strength of the brand itself. As brands are formed through separate elements, the synergy between them makes or breaks the brand and should be able to work independently regardless of the context it is placed into (De Chernatony (2002, 118). De Chernatony (2002, 118) also mentioned the importance of values for a brand and how individual employee’s values are a crucial building block together with company vision and organizational culture. A coherent brand is ultimately easier to create when there is a clear coherent view on the values company stakeholders have between them. Relating to the context of this thesis, values are always a crucial part of a

film and company values and the values portrayed in a film can form a significant dilemma congruity wise.

Brand coherence plays an important part with brand extensions. In order to create a brand portfolio with a coherent brand identity, coherence must be seen as a way for different subbrands to work seamlessly together “to convey a coherent and compelling message to consumers”. This coherence can be created through visual identity of a brand or design, brand personality and through brand’s symbolic values or symbolic identity. Synergy between these factors create a coherent image for consumers. (Nguyen, Zhang & Calantone 2018, 63) As Nguyen et al. (2018, 64) examined brands from the portfolio perspective, personality coherence is seen as an extent to which subbrands fit together and how ultimately, they form the brand image. Talking about personality instead of brand image, they viewed that the portfolio’s individual elements should be able to work together and “reflect the essence, aura, or “DNA” of the parent brand.” (Nguyen et al. 2018, 64) While using the portfolio concept as a view, the overall idea of it is that individual brands are placed into the same context, whether a corporate brand portfolio, or even a film. This conclusion suits also to Nguyen et al.’s concept of status coherence, where they mention some status characteristics like quality, high value and reputation. The status of subbrands should stay coherent as the opposite situation leads to inconsistent evaluations of the portfolio, or the cluster of brand elements in a certain context, resulting a fading reputation of the entity. (Nguyen et al. 2018, 64)

Norman (2007, 6) also studied brand extensions, and brand attributes in particular, as he viewed that the more a brand extension share the same attributes as a core brand, the more coherent, or fitter as he puts it, the extension is with the core brand. Norman (2007, 6) also mentioned the concept of brand membership to explain an extension’s fitness to a specific brand category. Like Nguyen et al. (2018), Norman (2007, 8) too viewed that one of the brand’s elements is its status and mentioned how the fitness between two different brands can not be assessed only by it as on a feature basis some brands may be completely different despite the similarity of their status. Norman instead saw that the congruity, fitness, of the overall prevailing concepts of the brands, is the one that matters. He mentioned how brands can fit to several different concepts, of which importance and relevance depend on their contexts (Norman 2007, 8).

Fitting a brand into a context that shares the same functional attributes associated to the brand image can be a positive factor for the consumers. McDonald (1991, 36-37) studied the congruency in sponsorships. He used the concept of product relevance to illustrate the congruency between the sponsorship and what the company does. A couple examples in the study were Philips, that fits to sponsor sport teams as they can be seen to fund the arena with their lights, Seiko, that fits to deliver the timer services and Barclays, that with its solid and traditional image fits to sponsor football that is seen as a national game. Negative relationships are also mentioned as tobacco and alcohol companies are seen incapable of associated with a sport entity.

### **4.3 Brand and film congruence**

As examined in the product placement chapter, brand and film congruence affects consumers's brand attitudes and attitudes towards the placement itself. Previously mentioned sponsorship literature in general prefers the concept of *fit* rather than *congruency*. Nagar (2016, 154) saw the similarity between the product placing and sponsoring as both have a triangular form in their structure: "...a company willing to support a certain activity (the sponsor), a sponsored activity or the target (the sponsee), and in a majority of cases also the different media covering the event or activity - it is only reasonable to consider that brands being placed in movies are, in a way, sponsoring a part of the movie." Nagar (2016, 154) also suggested that using the same principles by Aaker and Keller (1990), stating how the high congruency between a parent brand and a brand extension enable the transition of attitudes, can be used to explain how the congruency between a brand and its context affects on the outcome of how context bound attitudes transfer to a brand. Deriving from this thinking, it could be argued how the same principles could work also the other way around. The congruency between a brand and its context could result in a positive transition of attitudes towards the context as well.

As stated earlier, the perceived congruence between a brand and a film scene and its effects can be affected by the state the viewer is in. Yoon, Choi and Song (2011, 72) approached this issue by asking whether the situation where a viewer is multitasking

or not, would influence the effectiveness of congruity effects. They noticed that if a viewer is doing something else while watching a film, the negative congruity effects decrease with incongruent placements but also that in a case of congruent placements, the positive congruity effects decrease as well. As films are constantly viewed from a couch at home, this mitigating result can explain why home viewers might not see a problem with product placements compared to viewers who prefer film theaters and their more serene environment.

Ultimately, the type of brand and film congruence depends on the desired result the practitioners try to produce with it. Incongruent brand placements create more disruptiveness giving a better remembrance and recognition for the product. In turn, congruent placements evoke more positive effects when it comes to attitudinal changes. With the same logic, the more congruent the brand is with its context, like films, the better cognitive outcome it has. (Balasubramanian et al. 2006, 128, 131) This is supported by previously mentioned views by Verhellen et al. (2016) and d'Astous and Séguin (1999) regarding the congruence between brand placements and a film plot or the program itself.

Following the empiric part of this thesis, a statement can be made, that the congruence literature has not researched the effect a brand image has towards the perceived congruity. The congruence is almost always viewed from the viewpoint of how the placement is executed in a film and how congruently this action has been. Like d'Astous and Séguin (1999) pointed out, a brand image might not seem important enough for the viewers to be influenced by it as part of a product placement. The other term pointed out earlier, self-referencing, in turn supports the idea of a brand image being a sub-influencer in brand placements and their effects to consumers. Image congruence hypothesis indicates how the congruence between a brand image and a self-image influences the way consumers feel about products in general. Consumers prefer brands that tell who they are without saying a word. (Graeff 1997, 50) This in mind, as film viewers try to see themselves as film's protagonists, it makes sense that the brands the protagonist is using support the self-referencing process if the image of these brands fit to consumer's self-image as well. However, the weight of this influence can be insignificant. The empiric part of this thesis will shed light to this.

## 5 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODS

In this chapter the empirical part of the thesis is executed. The objective of this research is to answer the main research question and its sub-questions by finding out if brand image and film context congruence has an affect on consumer attitudes and the creation of emotional value of the film viewers.

Research design for this study follows the structure proposed by Hollensen (2015, 628) and goes as follows. First, the main research problem has been determined and stands as "*How the congruence of a brand image and a film scene influences the creation of an emotional value for a consumer?*". Secondly, survey has been chosen as a research approach with, thirdly, an internet survey as a contact method. The fourth step is the determination of a sampling plan which is discussed in the upcoming subchapter. Fiftly, contact medium and the survey design is discussed, followed by sixth step of this research design of an explanation about the procedure of pre-testing and data analysis. These steps are discussed next in more detail.

### 5.1 Research and data collection methods

This thesis aims to find understanding of the researched subject and provide reasons for why it occurs the way it does which makes the study qualitative (Hollensen 2015, 627). The study is exploratory in nature and the data collection is based on three concepts: brand image, product placements and congruence. The objective is to have a research structure that enables the analysis of these concepts individually and mutually. Survey was chosen as the data collection method and contains structured and semi-structured questions. Structured questions are aimed to set the relevant range for the answers and provide the necessary context to which semi-structured questions are then referring to. Specific concern was made for the range of the survey because the concepts can be found confusingly theoretical for the average consumers and the psychological nature of the survey can cause answers to be out of context.

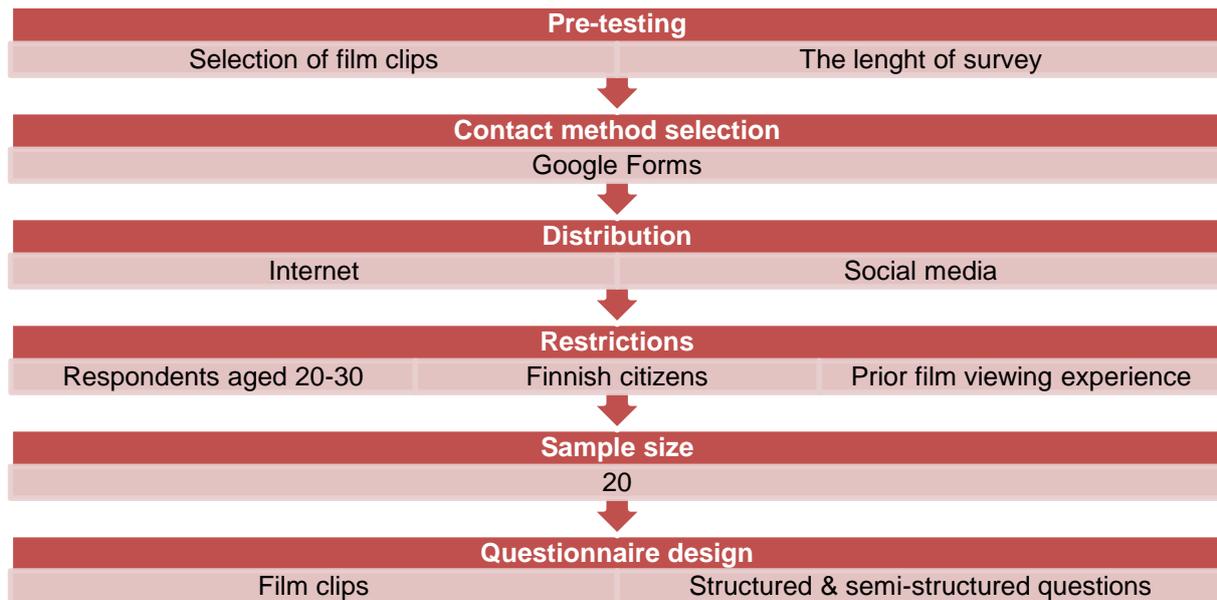
One significant decision with the survey medium is the use of video material. Respondents are provided with six short film clips, with a duration between 30-60 seconds,

which are then analyzed by the respondents with six supporting questions. The requirement for the film material made an internet survey the most convenient platform and contacting method for this study and it was made with Google Forms tool which enabled attaching YouTube video files directly to the survey without any technical know-how. Using this platform also enabled respondents to submit answers easily via smartphone. Using videos in a research enables using relevant form of communication in a research and making the material easily available for the respondents. In addition, internet surveys provide increasingly convenient way to take part of this kind of researches with a necessary flexibility and enrich it with relevant information. (Flick 2009, 285-286)

The survey was distributed via internet via social media on Facebook. The post included a link to the survey with a description explaining that it is a survey for a master's thesis. The sample plan was based on three restrictions that were mentioned in the post as well. The first mentioned that the respondents had to be Finnish and the second explained that they must be 20-30-year-olds. In addition, a preference was added that the respondents should consider themselves as consumers who are used to watch films and therefore would be familiar with the film context and perhaps possess some previous experiences with product placements in films. It was not further specified how many films participants should have had watched prior answering the survey.

The sample size was set at 20. As the survey consists of several open questions, 20 respondents were thought to be a sufficient amount for this exploratory research. Considering the psychological nature of the topic that requires self-aware and in-depth analysis from the average consumers, 20 answers were believed to provide enough relevant answers fitting to the desired context of this study in support of potential irrelevant answers. The survey was conducted in English.

In order not to steer respondents to a certain direction and not to prime respondents too much regarding the topic, film clips are placed first in the survey and questions concerning these clips. The survey is structured in a way that it has two different parts, first being the film clip section and the latter consists of questions without enriching content in support.



*Figure 2. Formulation decision points of the survey*

Decision points for the survey are demonstrated in the figure 2. Different steps shown in the figure indicate the phases and the overall strategy that lead to the structure and formalation of the survey to the form it is.

### **5.1.1 Selection of the films for the study**

The survey consists of six film clips from the films Iron Man (2008), Fight Club (1999), I, Robot (2004), The Internship (2013), World War Z (2013) and Transformers 4 (2014). These film clips are selected due to their prominent product placements and the congruence of these with the film context itself. Some of the placements could be argued to fit the scene better than the others and the same argument can be made about the congruence of the brand image of those placements. The selection was not based on the exact pre-figuration whether the placement and its brand image fit to the scene or not, as it was left for the respondents to decide. The clips only show the part of the movie where the placement is clearly visible for the audience. As the main objective is to focus on the brand image and its experienced congruence with the film scene, choosing different scenes based on placement prominence was left out of this study. Instead, the desicion was made to clearly show the placemet for the respondents so they mainly focus on analyzing the desired congruence factors of those placements.

### 5.1.2 Pre-testing

Pre-testing was conducted to determine the functionality of the survey for this study. The initial survey was answered by two Finnish citizens aged between 20 and 30 to match with the ultimate respondent group and both were film watching consumers. The goal of this pre-testing was to select the right amount of film clips, question formats and figure out the length of taking the survey. These initial results showed that the clip amount was too high at 11 clips with a survey duration between 45-60 minutes. Also some dichotomic questions were deleted and modified to provide answers on a scale between 1 and 7.

## 5.2 Data analysis methods

According to Tuomi and Sarajärvi (2013, 95-97) qualitative analysis is usually either inductive or deductive but abductive analysis also exist in the case of theory-guided data analysis. Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2009, 489) mention deductive and inductive approaches. They define the deductive analysis as an approach where researchers use an existing theory as base for the research and an inductive analysis as an approach where researchers base their theory on the conducted data in their research. This study uses the deductive analysis approach as the data is based on existing theoretical literature. The study also uses inductive analysis methods as some interpretations and generalizations are made based on the data. This due to the fact that the current literature lacks some insights on the researched matter. Saunders et al. (2009, 491) propose three different dimensions of qualitative research which is shown in the figure 3.

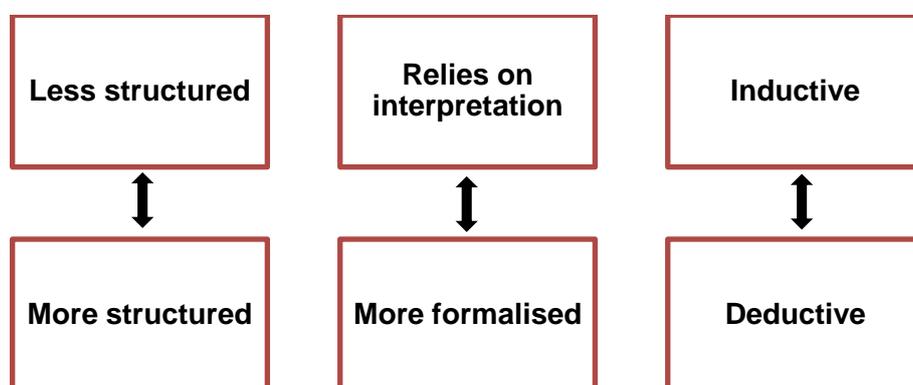


Figure 3. Dimensions of qualitative research (Saunders et al. 2009, 491)

Figure 3 indicates how the analysis approaches are hardly ever purely inductive or deductive in nature as this study relies on both approaches.

Cluster analysis methods are also utilized in this study as three bigger themes or concepts are used in the survey; brand image, product placement and congruence. Clustering the data includes finding similarities and differences within the data and this is done based on the aforementioned concepts. As the answers are put in those clusters the data is being defined and compressed to fit those sets. The clustering process involves some reductioning of the data to simplify it to find the relevant information for the study. (Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2013, 111-112)

The analysis of the findings first starts by analyzing the answers based on the film clips provided in the survey. By analyzing the film clips first, the results from the questions based on those clips can be used in the analysis phase of questions followed. The next phase of analysis is the categorization of different research topics and concepts and the one aims to find the converging factors from these categories or clusters.

### **5.3 Reliability and validity**

Hollensen (2015, 636) defines research reliability as the regard of how the measurements are done in a research and to what extent the research can result in same results “over and over again” using the same measurements. Validity in turn is defined as the extent to which a research measures the issue it is supposed to measure and is formed through three different types of validity: construct, internal and external validity. Construct validity “establishes correct operational measures for the concepts being studied”, internal validity specifies how certain internal conditions “lead to other conditions” and external validity shows how applicable the research is across other populations. (Hollensen 2015, 636) Flick (2009, 391) mentions how validity can be compromised if a researcher results in various interpretations that derive from “subjective viewpoints”. As the theoretical part of this thesis indicates that the researched topic lacks some theoretical insight, interpretations have been made which could have

caused diminished construct validity in the theoretical chapters and the following chapter afterwards due this issue. However, these interpretations are only minor part of the theoretical base of this study so the overall effect should not be significant.

The reliability of this study can be affected by the low number of respondents and the empirical data as a result. The survey consists of three different concepts, two of these defined for the respondents within the survey; product placement and brand image. The concept of congruence instead was thought to be too theoretical for an average consumer so instead of using it directly in a survey, more familiar phrases were used like the extent to how something fits to some context. By focusing on three different variables can cause variability within the data.

A closer look on the brands used in the survey's film clips could have improved the reliability of this study. Respondents were not asked their prior experiences and attitudes towards the used brands which could influence the data. However, as the prominence of the placements, in which brand familiarity has a major influence, was not under research in this study, the choice was made to use brands that are most likely familiar to the Finnish citizens; Audi, Ikea, Converse, Bud Light, Google and Pepsi. Bud Light could be seen as unfamiliar for the respondents, but the scene shown in the clip shows that it is a beer brand. Another concern for the film clips used is their length. Previously the choice of using only short clips and scenes where placements and their brands are clearly visible was reasoned, but this could cause a decrease in research validity. Even if the prominence of these placements was not under study, by highlighting the scene with these placements, it could result in a distorted view on the experienced congruence as the whole context is not shown. But as the objective is to examine the phenomenon as a whole instead of the phenomenon in individual films, this strategic choice is justified.

Regarding the external validity, the nationality of the respondents is Finnish so the study can not be fully generalized to other countries without decreasing the overall validity. This concern is based on the researches previously mentioned by Craig-Lees et al. (2008) and Gould et al. (1997).

The last concern about the study's reliability and validity concerns the topic itself. Chang et al. (2014, 544) suggest that emotions can be so complex and delicate among consumers when analyzing a film clip, that self-assessing measurements can't validate their mindset and emotional state. In turn they propose that the use of ECG (electrocardiography) measurements deliver more precise results in this kind of psychological researches. In future studies, using this kind of instruments could help to find more in-depth results with a better validity to support self-assessing methods like surveys.

## 6 ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

This chapter presents the results from the conducted survey (Appendix 1) to provide an empirical base for this study and the analysis of these results. First the survey's film clip part is presented and analyzed as it requires some interpretations before giving the final answers relevant to the researched concepts. This is followed by subchapters based on different themes surrounding the researched concepts; the first being product placements, the second brand image and the third being congruence. The last two subchapters are directed to provide further information for further studies based on the topic of this study, especially as the genre specific approach and product placements's brand image's relation to word-of-mouth is poorly studied in the current literature. 20 answerers took part in the survey but some of them left the open "why" type of questions unanswered most likely due to inability to figure out in-depth answers.

### 6.1 Consumer reactions on product placements in the presented film clips

In this subchapter film clips are analyzed based on their survey results. The questions about the film clips concern the noticeability of the product placements and how well it fits to the scene. The disruptionness of the placement is also asked as well as the fittingness of the brand image of the placement to the scene. The main focus is with the questions that answer "why" the respondents feel the way they feel towards these concepts. The exact questions after the film clip were:

1. *Did you notice the placement?*
2. *Did it fit to the scene?*
3. *Can you reason your previous response?*
4. *To what extent did the placement distract your viewing experience?*
5. *To what extent did you feel that the brand image of the scene's brand fits to the scene? (scene's character/mood/overall context?)*
6. *Can you reason your previous answer?*

After presenting the results, a summarizing analysis is made based on all of these clips concerning the researched concepts.

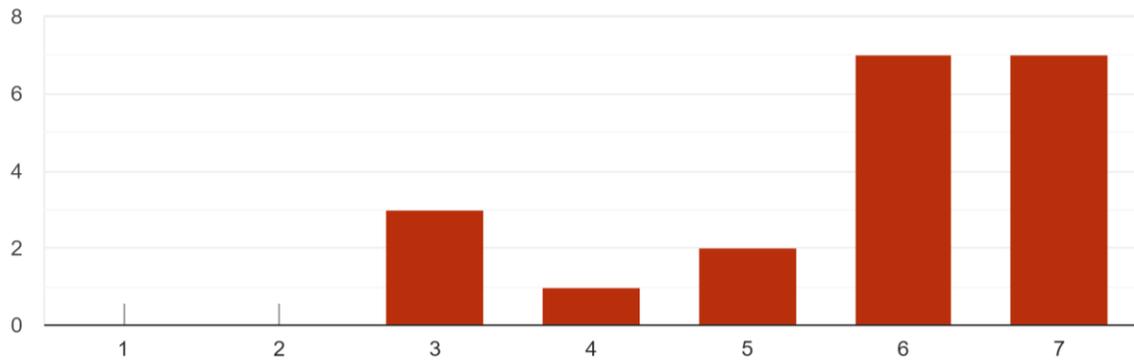
### **6.1.1 Iron man (2008) and Audi**

Iron Man is a superhero film premiered in 2008. In the clip a billionaire playboy type of a protagonist arrives to a premiere with a premium looking Audi. The car, its logo, the engine sound and the motor are clearly shown. The clip was selected due to its highly prominent product placement and due to the potential congruence between a portrayed character and the brand image of Audi.

20 out of 20 respondents noticed the placement and 18 thought it fits to the scene. There were two main approaches on why respondents felt that the placement suited the scene; the suitability for the character and the suitability for the film. Character wise, the coolness of the character and the fact that he appeared as a billionaire was seen congruent with the "nice", "high quality" and "masculine" car. Audi was seen suitable for the lifestyle of the character and "reflected the persona of the character well". It was mentioned that any sports car would have suited the scene, thus underrating Audi's influence.

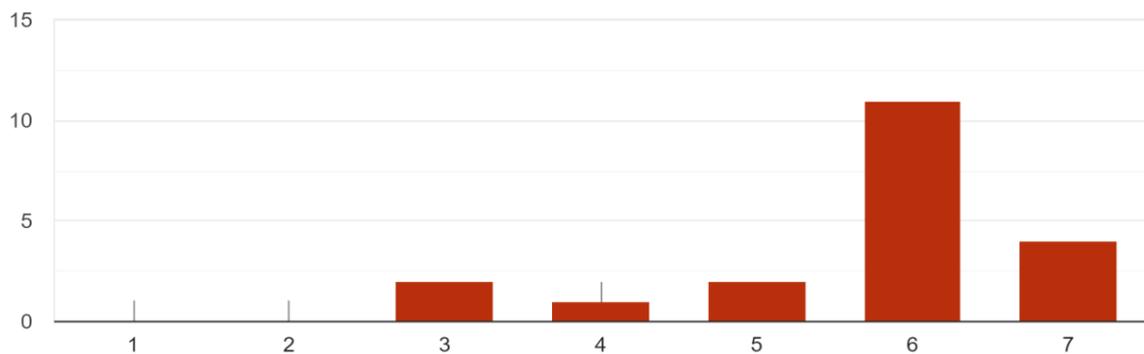
Film wise, Audi as a sports car was seen suitable for action films in general and another respondent said how fast cars suit superhero films. The high quality of the car suited the film as a whole as mentioned by one respondent. In overall, the congruence of a brand and a film scene was summarised by one respondent who concluded: "Cool scene, cool car."

To the question "To what extent did the placement distract your viewing experience?", respondents rated the distractiveness on a scale between 1 and 7, 1 being "very distracting" and 7 being "not distracting at all". Figure 4 indicates how the majority of the respondents viewed the placement undistracting. The result from the previous question could be the reasoning behind this result.



*Figure 4. Distractiveness of a product placement - Iron Man*

The next question was about the brand image of the scene's product placement and its congruence towards the scene. Figure 5 indicates how again the majority viewed the brand image congruent with the scene.



*Figure 5. Brand image's fittingness to the scene - Iron Man*

Respondents were next asked to reason this rating concerning the brand image. On a scale between 1 and 7, 1 equals "It did not fit at all" and 7 "It fit seamlessly". Seven respondents mentioned how Audi's brand image represents high quality and premium type of cars, so it fits to the scene with a billionaire and the viewed lifestyle of the character. However, six answers mentioned how Audi was not premium or cool enough to suit the scene and better options like "Bentley" or "James Bond's car" (Aston Martin most likely) could have been chosen. One respondent viewed that the scene needed a luxury car and stated as follows:

*"Audi is regarded as a premium brand and the car in the video is a luxury car so it is very seamless in my opinion."*

### 6.1.2 *The Internship (2013) and Google*

The Internship is a comedy premiered in 2013. In the clip two middle-aged men participate in a seminar session in Google's headquarters regarding the company's code of conducts which they don't fully understand compared to the younger audience participating the event. The clip was selected due to its highly integrated brand placement where the whole scene is about the brand, thus serving as a different type of placement compared to individual product placements in other clips.

19 out of 20 noticed the placement and 16 thought that it fit to the scene. 2 votes went for "no" and "not sure". One reason for this could be that the level on integration is so high, that viewers don't even think about it as a placement but as a fully integrated normal part of the scene. Respondents reasoned the viewed fittingness mostly based on two perspectives. First, Google offers the location for the scene and as the whole film was viewed to be about Google, the placement was seen as a congruent one. In overall, the answers indicated the uncertainty to analyze product placements when the integration is very high like with this clip. The second perspective circled around the idea, that googling something has been integrated so well to western society that it is seen as a normal way of doing something, so googling in a scene is also seen as a normal act, rather than as a paid product placement.

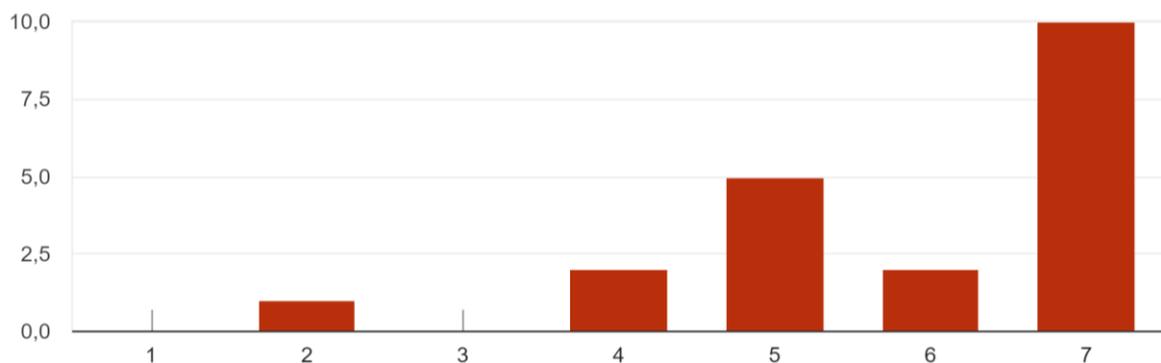
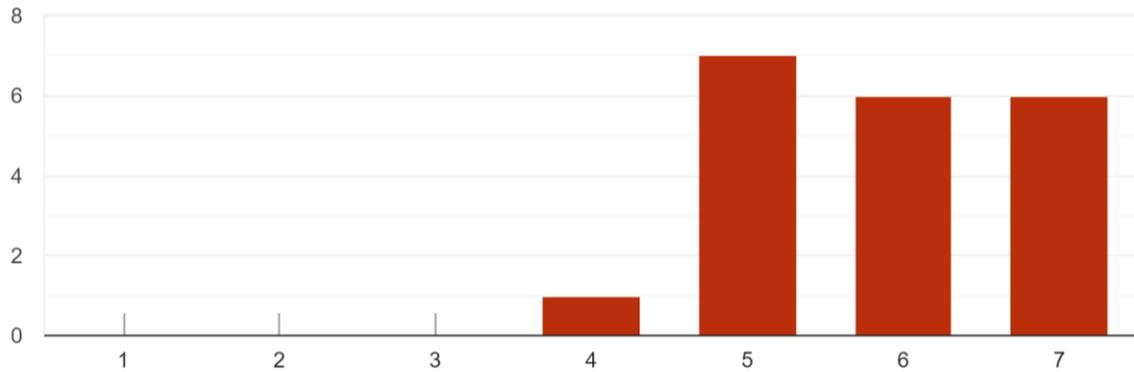


Figure 6. Distractiveness of a product placement - *The Internship*

Most respondents viewed that the placement was not distracting their experience as can be seen in the figure 6. This could derive from the perceived congruency with the scene in the previous question.



*Figure 7. Brand image's fittingness to the scene - The Internship*

Figure 7 in turn indicates how respondents viewed the brand image of the scene's placement suitable for that context. Only 9 knew how the reason their rating which can be the cause of the extremely high level of integration as previously mentioned. Most of these answers referred to the prominence of the brand in a scene instead of focusing its brand image. However, three brand image related relevant answers were offered for this and all of them referred on how the scene influences the viewed organizational culture of Google. One of them mentioned how the scene in fact made "Google look like a serious work place where they take things seriously" and the other said that the clip "confirms the organization culture of Google". The third respondent said:

*"It didnt really feel like a brand in the clip. I thought it is focusing on the culture of Google and promoting it. But the effect is subconscious, so the viewer does not pay attention to it that much."*

### **6.1.3 World War Z (2013) and Pepsi**

World War Z is a zombie action horror film premiered in 2013. In the clip the protagonist is about to face a pack of zombies with the uncertainty whether they attack him or not. However, before facing them he decides to have a relaxing moment as he sits down and takes a sip from a coke can without a logo that resembles a lot like a Pepsi can while in the background in a soda machine, the cans with Pepsi logos are highly visible. The clip was selected due to its prominent product placement and plot wise potentially incongruent nature.

19 out of 20 respondents noticed the placement in a clip. However, Pepsi's placement was not seen as fitting to the scene as compared to the previous clips. 7/19 answers indicated that it did not fit to the scene, 6/19 were not sure and the last 6/19 viewed it as a fitting one. Some mentioned that it was appropriate for the scene and did not take over it. The negative comments were mainly focused on the way the placement was made, about its prominence. These respondents viewed it as too obvious, forced, irrelevant for the scene and distracting. One thought that the placement seemed out of context and the other mentioned how:

*"I think this one seemed more like a commercial."*

Two of the respondents said that by knowing the whole context, the film, a better view could have been formed from this. They wondered that perhaps Pepsi would not seem as out of context if they knew the whole film. The film however does not have any other references to Pepsi outside of that scene, so this could be an irrelevant concern.

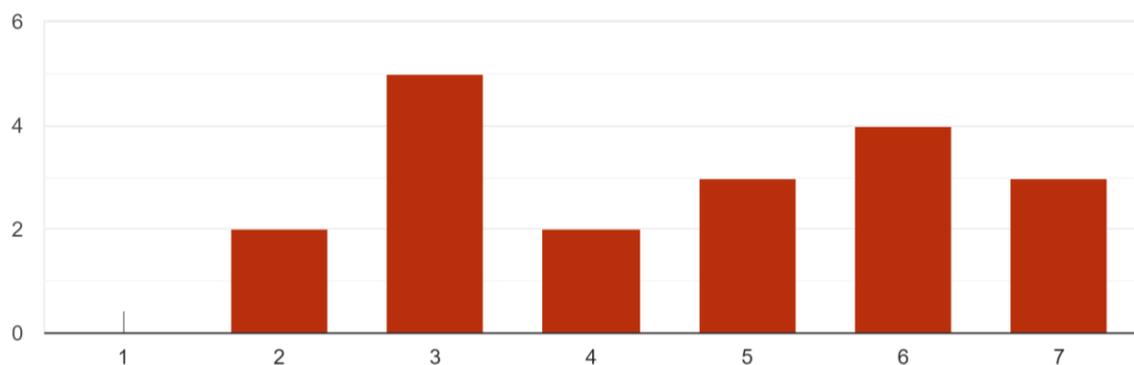


Figure 8. Distractiveness of a product placement - World War Z

Figure 8 indicates that the placement's distractiveness faces the same inharmonious result as the previous question. The ratings are much more diversified with an average around 4,5 with 5/19 ratings of 3. These results can be reasoned with the answers from the previous question as some mentioned how the placement was seen out of context and how the implementation of the brand was made unsuccessfully.

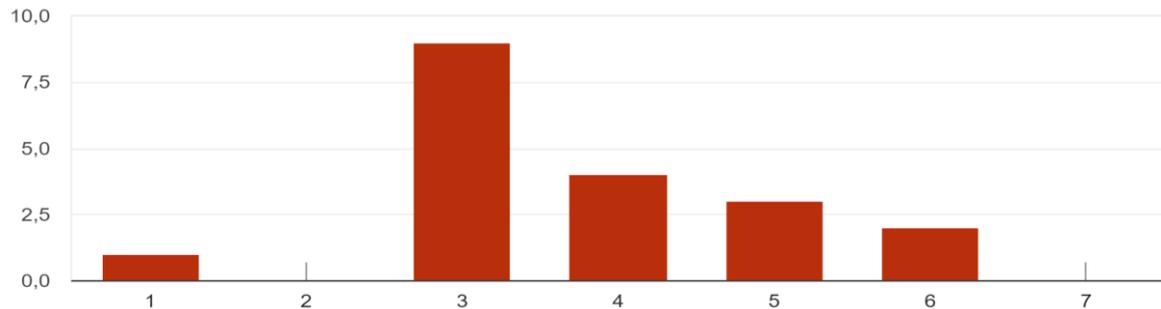


Figure 9. Brand image's fittingness to the scene - World War Z

Figure 9 in turn shows how most of the respondents felt that the brand image of Pepsi did not match the context to which it was placed in with 9 out of 19 rating it 3. However, the validity of this result is quite questionable as only 11 were able to reason their rating and 7 out of those 11 focused again on the prominence of the placement instead of brand image. Three respondents who focused on brand image mentioned how it did not have any influence whether the brand was Pepsi or any other soda brand. One of these three said:

*"Hard to see Pepsi in a horror/post-apocalyptic movie scene."*

It could be argued that the respondent referred to the overall atmosphere and context of this kind of setting and how a soda brand does not fit into it.

#### **6.1.4 Fight Club (1999) and Ikea**

Fight Club is a drama film premiered in 1999. In the clip the protagonist talks about the IKEA catalog while naming several products as they pop up to the scene with a price tag. He has become an IKEA addict and mentions this in a apathetic fashion. The clip was selected due to its prominent product placements and the potential incongruence between a brand image of IKEA and the image the scene is creating.

19 out of 20 noticed the placement in the Fight Club scene and 15 respondents thought it fit the scene. Seven answerers felt that the placement fit to the film's narrative and storytelling and three others mentioned that it was well planned, natural and very clever. A couple of answers mentioned that it was too obvious and distracting. As the figure 10 indicates, the respondents felt distracted by the placement, but the answers from the previous question would imply that the distractiveness is not necessarily felt as a negative experience as most of them viewed it as a fitting placement. One respondent put this relationship between a viewed prominence and intrusiveness as follows:

*“Even though it dominates the scene, it fits because it isn't just a product placement - the character draws the products to his narration and his own story, which makes the placement well-fitted.”*

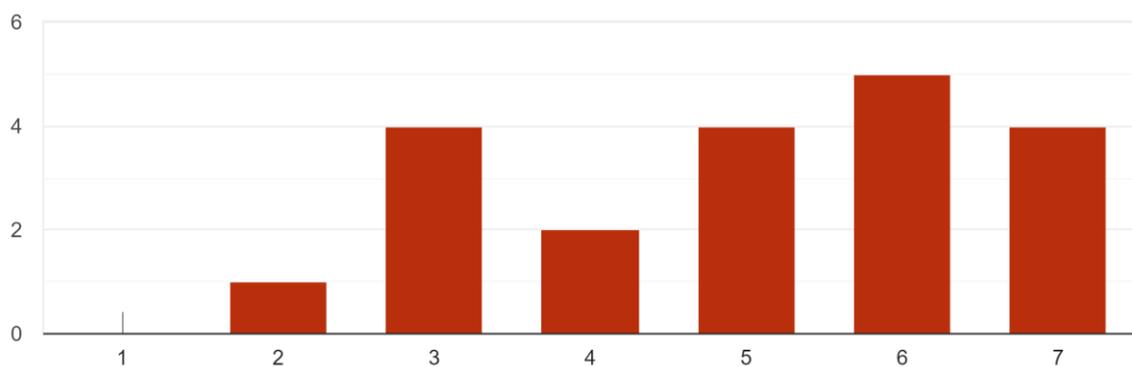
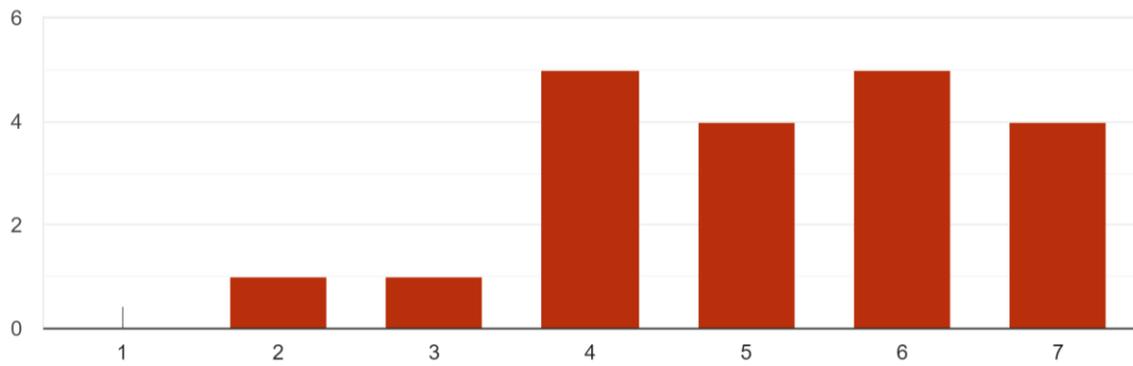


Figure 10. Distractiveness of a product placement - Fight Club

The figure 11 in turn shows how respondents thought that the brand image of Ikea mostly fits to the scene. The figure 8 is however only reasoned through 9 answers and again most of the answers were not relevant for the asked topic as most of them focused on the placement's prominence. One respondent reasoned the perceived fittingness by stating that as the protagonist is in his apartment, it makes sense that the brand of Ikea is present. The respondent associates apartments to Ikea, so an alternative location could have fought against the perceived brand image of Ikea.



*Figure 11. Brand image's fittingness to the scene - Fight Club*

Another respondent viewed Ikea as a good presentation of materialism and saw that this image of the brand suited the protagonist's "motive of making himself feel better by engaging to full on materialism". A third respondent said that he could relate to the person in a scene while giving a rating of 6 in a fittingness scale. The answer is left unclear about whether it means that the respondent felt that he or she saw Ikea the way the protagonist saw the brand or did she or he meant something else.

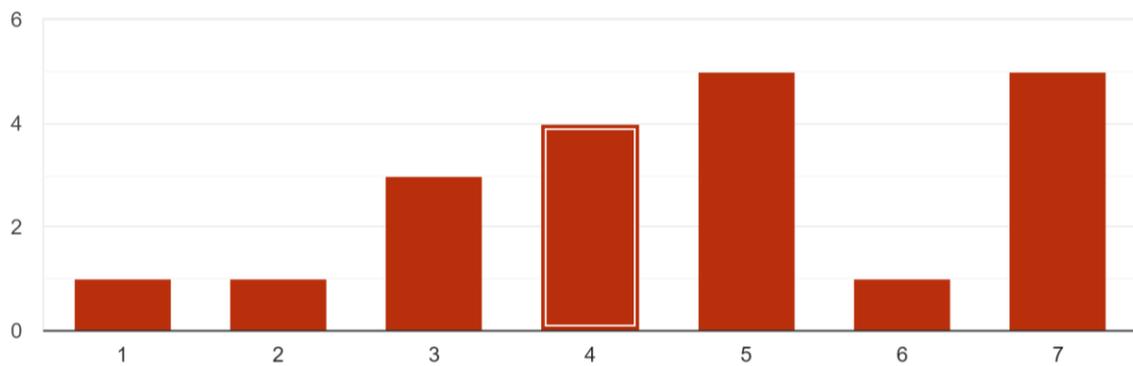
### **6.1.5 I, Robot (2004) and Converse**

I, Robot is a science fiction action film premiered in 2004. In the clip the protagonist opens a new package of Converse shoes, looks at them in an admiring fashion, puts them on and later presents them to another character while mentioning the name of the shoes. Finally, a third character praises the shoes to the main protagonist. The clip was selected due to its prominent product placement.

20 out of 20 noticed the product placement in this scene, but there were differences on the way people viewed its congruency with the scene. 9/20 said it fit the scene, 6 said that it did not and 5 were not sure. The respondents who did not like the placement or were not sure about its fittingness argued that it put too much emphasis on a brand and was too obvious. Two respondents mentioned that it looked like an advertisement, but otherwise fit the overall mood of the scene. One respondent said that it worked as a mean to create a specific setting in a film but failed in its implementation:

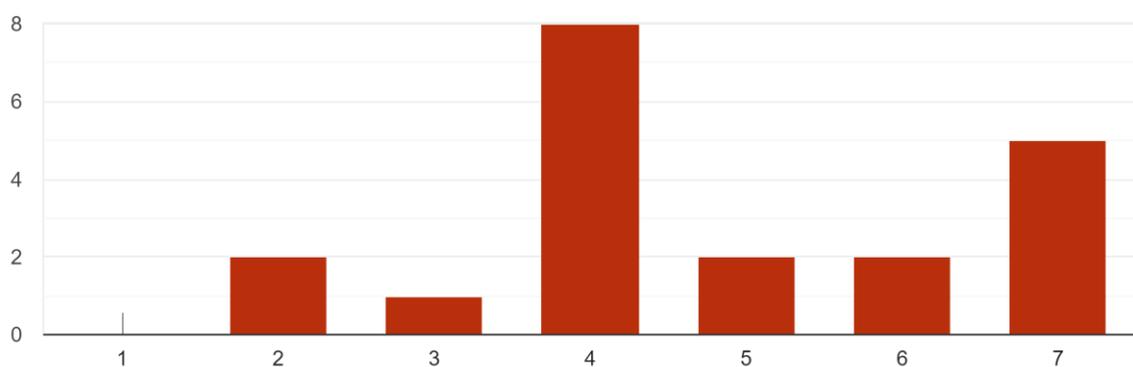
*“While it does appear that the point of the shoes is to remind that we are in the future and that the character likes nostalgia and wishes for a less technology age, it does hurt a little that they are referenced several times. The references seem a little forced.”*

Three respondents clarified their positive views towards the placement by saying that the product looks like something the protagonist would wear.



*Figure 12. Distractiveness of a product placement - I, Robot*

Figure 12 indicates that most people found the placement undistracting. However, based on the answers from the previous question, some clearly found it distracting based on its prominence in a scene.



*Figure 13. Brand image's fittingness to the scene - I, Robot*

People mostly thought that the brand image of Converse fit the scene's context with an average of 4,4 as shown in the figure 13. One person argued that the scene was done as a way to create a light-hearted atmosphere with a positive tone and the main

character was seen in a such way as well. The shoes were therefore seen as a fitting addition to help to create this image.

One answer also mentioned that it fit the character. This could mean various things, but as the aim of the scene could be guessed to be the creation of a youthful and nostalgic view on the character, the brand could be a fitting one to these attributes. Another respondent viewed Converse shoes as an ageless brand and therefore fitting to this scene. He or she could have referred to the fact the scene is clearly happening in the future and Converse fits to that era as well.

#### **6.1.6 *Transformers 4 (2014) and Bud Light***

Transformers 4 is a science fiction action film premiered in 2014. In the clip the protagonist crashes with an alien spacecraft with a car causing a traffic accident where a truck full of Bud Light spreads on a road. There is an argument between two characters. Simultaneously, a close up camera shots are shown targeting the Bud Light bottles. Finally, at the closing stages of the argument the protagonist takes a sip from one of these bottles and throws it away afterwards. The clip was selected due to its highly prominent product placement and the potential distractiveness of this placement.

17 out of 20 answerers noticed the placement in the scene. This scene was among the most prominent ones along with Google and Converse. However, the cinematographic choices in a scene are clearly emphasizing the product. This could be the reason behind the variable results regarding the placement's viewed fittingness to the scene as 7 answers said that it did fit the scene, 7 said that it did not and 5 were not sure. The same contingency continued with the figure 14 representing the placement's distractiveness. With an average of 4,4 it was viewed mostly undistracting. However, the open questions clearly indicate that people did not like it. 10 people disliked it and mostly questioned its over-the-top prominence in a scene. It was seen as irrelevant and unnecessary and one respondent felt that showing the product would have been okay but using the product by drinking the beer, put too much focus on it.

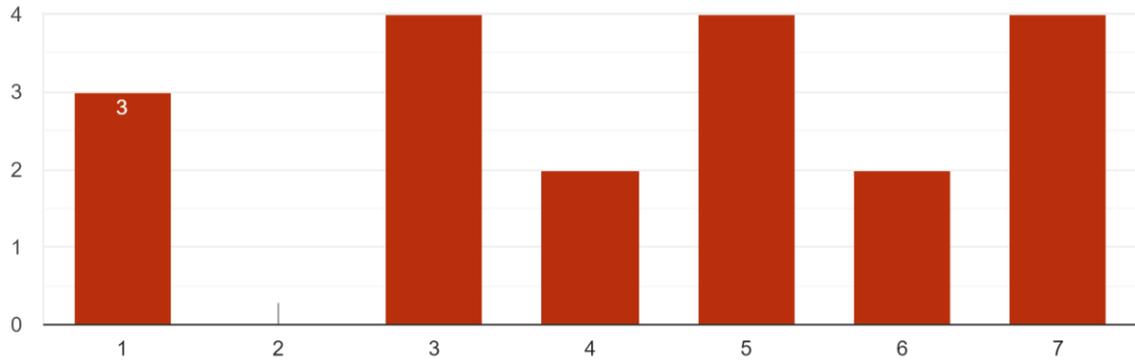


Figure 14. Distractiveness of a product placement - Transformers 4

Two respondents however mentioned that the placement did not take over the whole scene and was not overly done.

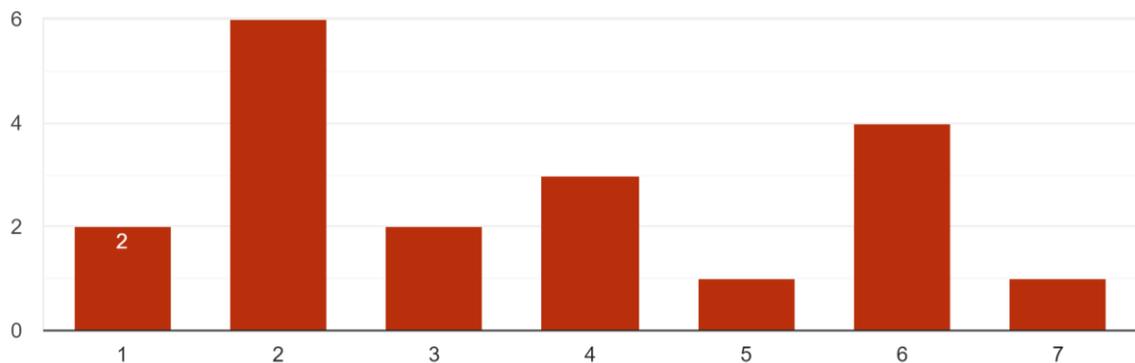


Figure 15. Brand image's fittingness to the scene - Transformers 4

Bud Light scored the worst brand fittingness to the scene with an average rating of 3,6. Only two persons knew how to reason their thinking regarding the brand image question. The first one said that the brand did not fit this kind of film. This answer is however left unclear as this person viewed action, sci-fi and family genres suifigure for placements in the following questions in the survey. These genres represent Transformers 4. Another respondent reasons the brand image question by saing that:

*“Budlight as a brand didn't really fit the scene and felt kind of separate from the plot itself.”*

The low average score could be the result of Bud Light's low brand awareness among Finnish people as it is not widely sold in Finland. The cultural indifference could therefore be an influencing factor here as suggested by Gould et al. (1997). Another potential reason could be that a beer brand is placed in a film that is mainly targeted for youngsters. However, the question about genres in this survey does not provide evidences to support this claim.

### **6.1.7 Additional analysis on film clips**

Although there were some individual anomalies about the relationship between the distractiveness of a placement and the fittingness (positive congruency) of a brand image of a placement, in overall those two seem to have an influence on one another. The average distractiveness of the placements in the presented clips was almost on pair with the viewed fittingness or congruence of the placement's brand image to the scene as can be seen in the table 1. The cases with World War Z and Transformers 4 indicate that if the product placements are viewed distracting, it increases the volatility of the viewers perceptions towards the experienced brand image congruence. The specifics of this effectiveness are however left unclear. The formerly mentioned influence occurrence is supported by the research result mentioned earlier by Reijmersdal et al. (2007, 415) that says how a brand image of product placements on television programs change towards the image of the program itself.

*Table 1. Average distractiveness and congruence/fittingness per film clip*

	<b>Distractiveness</b>	<b>Brand image congruence</b>
<b><i>Iron Man</i></b>	5,7	5,7
<b><i>The Internship</i></b>	5,9	5,5
<b><i>World War Z</i></b>	4,6	3,7
<b><i>Fight Club</i></b>	5,0	5,2
<b><i>I, Robot</i></b>	4,7	4,8
<b><i>Transformers</i></b>	4,4	3,6

Compared to the congruent relationship between the distractiveness and congruence indicators in the survey, there was no significant similarities between the perceived overall fittingness of the placement and the perceived brand image congruence. The open questions implied about the incompetence of an average consumers to analyze the brand image of a product placement, a result which was already indicated by Chang et al. (2014, 544).

## **6.2 Consumer attitudes towards product placements**

Consumers were asked how they like product placements in general and why they view them the way they do. 18 out of 20 respondents viewed product placement with a neutral mindset as only one viewed them mostly positive and one mostly negative. Six people reasoned their thinking by sympathizing the companies by mentioning that they understand why they are made and that companies must earn money. Four respondents said that they don't usually mind if they are not overly empathized in a scene and the other two mentioned that if one does not pay an extra attention to them, they remain unnoticed and therefore appropriate to use. The focus here is on the prominence of the placement. Additionally, five out of 16 people who reasoned their opinion, talked about how product placements support the narrative of the film and make the film seem more real.

*“It can fit to the plot and be a part of character storytelling. In a way, the brand main character or a character consumes, tells about the character.”*

Respondents said that placements make the narrative more vivid and increase its authenticity by connecting the film with real-life items. Product placements were also seen as a mean to shed light to unclear elements in a scene as one respondent mentioned how one does not need to guess what the protagonist is drinking or wearing if the brand is visible.

The next question asked about the things that make consumers like or dislike a product placement. Seven answers stated that the prominence of the placement is the most influential factor that make a consumer like or dislike the placement. Respondents

mentioned that if a placement “breaks the immersion”, pops out too much, is too obvious or distracting, consumers dislike it. Six respondents mentioned that what makes them like the placement is mostly its fittingness to the context, the scene or the character.

Two respondents mentioned that placements can be funny, but the quantity of the placement can ruin the film experience. With a high quantity of placements consumers may feel like they are watching a commercial which in turn breaks the mentioned immersion process. In addition to quantity, the duration of product placements was mentioned twice. If a placement is shown for too long or too excessively and happens too many times, negative emotions will arise.

One person noted that if she or he dislikes the brand outside the film context, this effect can transfer into the product placement as well. Another consumer found it negative that noticeable placements make you realize that you have been influenced by something that would probably influence your buying behaviour outside the film experience. This answer could derive from the idea that a thirdparty influencer with a commercial agenda has been noticed to disrupt your efforts to enjoy the film with their commercial agenda, which in turn evokes negative emotions towards the scene.

When asked whether product placement have affected consumers’ film experience, the majority, 8 out of 14, answered no and four answered yes. Those who answered negatively mentioned how there is no effect even if they are noticeable as mostly, they still allow to concentrate on the film instead of the placed product. Most of the those who said no could not reason their answer. This result could support the thinking previously mentioned by d’Astous and Séguin (1999, 906) who speculated that the influential weight of the brand image was not strong enough to effect consumer reactions. Those who answered yes to the question complained that in obvious product placement cases the distractiveness has interrupted the film experience. One of the respondents said the high quantity and high prominence of the placement make the scene feel like it is written just to promote the products. Another respondent said the same and mentioned the film *Man of Steel* which contains a scene with lots of product placements in a short period of time, which ultimately made the film feel like an expensive commercial. d’Astous and Séguin (1999) mentioned how consumer tend to prefer

explicit placement to implicit ones and one of the consumers who answered “yes”, mentioned:

*“Numerous product placements have left me feeling underappreciated by the filmmakers.”*

This answer supports the idea that consumers don’t want to be underestimated with their ability to notice placements, a result mentioned by d’Astous and Séguin (1999). It could also imply that consumers prefer placements that are done primarily with the film experience in mind instead of commercial reasons.

### **6.3 Consumer attitudes and preferences towards brand image**

Next question asked whether a brand image is an important factor behind a consumption decision or not. All 17 who answered the question said that a brand image influences their buying behavior. Three respondents mentioned how certain type of brand images equals good quality and another answered how a good brand image increases the trust that a product itself is good as well. Brand images that stand for something and stick to their values are also appreciated by one of the respondents. Well known brands are also preferred by one of the respondents as they result in a good feeling about oneself. 3 out of 17 answers stated how brands with a negative brand images are not worth consuming. Most of the answers circle around the idea of fitting the brand to consumer’s self identity. One respondent said that by using a specific brand he or she feels like a part of a team he or she wants to belong in. This refers to a concept of brand community and belonging into one. Another respondent said directly that certain brand images build his or her own identity and another stated:

*“Yes, I identify myself with the brands I use. Also, some brands I’m very loyal to due to eg. quality.”*

Respondents felt that the perceived brand image is related to their behavior. This result gives further validity for the answers regarding brand images in a film context. Another

result could have decreased the reliability and validity if the respondents would not have been influenced by brand images in general.

The next question asked more specifically about the brand image elements that are viewed as important by the consumers. The seven elements are listed in the table 2. and are derived from the theoretical chapters about brand image. Consumers were asked to rate these elements from “not important” to “very important” in a five-step scale. When put into a numerical form, “not important” would represent the rating of 1 and “very important” the rating 5.

*Table 2. The importance of brand image elements*

	Product related physical characteristic	Product related non-physical attributes	Attitudes towards a brand	Symbolic benefits	The feeling it brings to use it	Brand imagery created by brand advertising	Brand story
<i>Very important</i>	1	4	3	0	5	0	5
<i>Important</i>	10	5	4	6	9	2	5
<i>Quite important</i>	6	7	8	7	5	10	6
<i>Not that important</i>	3	3	4	7	1	8	4
<i>Not important</i>	0	1	0	0	0	0	0

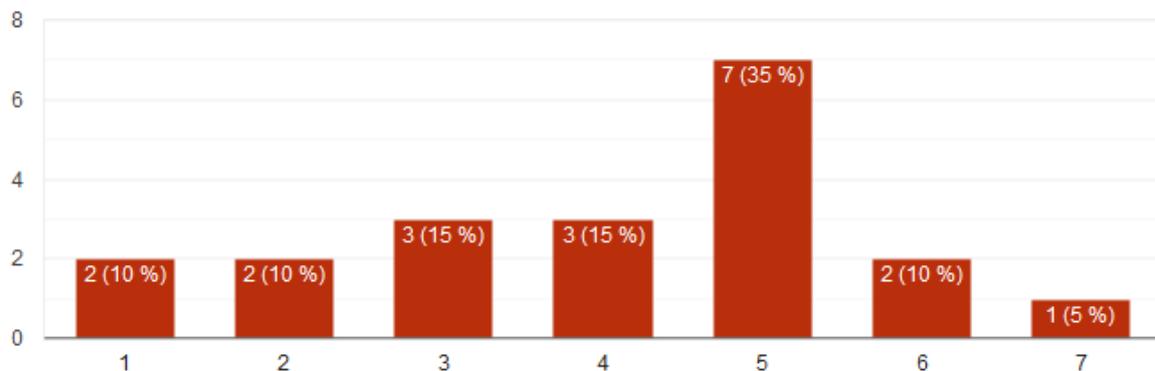
When examining the average scores of the brand image elements on a scale between 1 and 5. table 3 indicates how the feeling of using the brand was the most important brand image element while brand imagery created by brand advertising was seen as the least important along with the symbolic benefits like social approval, personal expression and benefits to self-esteem. The more traditional elements like product related physical and non-physical attributes were seen quite important or important representing the attributes like quality and prize of a brand. However, the more interesting result for this study was the perceived importance of attitudes towards a brand and

especially a brand story with 5 consumers placing it as “very important” and another 5 “important”. As consumers are influenced by stories, which are essential in a film context, those serve as an important source for brand image value creation.

*Table 3. Brand image element importance by average on a scale between 1 and 5*

	Product related physical characteristic	Product related non-physical attributes	Attitudes towards a brand	Symbolic benefits	The feeling it brings to use it	Brand imagery created by brand advertising	Brand story
<i>Average rating</i>	3,45	3,40	3,35	2,95	<b>3,90</b>	2,70	3,55

In addition, it is worth noting that every element leaned towards being at least “quite important”, which suggests that brand image’s importance is created through a cluster of different associations.



*Figure 16. The importance of a brand image of a product placement*

The next question asked about brand images but in a film context. Consumers were asked how important a brand image of a product placement is if a consumer notices a brand in a film scene. Figure 16 indicates that 10 out of 20 respondents thought that brand images are mostly important with a rating between 5 and 7, the rating of 5 being the most answered one with 7 votes. With an average rating of 4,05 consumers who took the survey find product placements’ brand images quite important.

## 6.4 The importance of congruence between a brand image and a film scene

The following question asked about the importance of the factors that impact the importance of a brand image in a film. These factors were presented to be the prominence of a placement, the duration of a placement, the congruence with a scene and the congruence with a character as seen in the figure 17. 18 out of 20 respondents found the congruence with a scene the most important factor, followed by the congruence with a character. Only half of the respondents thought that the prominence and the duration of a product placement is an important factor when assessing the brand image. As most of the studies highlight especially the importance of the prominence of a placement when talking about creating brand awareness, brand recognition and brand remembrance, the congruence of a placement seem to be the most important factor as consumers assess brand images in films.

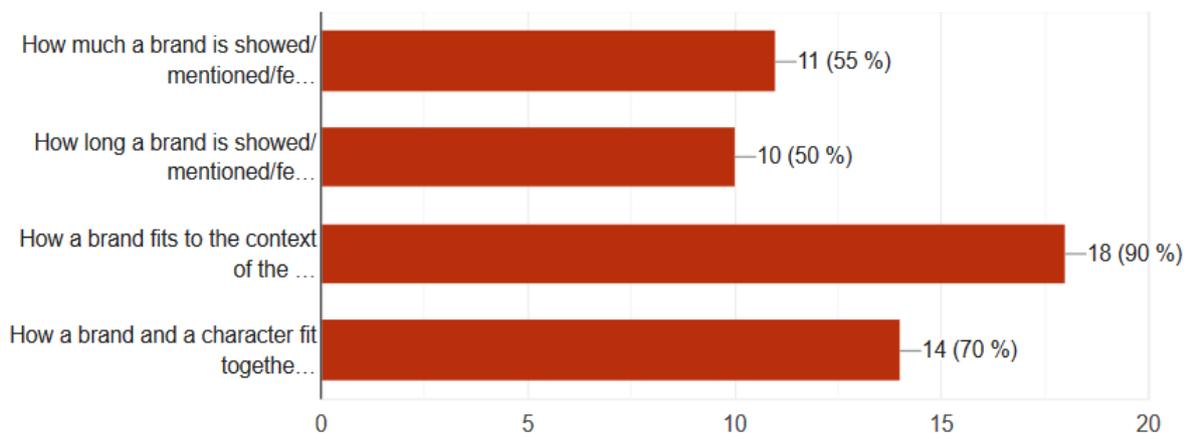


Figure 17. Factors impacting the importance of the brand image in a film

Previously researched film clips showed and confirmed how consumers appreciate and notice the congruency between a product placement's brand image and a scene as well as a character. With every film presented, every argument from the consumers to support brand image's fittingness to the scene were based on how well those placements fit the character and the overall setting of the scene.

## 6.5 Product placements in different genres

In the product placement literature different genres had not been largely studied as mentioned in the theoretical part of this study. Sung and de Gregorio (2008, 95) found comedies the most appropriate genre for brand placements, followed by action, drama, romance, adventure and crime. The most inappropriate genres were mentioned to be animation, science fiction, political and historical films. Garza (2003) however said that the comedies don't have any advantage over other genres. To found clarity to this debate, the respondents of this survey voted shared their opinion on the matter.

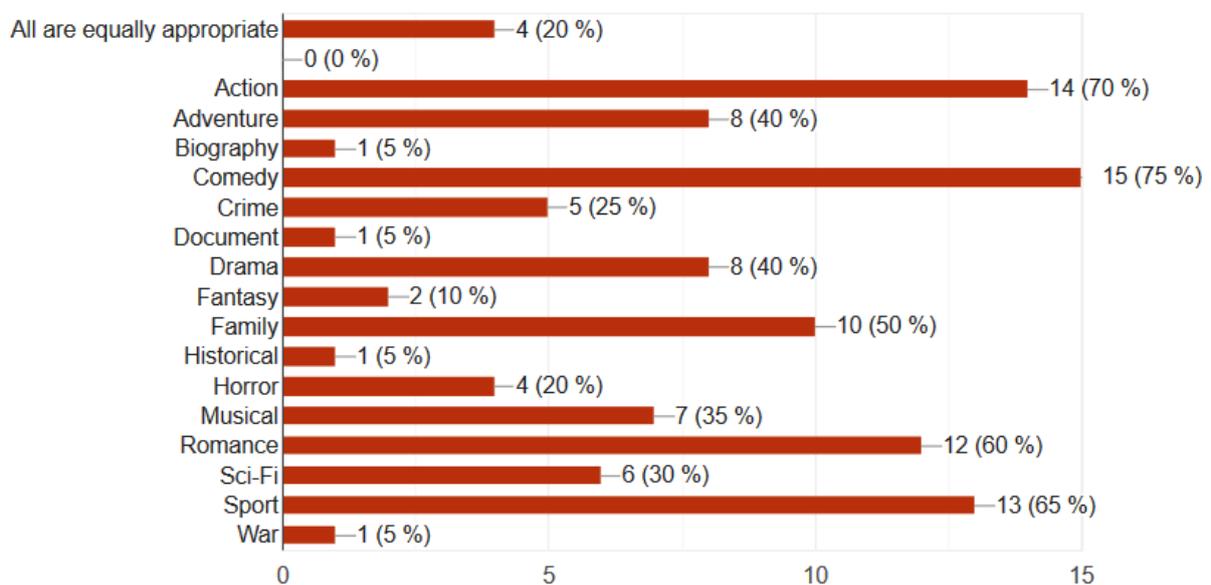


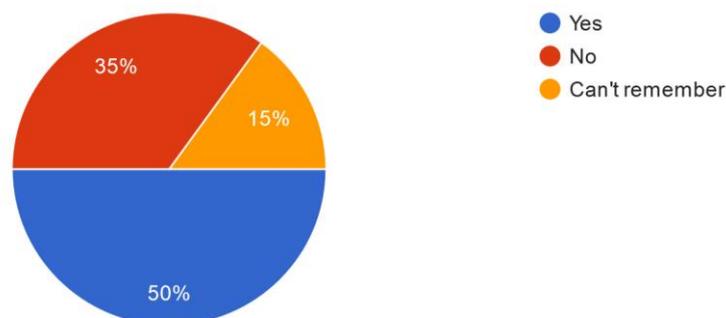
Figure 18. Product placement appropriateness per genre

Figure 18 shows how consumers indeed view comedies the most appropriate genre for product placements followed by action, sport, romance, family, adventure and drama. Like Sung and de Gregario (2008) the reasons behind these results were not asked as the genre specific perspective is outside of the scope of this study. Most of the top voted genres however share one trait together as they are genres that mostly happen in a fictional setting which tries to mimic the real life. These settings therefore are ideal to place real life properties into them in a form of product placements. These genres are also viewed appropriate for a commercial content which makes the family genre a surprising selection with 50% of votes. More subtle genres like historical, biography, war and documents were seen the least appropriate for product placements.

The film clips used in this study and the results based on them mainly support these genre related results. Iron Man (2008) as superhero action film fits the results with positive product placement assessments based on the perceived distractiveness score in the table 1. Fight Club (1999) and The Internship (2013) also support these findings with their scores as a drama and a comedy film. I, Robot (2004), World War Z (2013) and Transformers 4 (2014) in turn scored lower rating in the table 1 as well as in the figure 18 thus supporting these genre specific findings. However, the influence and the weight of a genre on the perceived distractiveness in these film clips require further research.

## 6.6 Product placements and word-of-mouth

Word-of-mouth is essential for films nowadays. In the era where film rating and reviews are immediately available even before the film premiere, the impressions of the view are for all to see. Therefore, as product placements become increasingly used in films and television programs, those kinds of smaller sub-particles that influence consumers affection towards the editorial content, also become increasingly important. When there is a lot to choose from, the consumption decisions can be made based on the smallest of details.



*Figure 19. Word-of-mouth about product placements after seeing a film*

Figure 19 shows how 10 out of 20 respondents mentioned talking about product placements after seeing a film. 7 out of 20 answered “no” and three respondents could not remember if they had or had not shared any thoughts on product placements after a film. This result indicates how consumers are influenced by product placement to the

extent that they first remember them after a film experience and second share their opinions forward. The influence of word-of-mouth that derives from either seamlessly or poorly made product placements is an interesting topic for future studies.

## **7 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION**

This master's thesis study researched the congruence of a brand image and a film scene from the perspective of product placements to discover their influence on consumer attitudes and emotions. The current product placement literature focuses primarily on the prominence of these placements and lacks significantly when taking the perspective of brand images into account. This research gap was aimed to fulfill through answering the research questions of this study.

In this chapter the main research question will be discussed after first responding the sub-questions. Sub-questions are addressed first as their results serve as a foundation for ultimately answering the main research question. All the questions are placed in their own sub-chapters in which they are answered by going through the empirical findings of this study and comparing them to the existing literature presented in the theoretical chapters. After answering the questions, theoretical contributions, practical implications and research limitations with future research suggestions will be discussed in their own sub-chapters.

### **7.1 Which brand image elements appear important for a consumer?**

Consumers gain value from brand images through the elements they view important. In addition to these elements that serve as a foundation for the brand image, especially emotional value can be created through more common attributes that can be associated with the brand image. The brand image theory chapter proposed that a brand image is formed through its attributes, benefits, attitudes, advertising, engagement and storytelling.

According to the conducted empirical survey consumers viewed all these elements at least quite important but especially experimental benefits, both product related physical and non-physical attributes, brand story and attitudes towards a brand stood out. Out of these elements, especially brand story, experimental benefits and attitudes towards a brand influence directly the emotional value a consumer is experiencing. As brand

attributes represented more functional benefits according to Keller (1993, 4), those could be seen targeting more specifically more rational values.

Hollenssen (2018, 418) mentioned that brand stories tell what brands ultimately stand for and thus representing a part of the emotional side of the brand. Empirical study of this thesis supports this fact as brand stories were found important when making consumption decisions. Symbolic benefits that Keller (1993, 4) proposed to be a part of brand images was also confirmed to be a prominent factor as it was mentioned in the empirical survey that brand images that represent something like certain values and the level of quality are also viewed as important by the consumers. In addition, emotional value is also created through brand image's ability to strengthen consumer's own identity which could also be seen as a part of symbolic benefits. However, the consumers who provided the empirical data for this survey could not identify symbolic benefits as it is as an important factor for them. This result could derive from the theoretical nature of the term compared to other brand image elements.

All in all, the most important brand image elements supported both by the theoretical part of this study as well as the empirical part were found to be the experimental benefits, product related physical and non-physical attributes and brand story. Both theoretical and empirical parts however also confirmed that the perceived importance of a brand image in consumer's mind is ultimately formed through a cluster of meaningful factors.

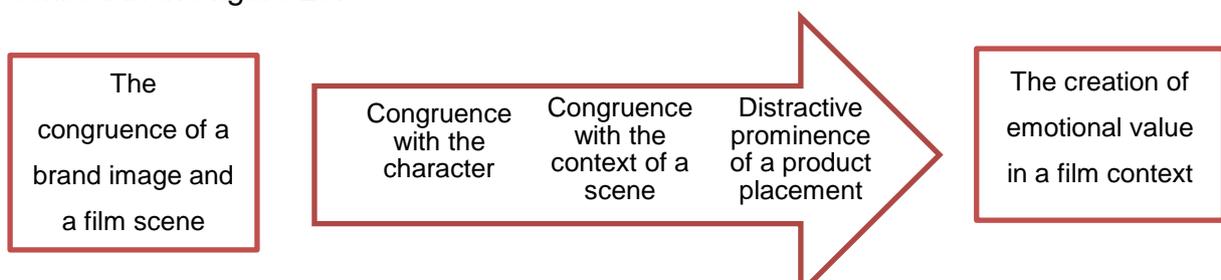
## **7.2 How product placements effect on consumer emotions in the film context?**

In general, product placements were viewed with a neutral mindset in this study. The respondents mentioned how they sympathize the companies and thus approving adding promotional content in films. Product placements also did not affect consumers' attitudes if they were viewed to have done in a subtle way. Consumers felt positively about product placement's ability to add realism to the scene and make the narrative more vivid by combining a real-life product in a fictional world. This result is supported by Balasubramanian et al. (2006, 115) who stated how brands help to set film's time

period or give a more detailed image about the characters. Consumers were also highly influenced by the prominence of presented product placements in the study, as supported by Russel (2002) who found that the prominence of these placements play a prominent role in effecting consumers' attitudes towards them. Highly prominent and incongruent placements were mentioned to make the film feel like a commercial thus resulting in negative evaluations. In addition to the prominence, the quantity and the duration of product placements were found to have an effect on consumer attitudes as well. Too many and too excessively featured placements broke the immersion a consumer had towards a film thus also resulting in a negative mindset. It was also found that consumers viewed it negatively if their ability to notice commercial content is felt to be tested and therefore explicit placement were found to be referable to implicit ones, a result shared by d'Astous and Séguin (1999).

### 7.3 How the congruence of a brand image and a film scene influences the creation of an emotional value for a consumer?

The main research question was at least partly answered in this study. However, the main result was to find evidence that a brand image of a product placements and its congruence with a film in fact does influence consumer attitudes thus emotional values they receive from films. This result was previously questioned by d'Astous and Séguin (1999) and all in all neglected as a research perspective in the literature. This study provide evidence that the congruence between a brand image of a product placement and a film scene influences the creation of an emotional value for a consumer through its fittingness with the character and the overall setting of the scene as well as through the perceived distractiveness of a product placement. This influential process is described in the figure 20.



*Figure 20. The main researched concept and its influential drivers towards the main research question*

50% of the respondents viewed product placements' brand images as mostly important factor in a film context. On a scale between 1 and 7, the average score of 4,05 clearly indicates that brand images are an essential subinfluencer in the consumer evaluation process regarding product placements. 90% of the respondents felt that the important role of brand images in films is created through the congruence between the context of the scene and a brand. In turn 70% of the respondent felt that the congruence between a character and a brand image increases the importance of a brand image itself in films. This result supports the study by Verhellen, Dens, and De Pelsmacker (2016) that stated how the congruence between a film plot and a product placement in general creates positive brand attitude by giving a placement more meaningful role. However, this study explains further the factors that influence those positive attitudes that provide emotional value for a consumer by suggesting brand images as influencing subfactors.

The concept of distractiveness can be closely associated to the concept of prominence as distractiveness is a form of prominence. As in the subchapter 6.1.7 was mentioned, the distractiveness of a product placement had a seemingly influential relationship with the perceived fittingness of a brand image of that product placement. These distracting product placements that break the immersive film experience for a consumer, seem to be viewed as equally incongruent. Brand image wise congruent placements therefore were found undistracting among consumers which is in pair with the study previously mentioned by Mandler (1982) that explained that the reason incongruency creates more recalls because it creates extremity in evaluation which causes increased arousal and cognitive activity, which in turn in the film context could be argued to create distractiveness.

#### **7.4 Theoretical contributions**

This study provided depth to the product placement literature from the perspective of brand images. The concept of congruency was also studied through a new angle with brand images as it was previously considered while studying the congruency between a product placement and the film plot (Russel 2002). The greatest gap in the current product placement and brand image literature was the lack of research on the effectiveness of a product placement brand image on consumer attitudes, film experience

or other outcomes. The current literature also had mixed views on the influence of the researched matter, to which this study added its contribution. Another great gap in the current literature was the lack of research that was made with the filmmakers or film viewing experience purely in mind. In general, the topic had been researched from the brand owners' perspective with an aim to find factors that influence the brand's value in some areas like brand awareness or brand recall. At the same time, the film context had been taken mostly as a constant variable.

In addition to adding new perspective and knowledge to the current literature, this study also confirmed some results the current literature had resulted in, which was valuable as some aspects in the product placement literature lacked wider validity. Chang et al. (2014, 544) noted that consumers find it difficult to explain their emotions regarding films clips as the emotions can be so complex that self-assessing can be impossible. This was found to be true also in this study as consumers largely relied on visual cues that circled around the concept of prominence, when reviewing film clips, as they were supposed to focus on more in-depth emotional analysis on brand images. This was the case even if respondents viewed brand image as an influential factor in product placements. The prominence is the most common topic in the product placement literature and the theoretical part of this study relied also heavily on that literature due to lack of literature on product placements' brand images and overall effect of the concept of congruence in a film context. The empirical part of this study confirmed the highly valued status the prominence of product placement has among consumers, as they review product placements mainly through that concept, but also that consumers review product placements' brand images partly through prominence, as found out in the chapter 7.3.

In addition, the distractiveness of product placements had not been previously studied the way it was done in this study, and the influential relationship it had with the perceived congruence of a product placement's brand image offered a new understanding on the matter. The congruence as a phenomenon influenced on the success of a product placement, as even if a distracting or negatively viewed congruence increased brand recall (Sung & de Gregorio 2008) and other brand related factors from the brand owner's perspective, it worsened consumer's film experience, which logically reflects poorly on the filmmakers.

A genre specific product placement literature that was left outside the scope of this study also gained new insight from this study, nevertheless. Different researchers had provided mixed results for the appropriateness of certain genres for product placements and this study both added support to some and contradicted some. Contradicting a study by Park and Berger (2008), an animation genre, that is for the same target audience than a family genre in this study, was found appropriate but supporting results were found regarding the drama, comedy, action, adventure and romance genres as with an addition of a sport genre as they were all viewed appropriate. The suggestion by Garza (2003) that stated how comedies don't have a special status among genres for product placements, was found to be incorrect in this study as the comedy genre was viewed the most appropriate one. However, these results indicate that further research should be made on that matter.

The concept of word-of-mouth was also left outside the scope of this study, but for further studies, this study provided some results to build on. As in the chapter 6.6 was explained, the concept of word-of-mouth has turned into increasingly important factor behind the commercial success of a film and as the competition continues to increase, smaller and smaller subfactors begin to influence the success or the failure of a film. This in mind, the results of this study that indicate how consumers tend to discuss about product placements after a film viewing experience, should assert future researchers to study the actual effect this kind of word-of-mouth has on consumers and films.

## **7.5 Practical implications**

This study offers practical implications regarding the implementation of product placements in films. Five major implications and suggestions are mentioned here focusing on the prominence of product placement, film genres, brand stories, word-of-mouth and the overall usage of product placements.

Firstly, instead of purely focusing on that aspect, to present the practical use of the product as a product placement, this study clearly indicates that more focus should be made towards the feeling itself it brings to use the product. As a brand story was found

to be a valuable part of the brand image and directly comparable to the functional attributes of a brand, this could be taken into account while planning the product placement as well. Brand stories could be a part of a narrative or emphasized in another matter.

Secondly, the study provided additional information on which genres are most appropriate for product placements among Finnish consumers. In order to be able to choose the most productive option for marketing actions, marketers should prefer placing their products into comedy, action, sport and romance genres primarily while considering also adventure, drama, family and musical genres as well. In turn, biography, document, historical and war films should be avoided product placement wise while also minimizing the presence in crime and horror films. As filmmakers, the implementation of placements with these types of genres should be kept in mind, as they could significantly influence the viewing experience and credibility as a filmmaker.

Thirdly, filmmakers should also consider using placements in order to directly improve the viewing experience. As the study and the presented theory confirmed, product placements do not only mean negative effects for film viewing experience as they were found to set a certain mood to the scene, add the feeling of realism as well as detailed information to a film scene. Product placements can therefore function also as cinematographic instruments for better film experience.

Fourthly, film makers can not take product placements for granted and assume that consumers accept them automatically. As this study found out and confirmed, highly congruent placements especially due to their congruent brand image with the character and the setting of the scene, are preferred among consumers and don't create distractiveness. This all should be made with word-of-mouth in mind as it was also confirmed that product placements stay on consumers' minds after the viewing experience to the extent that consumers tend to discuss about those placements afterwards. This word-of-mouth can take a form of either type of valence, positive or negative, depending on the quality of a placement implementation.

Fifthly, in Finland product placements have not traditionally enjoyed a great presence in films. The law concerning product placements is quite strict in Finland but the attitudes are changing to a more accepting direction when some regulations have already been removed (Markkinointi & Mainonta 2010) This was also supported by this study as

most of the respondents felt that product placements themselves have not distracted their film experience and in overall felt neutrally towards them. This in mind, as the Finnish law allows product placements in films if they are not too prominent, a more subtle way of implementation would offer a marketing platform that has not been used and worn out for Finnish companies.

## **7.6 Limitations and future research**

This study was conducted as an exploratory research. It managed to explain some theoretical gaps within product placement literature, but the findings do have their limitations. These limitations are discussed next, followed by some recommendations to future research.

In this study product placements were only studied empirically and mostly theoretically in a film context. As TV programs are also widely researched in the product placement literature, this addition could have presented additional depth for this study. However, the decision to exclude it was made since the existence of promotional content in those contexts vary between each other as TV programs could be seen as a more appropriate platform.

Another limitation was the incapability to use ECG equipments or other biometrical tool in the empirical part of this study. As the respondents were not experts in the fields of films or brand image, it was found difficult for them to answer complex emotion driven questions. As an example, most consumers who took the survey mentioned how product placements had not influenced their film experiences in the past. Therefore, even if these consumers viewed the brand image of a product placement as an important factor, the actual influence it has on film experience, is not necessarily a significant one in a larger scale, thus reducing the validity of this result. This could also mean that some of the answers regarding brand image's efficiency were hypothetical, as the actual experience of the product placement's brand image's influence on consumer emotional values was barely witnessed.

For future research, even if this study provided added information to product placement literature regarding genre specific view and word-of-mouth deriving from the use of product placement, much further researches must be conducted in order to draw comprehensive conclusions about their influence on consumers. Additionally, the more practical effects of this study serve as a future research topic. The major conclusion of this study was that the brand image of a product placement had in fact an impact on consumer attitudes. However, the practical targets to which this impact and influence reaches to, was left outside the scope of this study and provides an interesting angle for future research. One possible direction would be how does that influence on box office revenues or consumer ratings on film rating sites.

## **7.7 General conclusion**

Why does it feel strange that James Bond drinks beer instead of a martini? Shaken, not stirred. The brand images in films was mentioned to be noticeable only with extreme cases like with 007. This study however provided evidence that brand images and their congruity with a film influence consumer attitudes and the creation of emotional value more often than commonly recognized. The main research question asked: *“How the congruence of a brand image and a film scene influences the creation of an emotional value for a consumer?”* This was answered through the elements through which this influence takes place. These three main elements were concluded to be the fittingness with the character and the overall setting of the scene as well as the perceived distractiveness of a product placement. As a more general significant finding of this study, the importance of a product placement’s brand image received convincing evidences as this was previously left to uncertainty in the product placement literature.

As this study provided evidences that there is in fact an important relationship between a brand image, product placement, the congruence between these two and a film context, future researchers should embark on a mission to explore the influence these elements have in practice, outside the film theatre.

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## Appendix 1. Conducted online survey as screenshots

### Master's thesis survey

BEFORE ANSWERING, PLEASE NOTICE THAT YOU HAVE TO BE FINNISH AND BETWEEN 20-30 YEARS OLD

This survey consists of two parts. The first part consists of 5 film clips with 6 questions each and the second part consists of different questions regarding product placements and brand image.

Two definitions are provided to help you answer the questions.

This survey provides empirical evidence for my Master's thesis - Thank you already for answering - Kiitos!

**"Brand image" can be defined as the way consumers see the brand. Brand image indicates the perceptions a consumer has towards the brand.**

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Following questions contain the concept of brand image

**"Product placement" is a way to bring an actual real-life product or brand into a film. Companies use product placements to demonstrate products and their use.**

---

Following questions contain the concept of product placement

1. **What is your mood right now?**

*Merkitse vain yksi soikio.*

- Positive
- Negative
- Neutral

**Watch the following clips and answer the questions below**

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**Iron Man (2008)**



<http://youtube.com/watch?v=X3RbihXnfMU>

**2. Did you notice the placement?***Merkitse vain yksi soikio.*

- Yes  
 No

**3. Did it fit to the scene?***Merkitse vain yksi soikio.*

- Yes  
 No  
 Not sure

**4. Can you reason your previous response?**


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**5. To what extent did the placement distract your viewing experience?***Merkitse vain yksi soikio.*

1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
Very distracting	<input type="radio"/>	Not distracting at all						

**6. To what extent did you feel that the brand image of the scene's brand fits to the scene? (scene's character/mood/overall context?)***Merkitse vain yksi soikio.*

1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
It did not fit at all	<input type="radio"/>	It fit seamlessly						

**7. Can you reason your previous answer?**


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**The Internship (2013)**



<http://youtube.com/watch?v=PQe7QkP8V3I>

**8. Did you notice the placement?**

*Merkitse vain yksi soikio.*

- Yes  
 No

**9. Did it fit to the scene?**

*Merkitse vain yksi soikio.*

- Yes  
 No  
 Not sure

**10. Can you reason your previous response?**

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**11. To what extent did the placement distract your viewing experience?**

*Merkitse vain yksi soikio.*

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Very distracting	<input type="radio"/>	Not distracting at all					

**12. To what extent did you feel that the brand image of the scene's brand fits to the scene? (scene's character/mood/overall context?)**

*Merkitse vain yksi soikio.*

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
It did not fit at all	<input type="radio"/>	It fit seamlessly					



18. To what extent did you feel that the brand image of the scene's brand fits to the scene?  
(scene's character/mood/overall context?)

*Merkitse vain yksi soikio.*

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
It did not fit at all	<input type="radio"/>	It fit seamlessly						

19. Can you reason your previous answer?

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### Fight Club (1999)



<http://youtube.com/watch?v=C0xBX4xF3rs>

20. Did you notice the placement?

*Merkitse vain yksi soikio.*

- Yes  
 No

21. Did it fit to the scene?

*Merkitse vain yksi soikio.*

- Yes  
 No  
 Not sure

22. Can you reason your previous response?

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23. To what extent did the placement distract your viewing experience?

*Merkitse vain yksi soikio.*

1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
Very distracting	<input type="radio"/>	Not distracting at all						

24. To what extent did you feel that the brand image of the scene's brand fits to the scene? (scene's character/mood/overall context?)

*Merkitse vain yksi soikio.*

1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
It did not fit at all	<input type="radio"/>	It fit seamlessly						

25. Can you reason your previous answer?

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## I, Robot (2004)



<http://youtube.com/watch?v=3HplZrOH4zc>

26. Did you notice the placement?

*Merkitse vain yksi soikio.*

- Yes
- No

27. Did it fit to the scene?

*Merkitse vain yksi soikio.*

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

28. Can you reason your previous response?

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29. To what extent did the placement distract your viewing experience?

*Merkitse vain yksi soikio.*

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Very distracting	<input type="radio"/>	Not distracting at all					

30. To what extent did you feel that the brand image of the scene's brand fits to the scene? (scene's character/mood/overall context?)

*Merkitse vain yksi soikio.*

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
It did not fit at all	<input type="radio"/>	It fit seamlessly					

31. Can you reason your previous answer?

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## Transformers 4 (2014)



<http://youtube.com/watch?v=kAe8OU29E3s>

32. Did you notice the placement?

*Merkitse vain yksi soikio.*

- Yes
- No

## 33. Did it fit to the scene?

*Merkitse vain yksi soikio.*

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

## 34. Can you reason your previous response?

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## 35. To what extent did the placement distract your viewing experience?

*Merkitse vain yksi soikio.*

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Very distracting	<input type="radio"/>	Not distracting at all					

## 36. To what extent did you feel that the brand image of the scene's brand fits to the scene? (scene's character/mood/overall context?)

*Merkitse vain yksi soikio.*

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
It did not fit at all	<input type="radio"/>	It fit seamlessly					

## 37. Can you reason your previous answer?

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**Please answer the following questions**

**"Brand image" can be defined as the way consumers see the brand. It tells about the perceptions a consumer has towards it.**

---

Following questions contain the concept of brand image

**"Product placement" is a way to bring an actual real-life product or brand into a film. Companies use product placements to demonstrate products and their use.**

---

Following questions contain the concept of product placement

**38. How do you like product placements in general?**

*Merkitse vain yksi soikio.*

- Positive
- Negative
- Neutral

**39. Why you view product placements the way you view them?**

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**40. What are the things that make you like or dislike the placement?**

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**41. Has a product placement affected your film experience? If yes, how?**

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**42. When consuming a product or service, do you see brand image as an important factor behind the consumption decision? Whether yes or no, can you reason your answer?**

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**43. How important these brand image elements are to you?**

*Merkitse vain yksi soikio riviä kohden.*

	Not important	Not that important	Quite important	Important	Very important
Product related physical characteristics	<input type="radio"/>				
Product related non-physical attributes like prize	<input type="radio"/>				
Attitudes towards a brand	<input type="radio"/>				
Symbolic benefits (like social approval, personal expression and benefits to self-esteem)	<input type="radio"/>				
The feeling it brings to use it	<input type="radio"/>				
Brand imagery created by brand advertising	<input type="radio"/>				
Brand story (what brands ultimately stand for)	<input type="radio"/>				

**44. If you notice a brand in a film, how important is the brand image of that brand to the way you assess it in that film?**

*Merkitse vain yksi soikio.*

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Not important at all	<input type="radio"/>	Very important						

**45. Which factors impact the importance of the brand image in a film?**

*Valitse kaikki sopivat vaihtoehdot.*

- How much a brand is showed/mentioned/featured in a scene (Prominence)
- How long a brand is showed/mentioned/featured in a scene (Duration)
- How a brand fits to the context of the scene (Congruence with a scene)
- How a brand and a character fit together (Congruence with a character)

**46. Which film genres would you consider to be appropriate for product placements?**

*Valitse kaikki sopivat vaihtoehdot.*

- All are equally appropriate
- None is more appropriate than the other
- Action
- Adventure
- Biography
- Comedy
- Crime
- Document
- Drama
- Fantasy
- Family
- Historical
- Horror
- Musical
- Romance
- Sci-Fi
- Sport
- War

**47. Have you discussed about product placements after seeing a film?**

*Merkitse vain yksi soikio.*

- Yes
  - No
  - Can't remember
-