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Product Placement in Japan

A focus on the Animation Industry

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要旨

本研究、日本のコンテンツ産業、特にアニメにおけるプロダクトプレイスメントの有効性を検討する。

まず、研究の背景、研究課題及び研究の構成を説明する。本研究の課題は日本のアニメという媒体手段がプロダクトプレイスメントに適するコンテキストなのかということである。

第1章では、本研究の仮説を構築するために、数個の既存の文献をレビューする。第1パートは、プロダクトプレイスメントという広告手法の説明が提供される。そのため、プロダクトプレイスメントの特徴、他の広告手法やサブリミナル効果との相違点に基づいてプロダクトプレイスメントの定義を与える。それから、プロダクトプレイスメントの歴史概要を短く説明する。又、現在のプロダクトプレイスメントの市場背景を描写する。その後、モダリティ(様式)、プロミネンス(隆起)、プロットコネクション(プロット接続)といったプロダクトプレイスメントの多次元の特徴を説明する。又、映画を除きプロダクトプレイスメントの分野を検討し、タイイン、クロスプロモーションといったプロダクトプレイスメントに関する活動について説明する。最後に、心理作用を含める



視聴者に対するプロダクトプレイスメントの効果を明かにするために、幾つかの既存の研究をレビューする。

第2と第3パートは日本の媒体、特にアニメ産業の状況を検討する。日本におけるプロダクトプレイスメントの普及とその市場の背景の描写の上で、アニメ産業に強調する。最後に、本研究の仮説が設定される。

第2章では、本研究の方法論を説明する。アニメにおけるパロディブランドとプロダクトプレイスメントを同等にし、パロディブランドの暴露の結果としてブランド再認識を計測するために、世界中の数人のアニメ視聴者にオンラインアンケートを送信した。プロダクトプレイスメントに関する既存の研究との比較の上で、パロディブランドの暴露の結果としてのブランド再認識が圧倒的には異なるということが仮説された。

第3章では、アンケートの結果を説明し、本研究の仮説を検証する。調査の結果からして、パロディブランドとプロダクトプレイスメントの暴露の結果としてのブランド再認識が圧倒的には異なるということを明らかにした。

第4章は、本研究の発見物を説明する。要するに、日本のアニメ制作会社がパロディブランドをプロダクトプレイスメントに変換すれば、現在の深刻な予算の問題を解決できると検討し得るということを発見した。最後に、本研究の制限事項及び今後の課題について説明する。



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I. Introduction

The Japanese animation (in this study referred to as *anime*) industry is currently struggling to overcome problems connected to low budgets production, tremendous amounts of work and underpayment of animators (Condry, 2013: 14-15). The solution to this problem has traditionally been believed to be character merchandising-related businesses. In fact, the industry related to selling licenses to produce, sell, and purchase goods deriving from *anime* characters is believed to be worth ten times more the one of creating *anime* alone (Steinberg, 2012: 45).

Moreover, *product placement* has in recent years proved an efficient way of collecting budget for movie producers, television networks, record labels, etc. Because of the development and growth of ad-skip technologies, along with numerous other factors, marketers and advertisers in the last few decades found themselves having to come up with new tactics to promote and advertise products and services. Product placement, that is the placing of products and brands within movies, television programs, radio, music videos, videogames and other mass media channels has been one of them and has now become an important emerging area of marketing and advertising communications (McCarty, 2004: 1).

Though its history is allegedly very long, the movie *E.T., the Extra Terrestrial* is often cited as the most evident case of effectiveness of product placement, drawing attention to the practice and causing its effective birth, as we know it today. The movie was reported to have caused the increase of sales of the



peanut butter candy brand “Reese’s Pieces”, featured in a scene of the movie, by 65% within a month from the release of the movie in theaters (Gupta and Gould, 1998: 37).

Product placement differs from both traditional forms of advertisement, such as ads and commercials, and subliminal publicity, although it has often been confused with them. This is because product placement is performed in a natural and non-obtrusive way. “Natural and non-obtrusive” stands for the fact that placements have to be carried out in a way that the product does not interfere with the context in which is inserted, but is naturally intertwined with it. Other forms of advertising, on the other hand, cause an interruption in the viewing of a media form (Li et al., 2008: 39). In addition, since subliminal publicity cannot be consciously perceived, as it consists of stimuli too quick, weak or small to be noticed, it lacks of the natural side of product placement (Corti, 2004: 84).

With its fast growth since the 1980s, product placement has also caused and raised controversial ethical issues. In particular, audiences have harshly criticized the use of product placement to promote ethically charged products, such as tobacco, alcohol and weapons (Gupta and Gould, 1998: 37). Furthermore, being often associated or mistaken for the infamous practice of subliminal messages and subliminal advertisement, product placement has been appointed as an attempt by advertisers to brainwash audiences in order to increase sales (Ragone, 2009).¹

¹ Source: <http://www.altalex.com/index.php?idnot=46331>, referred to on 13/01/2015



Hence, this study presents itself as an investigatory research in order to determine if budget-related problems of Japanese animation industry could be solved through the adoption of product placement strategies.

In spite of its relative diffusion in Japanese medias (PQ Media, 2012), Japan's public opinion is still strongly reluctant towards product placement, which is not considered as a licit form of marketing just as much as television advertisement (Ōba, 2014).²

Furthermore, Kishiya and Mizuno (2008: 107) reported that “a gulf exists between the penetration of product placement in Japan and in the USA.” One could say that most Japanese audiences are unlikely to recognize product placement as an advertising method or an advertising form when they are exposed to it (Kishiya and Miracle 2010: 21).

Therefore the suitability of product placement to the context of *anime* must be investigated in order to understand the possibility of product placement as a solution to budget-related problems. This consideration was the cue to this thesis' research question.

Nevertheless, a practice similar to product placement has for long time, and still today is used in *anime*, known as “spoof brand”, or “brand parody”. Spoofs and camouflages of brands and products that appear in *anime* are often created by

² Source: <http://obagoro.blog.fc2.com/blog-entry-47.html#top>, referred to on 13/01/2015



switching letters of the brand or using words similar to it. Thus, MacDonald's becomes Wacdonald's, Google becomes Gentle, and so on.

Based on previous literature on product placement, the study will therefore measure the effects of spoof brands on audiences, and compare them to the ones of product placement (obtained in previous studies).

II. Research Question

This study tries to understand whether Japanese *anime* is a suitable context for product placement or not. In order to construct the hypothesis, several themes have been analyzed, starting from an analysis of product placement in general, its diffusion in Japanese media channels, and finally the characteristics of the Japanese animation industry.

III. Structure of the thesis

This study investigates the role of product placement in Japanese media and, in particular, in the animation industry.

In the first chapter, existing literature has been reviewed, to construct the hypothesis of the study. Firstly, the study will give an exhaustive description of what product placement is and how it works. In order to do so, an accurate definition of product placement, especially regarding its differences with traditional forms of advertisement and subliminal publicity, is provided. Then, a brief historical outline of product placement is illustrated. After that, product



placement characteristics are explained, focusing on the multidimensional features of modality, prominence and plot connection. Finally, a number of existing studies are reviewed in order to understand the effects of product placement on viewers, including psychological processes

The second and third parts of literature review focuses on the Japanese media industry and in particular the animation industry. After a panoramic of the presence of product placement in Japanese media and the Japanese product placement market, the study focuses on the animation industry. Finally, the hypothesis of the study is formulated.

In chapter two, the methodology of the study is explained. For this study, spoof brands in *anime* were considered equal to product placements and an online survey was sent to *anime* watchers all over the world in order to measure brand recognition as a result of exposure to spoof brands placed in *anime*. The method chosen for this study is therefore an online survey composed of several questions created based on previous studies. The studies were selected in order to create a parallelism with previous research on of product placement effectiveness, but with the original element of applying it to *anime* watching. In previous studies, the method was generally based on showing audiences extracts of TV shows or movies, which contained product placement. Accordingly, proper adjustments were operated in order to fit the methodology of the previous studies with the current study, by selecting extracts of *anime* episodes containing spoof brand appearances.



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In chapter three, results of the survey are illustrated. Results confirmed the hypothesis, showing that effects of exposure to spoof-brand placements in the provided videos caused an effect which is roughly the same as the one measured in previous studies on exposure to product placements in television programs, movies, etc. Moreover, implications of these results, both theoretical and practical, are considered. The main practical implication consists in the fact that *anime* studios and *anime* creators might recur to in-*anime* product placements as a way to overcome budgetary problems which the industry is currently facing. Finally, limitations and cues for future research are explained.



Chapter 1 – Literature Review

This first chapter revolves around three major themes. Firstly, characteristics of product placement in general are analyzed. This first part serves to provide the reader with a general notion of what product placement is, how present it is on the global scale, and how it works. The second theme of this chapter will be product placement narrowed to the Japanese content industry. The third and final theme of this chapter is the analysis of the Japanese animation industry.

Part 1 – An Introduction to Product Placement

As mentioned, the first part of literature review revolves around the theme of product placement in general. This first part has been constructed based on extant studies on product placement, along with academic and journal articles. A definition, a historical review, a market analysis and finally, an analysis of product placement's characteristics are provided.

1.1 Definition of product placement

Product placement is usually defined as “a paid product message aimed at influencing movie (or television) audiences via the planned and non-obtrusive entry of a branded product into a movie (or television program)” (Balasubramian, 1994: 29). In addition to movies and television, this study will also consider other types of media in which product placement is present, such as videogames, music videos, internet, etc.



From this definition, the principal elements that define product placement can be easily understood. Firstly, the commercial nature of product placement. In fact, what can be defined as product placement occurs only in the case there is a commercial contract between the advertiser and the producer of the media. Thus, product placement is considered separated from what is defined as “brand integration”, which consists in the appearance of a brand or product into a movie or television program by chance, or as an artistic instrument, or with the aim of assigning specific features to a character, or to improve the sense of realism of a story (Ragone 2009).³

A second fundamental aspect is the “non-obtrusive” nature of product placement. Product placement is exposed to the audience within the media channel, without creating pauses, and it is thus deeply connected to it, creating a neat difference with traditional forms of advertising, such as ads and commercials.

Product placement is also referred to as “brand placement”, because placements often only feature the brand and its attributes, rather than products. The two terms “product placement” and “brand placement” are therefore interchangeable (Balasubramanian et al., 2006: 115).

Various studies have proved that product placement is a much more preferable advertising technique than traditional forms of advertising because it

³ Source: <http://www.altalex.com/index.php?idnot=46331>, referred to on January 13th, 2015



enhances realism, aids in the development of the character, generates historical subtext, and provides a sense of familiarity (Mahyari et al., 2009: 2).

Traditional advertising is, on the other hand, perceived by viewers as “intrusive” (Nebenzahl & Secunda, 1993), as it is perceived as an evident attempt to persuade viewers to purchase certain products (Friestad & Wright, 1994). In fact, first studies on product placement showed that most consumers had positive attitudes toward product placement, because it was less intrusive than traditional forms of advertising (Nebenzahl & Secunda, 1993; Gupta & Gould, 1997).

Moreover, with respect to the dimension of prominence, Gupta and Gould’s study (1998: 450) proved that products in prominent product placements create more brand recall by viewers, than products in traditional forms of advertising.⁴

It is also to be specified that all those forms of advertising that appear within the duration of a movie or program, but are not intertwined with the plot, like banners, overprints, pop-ups, etc., are excluded from the definition of product placement. It is necessary that the appearance of the brand be unequivocally connected with the development of the story and it has to be performed in a natural and non-obtrusive way.

Product placement shares some common aspects with traditional advertising methods, such as commercials and ads, which general audiences find more familiar. Both are marketing methods and they both share the aim of persuading consumers

⁴ See paragraph 1.4.2 for a clear explanation of “prominence”



to purchase certain products. However, they have one major difference: persuasion attempt is not blatant in product placement.

McCarty (2004: 50) argued that different marketing communications could be considered along two dimensions: (1) the extent to which the sponsor of a message is disguised, that the message in a paid advertisement is disguised, or both; (2) The extent to which the persuasive message is secondary to the main message of the communication. Along these dimensions, it is clear how product placement differs from other forms of advertisements. In fact, in traditional advertising, the sponsor is not disguised, and the persuasive attempt made by the sponsor is generally clear to the audience. In addition, the message of persuasion is a salient part of the communication and not secondary to any other message.

On the contrary, product placement is not directly connected to the sponsor as an explicit persuasion attempt, as the product or brand is presented within a context, i.e. the plot. Concerning the second dimension, the persuasive message is secondary to the general message, which consists in the plot of the movie.

On the contrary, Wells (1989: 15) tends to identify product placement as a kind of advertisement. According to Wells, commercials can be divided into two formats regarding the extent to which the brand is presented in the context of a story: *lectures* and *dramas*.

Lectures refers to that type of advertisement that is directly aimed at the audience, so that the product and its qualities are explained through arguments and facts.



Dramas, on the other hand, are a form of advertisement that draws the audience into a story, a situation in which the product is not the center of the attention, but in which it nonetheless is inserted. Part of the effectiveness of *drama* advertisements consists in the fact that the viewer forgets that the story is an attempt of persuading him to purchase the product. Many ads do not feature the qualities or characteristics of the product, but they present it in a certain context to which is associated. A product placement could thus be considered as the ultimate form of drama advertising.

Nevertheless, there is a crucial difference that separates product placement from traditional forms of advertisement, and that is the non-obtrusive nature of product placement. Ads, both lectures and dramas, are equally presented in a context logically and temporally external to the main context of the stories, while product placement is deeply connected to it. In other words, ad breaks interrupt the movie or program, while product placement is displayed within the duration of it.

1.2 Birth and development of product placement: a historical review

Although product placement in its current form is a relatively new technique, to draw a full history of this practice is indeed a complex task. For what concerns product placement in movies, it has been stated that its birth corresponds to the birth of cinema itself. In 1895, the Lumière brothers themselves presented *Workers Leaving the Lumière Factory*, a short movie in which they self-promoted their



factory. In early times, in fact, the Lumière brothers used to consider cinema itself only as a way to better compete against their rivals in order to increase the notoriety of their factory of photographic plates (Corti, 2004: 15).

Product placement was later largely used during the totalitarian regimes of the 20th century as a way of propaganda. However, it remained for long time a less-known practice and it was performed in confused ways. Usually, product placement consisted of informal agreements between firms and directors, or in some cases actors. Moreover, in this phase, the aim of placements was giving a better sense of realism to stories by the entry of actual existing brands, rather than promoting brands (Corti, 2004: 16). An example of this is the 1965 movie *Breakfast at Tiffany's*: the jewelry brand received and still receives great attention because of the movie, but the company never took part in the decision of placing the brand into the movie.

In the 30s, the most placed product was cigarettes. In a recent study⁵, revenues of Hollywood stars deriving from sponsoring cigarettes in movies from the 1930s to the 1950s were published. Lucky Strike alone spent more than three million dollars in cigarette product placement in the years 1937-1938. Actors were paid around ten thousand dollars a year just to smoke during scenes of movies in which they were featured.

Through the 1960s and 1970s, and in particular in the James Bond franchise,

⁵ “Signed, sealed and delivered: ‘big tobacco’ in Hollywood, 1927-1951”, *Tob Control*, September 25th, page 313-323



product placements became more and more frequent and more products started to be placed. Aston Martin, Dom Perignon and other brands connected to the character of the British spy, were a clear prove of the commercial potential of product placement. In this period, script-reviewing agencies were born in order to find scenes in which firms could place brands (McCarty, 2004: 51).

The 1980s see the definitive development of product placement. In 1982, the movie *Risky Business* tripled the revenue of Ray-Ban sunglasses, worn by Tom Cruise in a scene. The most emblematic case is, however, the movie *E.T. – The extraterrestrial*. In a scene Elliot, the main character, is trying to call E.T. out of his closet using small chocolate candy as a bait (See Figure 1). Amblin, Producer Company for Steven Spielberg, director of *E.T.*, initially made an offer to M&M's to insert their candies in this scene. After a refuse from M&M's, the project was given to Hershey, which placed its "Reese's Pieces" candies, a lesser-known brand. The effect was huge: in less than a month Reese's Pieces' revenue grew up to 65% more (Gupta and Gould, 1997: 47). The case of *E.T.*, particularly because of the loss caused to M&M's, is considered to be the main event that triggered the birth of modern product placement (Dens et al., 2012: 35).



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Figure 1 Elliott offers E.T. some "Reese's Pieces" in *E.T. - the Extraterrestrial*
Source: <http://www.tiendasdelacueducto.com/>

However, some consumer representative groups remained skeptic on product placement, considering it as a subliminal practice. For this reason, the product placement industry created the Entertainment Resources and Marketing Association, which plays an important role on regulating the practice of product placement to date (Choi 2007: 10).

Starting from *E.T.*, from the 80s until the present day, a new phase of product placement history began, with product placement now being treated as a real business. We have, thus, examples like Budget, whose service of truck renting was obscured by rivals, until one of its trucks helped mother and son reunite in the movie *Home Alone*. Other famous examples are the movie *Cast Away*, in which FedEx appears repeatedly, both visually and within the plot of the movie, or *You've Got Mail*, with its numerous placements of AOL and Apple computers.⁶

⁶ Examples taken from "Product placement Hall of Fame" in <http://www.businessweek.com/1998/25/b3583062.htm> referred on October 24th, 2014



Figure 2 Product Placement of Fedex in *Cast Away*

Source: <http://www.brandstories.net/wp-content/uploads>

1.3 Product placement market

Product placement's development is to be attributed to three main factors. The first being the birth and development of technologies which allow to hide or skip ads and commercials, like TiVo or Sky+, for television, or ad-block applications and extensions for smartphones and computers (Williams et al., 2011: 4). The development of these technologies is indeed attributable to the intrusive nature of traditional forms of advertising. Intrusiveness is defined as “the degree to which advertisements in a media vehicle interrupt the flow of an editorial unit” (Ha, 1996: 77). Hence, intrusiveness is a perception or psychological consequence that occurs when an audience's cognitive processes are interrupted. Therefore, ads within programming, such as product placement, are not themselves intrusive, but rather, ads must be perceived as interrupting the goals of the viewers to be considered intrusive (Li et al., 2002: 39). When consumers are irritated by advertisements, they are likely to avoid them. Regardless of the nature of the



reactions of viewers to irritating ads, studies have confirmed that when consumers are given a means to avoid ads, many just do that (Li et al., 2002: 38). Therefore, studies have led to believe that product placements show some characteristics that seem to make the superior to commercials: since they are part of the very editorial content, no audience member will mute it, as this would mean missing part of the show (von Rimscha et al., 2008: 28).

The second factor is the development of interactive television, which facilitated product placement's development because it allows integrating several products in different programs and in different regions, reaching more easily the customer target. Finally, the development of media, such as the internet, has caused a certain level of awareness and skepticism about traditional ways of advertising (Choi, 2007: 10).

According to the most recent data, the total spending on global product placement amounts to €6,63 billion (PQ Media, 2012). The United States represented the largest market, with €3.83 billion of spending in product placement. Furthermore, the Americas region represented the lion's share of spending in product placement, with €5.25 billion in 2011, a 79% share of the global market (PQ Media, 2012).

Traditionally, product placement has always been more controversial in Europe than in the United States (Dens et al., 2012: 35), but the EU has recently loosened the regulations on advertising, resulting in a great expansion of the European market.



In fact, the European region, although struggling due to the ongoing euro crisis, possessed a market growing 5.6% to €664 million, and is expected to grow at high rate. The second-largest global product placement-spending region was, though, the Asia-Pacific one, with €729 million (PQ Media, 2012).

Product placement market's growth is visible in recent movies and television programs. For example, the 2013 movie *Man of Steel* has broken the record for highest number of product placements in a movie: more than 100 placements, which, alone, granted a budget of more than €143 million.⁷ In 2012, the most successful 34 movies at the box office featured 397 product placements, with an average of 11.7 placements per movie (Ōba, 2014).⁸



Figure 3 Placements of 7-eleven and Sears in *Man of Steel*
Source: <http://www.ted.me/wp-content/uploads/2013/06/>

1.4 Multidimensional nature of product placement

First studies (Ong & Meri, 1994; Babin & Carder, 1996) on product placement revolved mostly around its effectiveness, in terms of brand

⁷ Source: <http://www.bloomberg.com/video/-man-of-steel-most-product-placements-ever-tpqpI2seTLCoWVA4YtjYzA.html> referred on January 09, 2015.

⁸ Source: <http://obagoro.blog.fc2.com/blog-entry-47.html#top>, referred to on January 13th, 2015



recall/recognition of the audience after exposure to product placement, or around its grade of acceptance within the audience, that is how the public reacted to product placement in general. With first attempts to investigate product placement effectiveness, scarce results were found.

It was noted, although, that these studies did not take into account the multidimensional nature of product placement, which consists of modality, prominence and plot connection (McCarty, 2004: 55).

1.4.1 Modality

Mode or modality stands for the way product placement is carried out in terms of sensorial perception. Along this dimension, three types of modality can be distinguished: video, audio or mixed.

Video or visual product placement consists in the mere visual exposure of a brand. This can happen in various ways: with the appearance of the product itself, only the logo, etc. However, no auditory element is present in these placements. In the dimension of visual placements, examples like shots of a Fendi purse in *Sex and the City*, as well as billboards displaying the brand Coca-Cola in *Blade Runner* are included.

Audio or auditory product placement consists in the mentioning of the brand by a character, without the brand visually appearing on screen.

Finally, mixed or integrated product placement consists in the mentioning of the brand combined with its visual appearance on the screen, or the transmission



of a message regarding the product or its features in auditory way while the product appears (Wouters et al., 2010: 301).

The importance of defining modality is that different levels of modality create more or less effective product placements. Information presented in auditory way is generally perceived as more meaningful, because visual channels have the function of creating the context, while auditory channels represent the story itself. Another reason relies in the fact that auditory information can be heard even when the audience is distracted or is not looking at the screen (Wouters et al., 2010: 302).

1.4.2 Prominence

In all three types of modality, placements can occur on different levels: a visual placement can consist in a close-up, as well as a background appearance. Similarly, auditory placement can be more or less loud, and have different repetition frequencies.

Different levels of modality constitute the prominence of product placement. Prominence is defined as the extent to which a placement possesses characteristics designed to make it a central focus of audience attention (Dens et al. 2012: 37). It is, thus, a wide range of values that expresses the measure to which placements are visible and/or audible in a scene. This range can be divided into three prominence levels: high, moderate, low (Wouters et al., 2010: 302).

On occasion, modality and prominence have been conceptually intertwined,



without there being a strict division between the two dimensions. This is because, practically, placements of the same product are often repeated in different modalities and/or levels of prominence, making the borderline between the two hard to find.

First studies on importance of prominence have showed how placements with high level of prominence (referred to as prominent placements) are more effective in terms of brand recall than placements with low level of prominence (referred to as subtle placements). Gupta and Lord (1998: 450) exposed viewers to movies with placements with different levels of prominence, with some interruptions of traditional advertisement messages. The results showed that prominent placements were more effective than commercials, which were themselves more effective than subtle placements (Choi, 2007: 15).

Nevertheless, more recent studies have proved that prominent placements, despite creating more brand recall/recognition, are perceived in a more negative way than the subtle ones (Van Reijmersdal et al., 2009: 430). The triggering of these negative attitudes can be attributed to the activation of the audience's persuasion knowledge.

Persuasion knowledge is described as the “knowledge that people develop about how, why, and when a message is intended to influence them, which serves to help customers cope with persuasive episodes. However, this knowledge lies dormant until triggered by a stimulus; often the ostensible message of a sales pitch” (McCarty, 2004: 48).



The persuasion knowledge model, theorized by Friestad and Wright, states that “when consumers recognize a media message as a persuasion attempt, they tend to elaborate the message in a different way than when they do not recognize the persuasion attempt” (Friestad and Wright, 1994: 62).

In particular, they tend to get distracted and detach from the message and develop evaluations on the attempt that is being made to persuade them and the company connected to the medium (McCarty, 2004: 48).

The message is thus interpreted within the context of this persuasion knowledge caused by the awareness that the advertisement is a persuasion attempt message. Since product placement is a “hidden” media message, it is less probable that this kind of reaction happens in its presence (Wouters et al., 2010; 305).

In fact, product placement is believed to be resistant to persuasion knowledge for two reasons: (1) its relative newness and consequent unawareness of general audiences; (2) the entertaining context of product placement, which avoids persuasion knowledge to be triggered (Fitch, 2009)⁹.

As anticipated, prominence and persuasion knowledge are highly connected. Placements with high degree of prominence are deemed to be recognized as an obvious commercial persuasion attempt. Subtle product placements, on the other hand, will be processed more implicitly by the audience, avoiding triggering persuasion knowledge. This will result in a more positive brand attitude as a result

⁹ Source: http://digitalcommons.bryant.edu/honors_marketing/4, referred to on January 13th, 2015



of the exposure (Kozary et al., 2010: 3).

1.4.3 Plot connection

Russell (1998: 357-362), in her *Tripartite Typology*, has introduced another classification of product placement dimensions. The first two dimensions, called screen placements and script placements, resemble video and audio level of modality: “screen placements” refers to only visual, “script placements” to only audio placements. The third dimension is plot placement (that is the combination of audio and video placement), but considered as the extent of connection between the placed product and the plot of the movie. A placed product with low plot connection does not play a fundamental role in the plot or definition of the characters, while one with high plot connection can become a main factor in the events. For example in the cited movie *Cast Away*, expedition company FedEx plays a crucial role in the unfolding of the events and delineation of the main characters. This is an example of high plot connection.

On the matter of plot connection, it is interesting to examine the case of Dove and other affiliate brands in the Chinese version of the television series *Ugly Betty*. Dove’s campaign revolving around the idea of “real beauty”, carried out and successful in many countries, proved to be a failure when entering the Chinese market. Dove decided then to try another approach by placing its products in the Chinese version of the 1999 Colombian *telenovela*, *Yo soy Betty, la fea*, made popular mainly by the American remake version *Ugly Betty*. In the original format,



the story revolves around Betty, who works in a fashion magazine and is confronted with various occurrences. In the Chinese version, on the other hand, Betty works in an advertising agency, and in the storyline the agency is pitching the Dove account, and when a problem arises Betty steps in and discusses about real beauty, which is exactly what Dove's communication is all about. In the first season, Dove crossed two episodes and totaled nearly 50 minutes of product story line and product placement. With an average of 23 million viewers a night, Dove was able to double the value of its original investment and the series helped make Dove's campaign a success in entering the Chinese market (Bush, 2009). In this case, plot connection is extremely high, considering the entire plot of the show was specially changed for the brand.

Plot connection is carried out in various levels: high, moderate, low or not present (Wouters et al., 2010: 305). Nevertheless, usually all placements are considered of at least low plot connection. After all, the only fact that a brand is mentioned, thus conveying the characteristics of the product to the movie, gives a certain contribution to the movie, however small it might be. Thus, practically no placement is considered "not connected", creating a weak boundary between modality and plot connection: it is hard to determine if a placement is, for example, only auditory and not connected to the plot.

Accordingly, it can be stated that the three dimensions of characteristics of product placement are widely intertwined, but remain independent, creating a tridimensional framework including modality, prominence and plot connection



levels (Wouters et al., 2010: 305).

1.5 Fields of product placement

The historical outline of product placement development has mostly considered what is believed to be the traditional field of product placement: the movie industry. Nevertheless, product placement has developed and is currently developing in other fields and media, such as television (which actually represents the biggest current market in product placement spending), music videos, videogames, etc.

1.5.1 Television

Television represents the field in which product placement has developed the fastest. In addition to ad-skip technologies, already mentioned above, the influx to movie theaters has considerably diminished in the last years because of the growth of admission tickets, reaching 142% from 2008 to 2009 (Williams et al., 2011: 4).

75% of American prime-time television shows feature programs with product placements, and in 2008, 29,823 placements were performed in American television programs. They are so widespread that an average American television viewer is exposed to a product placement every twelve minutes (Dens et al., 2012: 35). However, product placements are more or less concentrated depending on different types of program. Four main television programs exist: (1) quiz, variety



shows and so on, in which the need for entertainment is maximized. In this category product placement are average effective. (2) dramas and mini-series in which viewers tend to associate with the characters. In this category product placements are low effective, as the viewer is more eager to develop a sense of “intrusion”. (3) Programs of information and service. Placements in this category are the most effective, in terms of brand recognition and the more specific the argument is, the better the response from the audience will be. In other words, placements that are directed to a specific target are the more effective. Finally (4) sport or cultural events programs. In this case, the sponsor is more linked to the event itself than the program (Williams et al., 2011: 14).



Figure 4 Placement of Apple products in *The Ellen DeGeneres Show*

Source: <http://www.blogcdn.com/www.engadget.com/>

1.5.2 Music videos

The monopoly of music videos broadcastings has traditionally been owned by television channel MTV. From its start in 1981, until the end of the 90s, MTV



was the only channel through which music videos could be viewed. In this period, videos were considered as a way of sponsoring the song, the record or the artist. Over the years, videos have evolved in various forms, but never have been conceived as a way of increasing revenue. This was because MTV declared to be against the use of music videos as publicity channels for brands, in order to preserve their artistic integrity, excluding any commercial activity. In the rare case videos featured product placements, they were blurred or censored when aired on television (Plambeck, 2010).

The situation changed from the last years of the 90s for a series of reasons. Firstly, record sales dropped significantly due to the digitalization of the industry, and the consequent spreading of internet piracy. In 1999, the file-sharing site Napster was launched on the Internet, and the music industry suffered a drop of sales from €24.5 billion to €17.7 billion in a year. This brought record labels to search for new methods of earning revenue. One was the discovery of commercial value of music videos (Vidyarthi, 2010).

Another factor to the end of MTV as prime music video network is the growth of video-viewing channels on internet. Youtube and Myspace allowed viewers to upload videos online, which thus became accessible to whomever and at any time. Youtube is with no doubt the main factor of the disappearance of music videos from MTV (Vidyarthi, 2010). From its acquisition by Google, algorithms were created in order to identify copyright material and censor users who uploaded videos without owning the rights. This created a confluence of views toward the

so-called “official” videos only, which were videos uploaded directly by artists or record labels. This way, the creation of a music video-based commercial market had been made possible. Universal Music Group and SONY BMG are Youtube’s two major commercial partners and with it, they created VEVO, a music video network that connects various artists, from Madonna to Rolling Stones. VEVO became and still is the major distribution channel for music videos, and has a very different policy regarding product placement in videos than MTV. In fact, VEVO plays the main role of communication channel between the largest record companies and the largest brand marketers (Karbasfrooshan, 2011).

Thus, from 2009 to 2010, investments in music video product placement grew with a rate of 8%, reaching €18 million: more than double compared to 2000. Especially in the last years, the phenomenon has reached huge proportions, with videos like *Telephone*, by Lady Gaga, featuring ten product placements in nine minutes. The brands include Heartbeats Headphones, Virgin mobile, Chanel, Coca Cola, HP, Miracle Whip, Chevy and Polaroid (Figure 5).



Figure 5 Placements of Heartbeat Headphones, Virgin Mobile and Coca Cola in *Telephone*
Source: <http://davidmaloneya2media.blogspot.it/>



These and many other music videos count hundreds of thousands of views and placements are not censored. This represents a huge commercial opportunity for sponsors. Placements vary from €15 thousand to even €500 thousand (Sicardi, 2014).

However, the majority of placements happen when record companies are already connected to sponsors, e.g. for the sponsoring of a tour, while it seems hard to persuade advertisers to invest in placements in videos for new brands. This is because, with the exception of major artists, the number of views remains unpredictable and placing brands represents a risk for marketers (Plambeck, 2010).

1.5.3 Videogames

Beginning from the 1980s until the late 1990s some major videogame creator companies started inserting products and logos in their videogames and being paid for it. Today, on the other hand, this practice seems to have become more “spontaneous”: production companies are not paid anymore in order to place products into videogames, but they prefer to make other deals.

SEGA, a Japanese company that inserted Marlboro’s logo into a speed racing videogame, conducted the first example of product placement in videogames. Another example is Dole bananas, which SEGA placed into *Super Monkey Ball*, in which the player has to collect as many bananas as possible (Choi, 2007: 9).

Other examples are *Crazy Taxi* from Vivendi Universal, with placements of

KFC, Pizza Hut, or Zippo and Motorola in *Die Hard*, also from Vivendi (Emery, 2002).

Thus, at the end of the 1990s, placement were performed in videogames industry with fees that reached an average of €20 thousand. The key factor was that placements in videogames allowed a clear and highly repetitive exposure to an audience of teenagers and young adults.



Figure 6 Pizza Hut placement in *Crazy Taxi*

Source: http://24.media.tumblr.com/tumblr_lrdjqtcv6e1qk26dzo1_500.gif

Today, it is ever rarer that placements are paid for, and usually they happen in a “spontaneous” way, that is, the creator is the decision maker. This happens for several reasons. Firstly, for logistic reasons: marketers usually want to have an important role in the decision process about how the brand is placed, which brand is to be placed, and so on. On the contrary, designers and creators also care much about the artistic value of the game, especially from a graphic and visual point of view, and are not eager to come to terms with marketers (Emery, 2002).

The main reason behind even the birth of product placement in videogames seems in fact to be not in order to search for budget, but rather to give a better sense of realism to the game. For example, in the case of Dole, the placement was



paid only for the Japanese market, because Dole was trying to expand its fruit market in Japan. However, when the game was brought to the United States, Dole did not pay for the placement, although the logo was kept for “esthetical reasons” (Emery, 2002).

In an article from USA Today of 2002, Mike Fischer, then vice general animation marketing director for SEGA America, stated that logos and brands are placed to make the player feel like they are playing in the real world. In a game, he explains

“You don't pick up a facial tissue, you pick up a Kleenex. You don't pick up a corn chip, you pick up a Frito or a Dorito. In the video game experience, you don't want to drive to the fried chicken restaurant; you want to drive to KFC.”¹⁰

Other methods have developed in the videogames industry that resemble product placement. One is the so-called “dynamic advertisement”, an online technology that allows advertisers to insert advertisement spaces at any time into online videogames. The second is called “advergames” and it has become extremely popular in the recent times. Small games are created revolving around the characteristics of a product, e.g. in coincidence of its launch on the market, as a way to promote it. These are mostly free games, in which the product has a central position and is continuously exposed (Choi, 2007: 9).

¹⁰ Gene EMERY, *What's in a name: Product placement in games*, Usatoday, January 30th, 2002

1.6 Product placement related activities

Product placement is often actually just a part of a series of larger marketing operations all intertwined with each other. Nowadays it is, in fact, very rare to observe isolated placements that do not belong to promotional operations such as “tie-in” campaigns, cross-promotions, etc.

1.6.1 Tie-in, cross promotion

Applied to the movie industry, tie-ins are operations in which movie and product mutually sponsor, the product being placed in the movie and the movie sponsored in parallel advertisement campaigns. For example, when the movie *Men in Black II* came out in theaters, fast-food chain Burger King created a time-limited edition of burgers, which was named after the movie, along with a series of gadgets and accessories inspired by the movie available with the purchase of the Big Kids Meal. The fast-food chain was meanwhile sponsored with some placements in the movie.¹¹



Figure 7 Burger King placement in *Men in Black II* and the tie-in campaign

Source: <https://theentertainmentnut.files.wordpress.com>

It is now common for companies to put significant advertising and

¹¹ Source: <http://www.prnewswire.com/> referred to on January 12th, 2015



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promotional weight behind product placement because there is a general opinion that it is impossible to achieve a call to action unless there is a promotional campaign around the brand integration (Hudson & Hudson, 2010: 496).

Sometimes television hosts, singers, etc. promote products of their own: this is called cross-promotion. For example, American show host Oprah Winfrey often promotes her own books and products during her shows. Singer Britney Spears also cross-promotes her clothing lines and perfumes within her own music videos. For example, in her *Perfume* video, her perfume line Fantasy often appears on screen (Figure 8).



Figure 8 Cross promotion of Fantasy in *Perfume* music video

Source: <https://metrouk2.files.wordpress.com>

1.6.2 Reverse product placement

Reverse product placement works in the opposite way to product placement. That is, instead of placing existing products and brands into media channels, brands, products and objects that exist within a certain fictional context are produced and sold as real.

Cap Candy, a division of Hasbro, has launched on the American market “Bertie Bott’s Every Flavor Beans”, a candy found in the *Harry Potter* books and

movies. These jellies are produced in very bizarre flavors, like pickles and sausage, to recreate the nauseating, almost magic experience, which characters experience in the novel (Edery, 2006).

Reverse product placement creates multiple effects. Firstly, similarly to product placement, it has a promoting and advertising effect: the movies and their context foster customers to purchase products. Secondly, it rewards with lower costs for market entry and enhances customer relationships (Edery, 2006). Videogames, on the other hand, represent also a great potential for reverse product placement. Many videogames, in fact, allow the player to construct and customize objects, sometimes even making players pay. This trend allows the manufacturer to assess the popularity of a particular item before or while launching it (Saladino 2008: 103).



Figure 9 Harry Potter's "Bertie Bott's Every Flavor Beans" jellies

Source: <https://c3.staticflickr.com>



1.7 Effects of product placement - Psychological processes

The multidimensional nature of product placement suggests that a variety of psychological processes are occurring when a viewer is exposed to it (McCarty, 2004: 52). At a basic level, an effect occurs called “affective classical conditioning”. This consists in the association of a non-conditioned stimulus, e.g. a nice view, with a conditioned stimulus, e.g. a product. In this way, feelings linked to the non-conditioned stimulus are transferred to the conditioned one at an unconscious level.

Thus, a scene providing a product in the context of a nice view will cause the transfer of the positive feeling caused by the view to the product. The intensity of the association can depend by the quality of the feeling, as well as the centrality and visibility of the product, but generally, the process requires only the affective response of the viewer to a scene and the presence of the brand in the scene (McCarty, 2004: 56).

A potential complication arises regarding which feelings are associated to the product. In fact, throughout a movie, viewers can experience a variety of feelings, both positive and negative, such as fear, disgust, etc. It is possible that viewers end up associating these negative feelings with the product, and the placement could have an effect opposite to what it was hoped.

The second level is represented by “mere exposure”. It has been observed that viewers tend to develop positive feelings towards a brand merely because of their repeated exposure to it. In this case the factor of association is the repetition



of the appearance of the brand (McCarty, 2004: 56). In a Key Lime Interactive study on product placement in music videos, studies on repetition have been conducted. Using remote eye-tracking technology, viewer's attention was observed, focusing on product placements. Results were compared to brand recognition of placed brands and other factors, such as exposure duration and frequency of repetition. The results showed that the frequency of the appearance of a brand has a certain statistic relevance in the recognition of a product, while the dimension of the brand on screen seemed to be unrelated.¹²

The last psychological process triggered by product placement is the so-called “transformational process”. Transformational advertising is advertising that transforms or changes the experience of using a product such that the product becomes something else that it would normally be, becoming “richer, warmer, more exciting and/or more enjoyable” (McCarty, 2004: 52).

It is not the product itself that is advertised, but the potential experience derived from using the product. For example, let us consider brands like Aston Martin or Dom Perignon, which James Bond is often associated to in the *James Bond* franchise. If the transformational process occurs, the reason why consumers purchase these products is not that they are considering them in their traditional functionality, but that they are wishing to experience the *James Bond* experience through them.

¹² Source: <http://www.smivision.com/en/gaze-and-eye-tracking-systems/home.html> referred to on January 13th, 2015



This process is also called lifestyle advertising, in which products are advertised in a way that they are associated to a certain lifestyle. Thus, a perfume brand will advertise its products associating them to a glamorous and elegant lifestyle, while a detergent brand will associate its products to a more ordinary, housewife-friendly lifestyle (McCarty, 2004: 52).

Part 2 - Product Placement in Japan

The economy of Japan is currently the world's third largest by nominal GDP, following the US and China, with almost €4.38 trillion per year.¹³ According to Dentsū,¹⁴ Japan's major advertising company, advertising expenditures in 2014 in Japan totaled ¥6,152.2 billion, (€45.31 billion). It is the third world's largest market, following the US and China¹⁵. The Japanese media market is also a great potential field of investment, amounting to ¥43 trillion (around €306 billion) per year, with multiple media channels, including newspapers, television, *manga*, *anime*, etc.¹⁶

However, the latest forecasts of global spending in product placement indicated that in 2013 Japan would come at sixth place in product placement spending market on the global scale, following the US, Brazil, Mexico, Australia

¹³ Source: http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.MKTP.CD?order=wbapi_data_value_2013+wbapi_data_value+wbapi_data_value-last&sort=desc referred to on March 17th, 2015

¹⁴ "Advertising Expenditures in Japan for 2014", *Dentsu* (2013)

¹⁵ Source: <http://www.emarketer.com/Article/Advertisers-Will-Spend-Nearly-600-Billion-Worldwide-2015/1011691> referred to on April 4th, 2015

¹⁶ Source: <http://www.eurotechnology.com/store/jmedia/> referred to on April 4th, 2015



and France. According to the PQ Media Global Product Placement Spending Forecast (2012–2016), the Japanese market would surpass €87.62 million in spending for the year (PQ Media, 2012).

Ōba (2014)¹⁷ stated that, considered the dimension of economy, the dimension of the advertising market, and the media market, this is still a relatively small expense.

The reason to this has been attributed to the general newness of the practice in Japanese media, and the consequent skepticism of Japanese public opinion. Moreover, a lack of real knowledge about product placement has been noticed by Japanese scholars, and more detailed studies are called for. Academic studies on product placement in Japan are indeed very scarce and do not leave a clear image of the current situation.

In Japan, the use of well-known actors or other public figures in television commercials has been popular since the beginning of television broadcasting and famous actors are quite likely to appear in advertising. Moreover, appearances in television advertising in Japan have frequently turned unknown actors into celebrities or stars (Kishiya and Miracle, 2010: 20).

In fact, in Japan, advertisement is also a steppingstone for models, aspiring actors, singers and other entertainers towards fame. The word *tarento* (タレント, i.e. the rendering of the English word “talent”) is used to describe this kind of

¹⁷ Source: <http://obagoro.blog.fc2.com/blog-entry-47.html#top>, Referred to on January 13th, 2015



celebrities, who are in most cases young aspiring models, also often referred to as *aidoru* (アイドル, “idols”) who start their careers by appearing in TV commercials, thus gaining a certain degree of exposure and acquire fame within the public (Praet, 2001: 2).

For example, Rola is a famous Japanese *tarento* who started her career as a model in various magazines, becoming later a television personality due to her appearances in various television commercials. She was the most featured person in Japanese television commercials of 2014, and currently stars in various television dramas, TV shows, and is starting a singing career (Modelpress, 2014).

In this context, where television personalities and advertisement are highly connected, the use of product placement by such characters is likely to influence Japanese consumer attitudes in a favorable way towards placed products (Kishiya and Miracle, 2010: 17).

In fact, it has been noticed that Japanese viewers possess a significant parasocial interaction, which is the process through which viewers identify themselves with a character. This way, Japanese viewers seem to think of a character as an ideal consumer, which is a strong motive for purchasing a brand or product placed in television shows (Kishiya and Miracle, 2010: 17).

One of the first examples of product placement in a Japanese drama show is the 2004 “Tokyo Wonder Hotel” (東京ワンダーホテル) in which placements from Shiseido, Suntory and Nissan were performed (Yamamoto et al. 2005: 167-168).

Product placement has also reached Japanese music industry, in which it is though, scarcely and rarely performed. It is not new, though, the practice of artists “lending” songs to be inserted into television commercials. Japanese musicians themselves often participate in advertising campaigns of various types of products and traditionally the soundtrack to these ads consists of the artist’s latest song. In addition, artists often change lyrics to their songs *ad hoc* for the ad in which they feature.

An example is the song *Kyary ANAN* (きゃりーANAN), by singer Kyary Pamyupamyu. This song is the soundtrack of the promotional campaign of *An*, search engine for part-time jobs. The lyrics of the song, often performed by the artist even outside the context of the promotional campaign, revolves around part-time jobs and the word “An” is continuously repeated (See Appendix A).



Figure 10 Singer Kyary Pamyupamyu in the promotional campaign for search engine “An”

Source: <http://imgc.appbank.net/>

With music video networks such as Youtube and Veoh, product placement



has grown also in Japanese music videos. A recent and famous case is the video for the song *Think About You* of dance-rock band HakU. The video is the result of an agreement with Konami Digital Entertainment for the promotion of “Jubeat”. Jubeat is a dance console that features sixteen keys to be pushed in a certain order to the rhythm of a song, in this case *Think about You*. The console has gained a certain popularity in Japan and other Asian countries, supported by the creation of a smartphone-app version (Takata, 2014). For the whole duration of the video, shots of the band playing the song alternate with shots of four players using the console. Producer Hiroyuki Masuda from Konami has stated that

“[the video] is a new experiment, and if we can make even just one person a fan of the console we will be satisfied. [...] Just watching the video, consumers will easily understand the image of our product”¹⁸

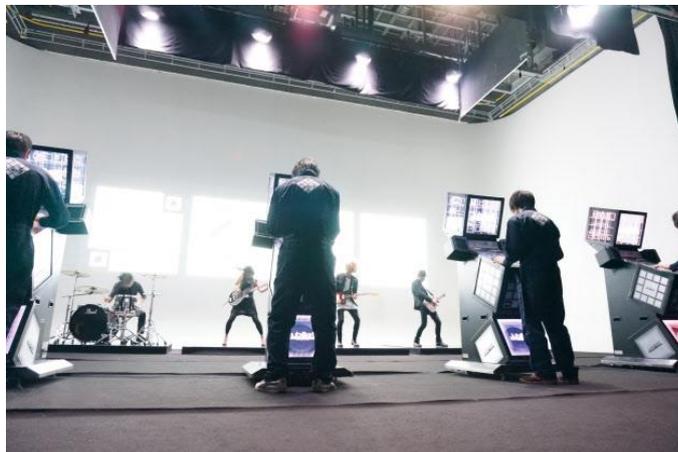


Figure 11 The making of the video for *Thinking of you* with Jubeat consoles

Source: <http://www.nikkei.com/>

¹⁸ “Ongaku bideonai de seihin PR, tsui ni kaikin – kigyō no munezan’yō” (Promotion within music videos - expectations of firms), *Nippon Keizai Shimbun (Digital edition)*, April 23rd, 2014



The situation described above shows that product placement is relatively present within Japanese media, including new fields of product placement, like music videos, etc. As a result, it is assumable that the lack of development of product placement in Japanese *anime* does not depend from characteristics of Japanese audiences, which might hypothetically represent an obstacle. The study will therefore now focus on characteristics within the Japanese animation industry.

Part 3 – Product Placement and the Japanese Animation Industry

Japanese animation is often referred to with the term *anime* (アニメ), which is generally believed to be a shortened version of the word *animēshon* (アニメーション), the *katakana* transliteration of the English word “animation” (Tavassi, 2012: 19).

This terminology includes all commercial animation coming out of Japan today. Nevertheless, there are two main streams of animation in Japan: the television-based style of limited animation, which developed out of the relation between animation and *manga*, and long-length animation style (which derived from the Disney tradition of the 30s) based around theatrical release (Steinberg, 2012: 8).

Although this generalist definition, six peculiar characteristics can be attributed to *anime*. Citing Steinberg, *anime* is an animation form that

“(1) is cel based; (2) uses various time – and labor – saving devices that give it a lower cel count than most non-Japanese animation [...] (3) has a strong tendency



toward the development of complex human relationships, stories, and worlds [...] (4) is primarily organized around television (5) is character-centric and (6) is inherently transmedial, crossing to multiple media platforms and material objects”.¹⁹

The history of Japanese animation is indeed very long, and its roots can be found in Japanese medieval illustration style of *ukiyo-e* (Tavassi, 2012: 19). Nevertheless, the real breaking point from which modern *anime* was born was the establishment of Tōei Animation in 1956 and the development of *Tetsuwan Atomu* (translated as “Astro boy”) by Osamu Tezuka in 1963 (Steinberg, 2012: 9).

Commercial *anime* is classified into various genres and subgenres, depending on the topics covered, and especially depending on the target audience. The genre classification mechanism in Japan is, in fact, opposite to the one in western countries. In western countries, target audience is detected *a posteriori*, primarily with post-sale surveys, and genres are determined by elements that are recognizable by the general audience. On the other hand, Japanese *anime* genres are divided into age and sex groups.

For this reason, in Japanese commercial animation, the same theme can be covered in a different way depending on the audience target. In particular, *anime* genres are generally considered to be:

1. *Kodomo* (子供) : for children up to 10 years of age; *yōji* (幼児) for

¹⁹ Ian CONDRY, *Anime's Media Mix – Franchising Toys and Characters in Japan*, Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 2013, page 8



children up to 6 years of age;

2. *Shōjo* (少女): for teen girls;
3. *Shōnen* (少年): for teen boys;
4. *Seinen* (青年) or *dansei* (男性): for adult males;
5. *Josei* (女性) or *rēdisu* (レーディス): for adult females;²⁰

From this classification, it is clear that Japanese *anime* is targeted to a wider audience (in terms of age range) than western cartoons, which are generally intended for a rather younger audience (JETRO, 2005).

Anime's success in Japan and, subsequently, overseas has its roots in *manga* comic books. Almost 60% of current *anime* programs are based on *manga* series (Condry, 2013: 106). The continuity with the *manga* world plays a key role in the way that it creates a fan-base of characters before the production of *anime*, reducing budget-related risks and investments. It also plays another fundamental role: *manga*'s success in Japan relies on the feedback loop between producers and audiences. Not only *manga* is cheap to buy and easily accessible, but can also be read for free while standing in convenience stores, a practice known as *tachiyomi* (立ち読み, literally "to read standing up"). This practice reduces influences from promoters, critics and reviews.

Japanese Animation possesses indeed a significantly big market, both in

²⁰ Guido TAVASSI, *Storia dell'animazione giapponese – Autori, arte, industria, successo dal 1917 a oggi* (History of Japanese animation – Authors, art, industry, success from 1917 to today), Latina, Tunuè, 2012, page 39



Japan and overseas. Since its peak in 2006, the animation market in Japan suffered a crisis, but in more recent years, the market has seen a revival, which has brought to a record in sales in 2013. According to the “Animation Market Analysis Project” of Japan’s Media Development Research Institute (MDRI), the market has reached ¥242.8 billion (about €1.82 billion) in the year 2013. This is a record for the industry, whose previous peak, as anticipated, was in 2006 in which it reached ¥241.5 billion (about €1.73 billion) (MDRI, 2014).



Figure 12 Japan Animation Market size transition (1970-2013)

Source: MDRI, 2014

Japanese *anime* started to be successfully exported with *Tetsuwan Atomu* (Astro Boy), and had a rapid increase in overseas selling from the beginning of the 1980. In Europe, *Doraemon*, *Sailor Moon* and *Dragonball* were very popular, while in the US, *Akira*, *Gundam* and Studio Ghibli titles have enjoyed success. It has been calculated that around 60% of the animation shown worldwide is made-in-Japan *anime* (JETRO, 2005). *Anime*'s foreign market reached ¥14.4 billion (around €106 million) in the year 2012 (AJA, 2013), with Asia as the biggest deployment region (39%), followed by Europe (21%) and the North American



Region (11%) (METI, 2014). The export power has experienced a decline in the last decade, with 2010 being the only exception of growth from the previous year.

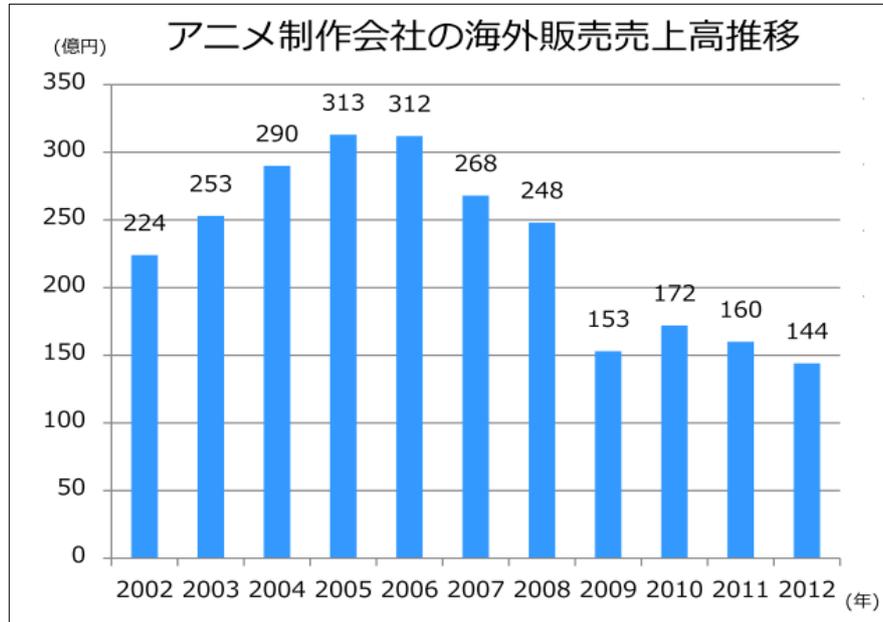


Figure 13 General trend of *Anime* studios revenue from overseas sales
Source: METI, 2014

The value of success of *anime* as a global phenomenon and the energy of the participants are not easily translated into monetary rewards for the studios. In fact, although a large process of *anime*-making is outsourced in South Korea, the Philippines and China, the extreme budget constraints and the tremendous amount of work required leave a scarce margin for economic success (Condry, 2013: 106). The average salary for animators in their twenties is estimated at €10.000 per year and only twice that for animators in their thirties. Moreover, nine out of ten animators are said to leave the industry within three years to move to other areas of work, especially videogames (Hayashi, 2009).

There are said to be around 430 *anime* production houses in Japan, which



form a production consortium together with television stations, advertising agencies and toy companies. In the last ten years, this has become an established practice in order to gather more consistent budget, but more importantly to reduce investment risks. This, though, happens today mostly, if not entirely, for commercial television productions only, and not for original and experimental cinema productions, which are considered to be too risky (Tavassi, 2012: 419).

As anticipated, the industry is nowadays struggling to overcome problems connected to low budgets and high-expense productions. A 30-minute TV animation production generally costs nearly ¥10 million (around €72.000), so the majority of production companies attempt to overcome losses through secondary uses of content, such as sales of videos, DVDs and most of all character products (JETRO, 2005).

Character merchandising is, in fact, a growing phenomenon. Production studios obtain fees from licensees who use characters to create products. *Anime* has thus become a promotional tool and this is why toy and game manufacturers are increasingly working with advertising agencies to plan *anime* production (JETRO, 2005).

The term “character merchandising” refers to licensing, production, marketing and consumption of goods and media based around the image of a character. It is the business of creating contracts and gaining income through selling or leasing the rights to use a character image (Steimberg, 2012: 41). As anticipated, *Tetsuwan Atomu* marks the beginning of modern *anime* history not



only for stylistic and technical innovation, but also because, due to a highly strict budget, the creators had to seek compensation for the deficit created by production costs in character merchandising. Stickers, candies and many other products for Meiji Chocolate were produced using the image of the title-character Astro Boy. For the first time, the animation industry was tied to merchandising and character marketing, and since then this has remained a necessary feature of Japanese animation industry. It is believed that the current market of licensed merchandise based on fictional characters is ten times that of *anime* itself (Condry, 2013: 72) and amounts to approximately ¥1.6 trillion (€11.46 billion) (Steimberg, 2012: 43).

Following this trend, with character merchandising representing the major income source for *anime* production studios, product placement has been relatively ignored. In fact, *anime* has been considered a “not suitable” context for product placement, because stories are usually set in fictional and fantastic worlds, where products would be hard to place (Ōba, 2014: 14). This, though, does not mean that *anime* have never featured product placements.

A famous example of product placement in *anime* is the case of *New Genesis Evangelion* (新世紀エヴァンゲリオン). The 2008 long-length movie featured placements of national brands, like Yebisu, and international ones, like Pizza Hut. The movie also featured an intense promotional tie-in campaign with UCC Ueshima Coffee. The *anime* and the firm had quite a long history of mutual

sponsorships: from 1997 to date, at every movie release came the launch of a time-limited line of coffee cans with images of the main characters featured on the cover.



Figure 14 UCC Coffee cans featuring *New Genesis Evangelion* characters

Source: <https://www.ucc.co.jp/company/news/2011/rel110819.html>

The tie-in maneuver has become so popular that it has gained a nickname among the young generations. The official denomination of UCC コーヒーオリジナルエヴァンゲリオン缶 (UCC kōhī orijinaru Evangelion-kan, that is “UCC coffee original Evangelion can”), has become known as its abbreviation “Eva-kan” (エヴァ缶). The campaign also features the displaying of posters and cardboards with characters from the *anime* sipping UCC Coffee in convenience stores.²¹

As anticipated, spoof brands or brand parodies have also been a traditional feature of *anime*. Switching or changing letters of existing brands appears to be the most usual practice, but animators also create spoofs based on changing colors or using words that recall the original brand.

²¹ Source: UCC Ueshima Official website <http://www.ucc.co.jp/>, Referred to on April 3rd, 2015



However, the reason behind this practice remains unclear. Clearly, animators insert real brands because they want to give the *anime* a better sense of realism. However, not receiving, or else not requesting permission from brands, they create spoofs, possibly in order to avoid legal issues due to copyright infringement.²²

As no previous study on the matter is available, the study will now offer three possible explanations for the existence of spoof brands in *anime*, meaning the reasons why these brands remain spoofs and are not turned into proper product placements. The first hypothetical explanation to this phenomenon might be attributable to a climate of anti-commercialization of *anime* on the side of writers and creators. For example, *anime* director and scriptwriter Mamoru Oshii has stated in an article from *Asahi Shimbun*, that

“current *anime* is mostly *otaku*-centric²³ and made to be turned into merchandising. *Anime* today is a copy of a copy of a copy that is no longer a form of ‘expression’”.²⁴

Moreover, *anime* director Hayao Miyazaki has also stated *anime* is becoming “too commercialized”, and “obsessed by the trends” (Pacific friend, 1991). It is likely, therefore, that *anime* producers do not have a good opinion about the

²² Source: <http://nopybot.com/2011/11/29/parodied-brand-names-in-anime/>, Referred to on May 1st, 2015

²³ “The word ‘otaku’ is often referred to people with an obsessiveness toward ‘geeky’ realms of knowledge and activity, such as cult *anime*, *manga*, computer games, military trivia, and so on” (Condry, 2013: 188).

²⁴ Atsushi OHARA, “*Young people, have no dreams*”, said the director, *Asahi Shimbun*, November 21st, 2011



commercialization of *anime*, which might derive from using product placements. Indeed, product placement has been often received criticism about compromising the artistic integrity of an artwork, not only in the *anime* world, but also for movies, television, music videos and videogames. In this perspective, *anime* writers, directors, etc. might, on the one hand desire a more realistic art piece by inserting real brands in *anime*, but on the other hand see product placement as a threat to their artistic integrity, thus inserting real brand-resembling spoofs.

A second explanation might derive from the unpredictability of the development of *anime* stories. Cartoons of the “western school”, such as Hanna-Barbera, Disney, or, more recently *The Simpsons* or *Family Guy*, possess a certain level of seriality. That is, episodes follow one another sequentially, so that every episode has more or less the same structure, and nearly every episode is distinct from each other. *Anime*, on the other hand, possesses a logic of continuity, so that the story develops with the recurrence of the episodes (Condry, 2013: 83). In other cartoons, it might be easier to juxtapose products and brands to a character, as the personality and features of that character are bound to remain unchanged. This might have been a reason for discouragement for marketers to place products in *anime*, hence not bestowing copyrights to *anime* studios.

A third hypothetical reason to the existence of spoof brands might not depend on neither *anime* authors nor marketers, but to a general lack of knowledge about product placement and its advantages in Japan. That is, *anime* studios might also be unaware of the fact that products can be placed in *anime* with a return of



money. As mentioned above, product placement is still a new practice and many people are likely not to recognize it as an advertising strategy.

The study will now start focus on the assumption that spoof-brand placements have a sponsoring role for brands placed, which is roughly the same product placement has. Hence, regardless of the reason why producers come up with these spoofs in the first place, the only difference between spoofs and real placements would be that *anime* studios are not paid to place spoof brands in *anime*. If this assumption was correct, *anime* creators and production studios might turn to product placement as a way to overcome problems related to low budget and high expenses, which the industry is currently facing, as mentioned in above while describing the current market situation of the Japanese animation industry.

Hypothesis

The effects in terms of brand recognition after exposure to spoof-brand placements in Japanese *anime* and product placements in television, movies, etc. (measured in previous studies) do not differ in a preponderant way. Therefore, Japanese *anime* is a suitable context for product placement, which could represent a solution for budget-related problems, which the Japanese animation industry is currently facing.



Chapter 2 – Methodology

The second chapter presents the survey that aims at measuring brand recognition after exposure to spoof-brand placements and represents a completion of the research carried out with the literature review. Firstly, a brief explanation of the survey's purpose and contribution from existent studies is provided. Secondly, the data gathering process is illustrated. Finally, an exhaustive description of the content of the survey is provided.

2.1 Study purpose and contribution

The survey's purpose is to demonstrate how, in comparison with previous studies, spoof-brand placements' effect on viewers is roughly the same of product placement in traditional media channels. Effectiveness is measured in terms of brand recognition after exposure. The methodology used was in line with previous studies. In particular, this study followed the example of the following studies:

1. Cholinski (2012) used an experimental approach and field setting in order to measure effectiveness of prominent, audio-visual, highly connected to the plot product placement in movies. The study in particular suggests an implicit approach, which was used in this study.

2. Law & Braun (2000) measured effectiveness of product placement in television shows, with the use of two different types of measures: explicit measures that tap memory directly, and implicit measures that measure the effect



of exposure on product choice indirectly. This second stream of measures was adopted in the present study.

3. Brennan, Dubas & Babin (1999), measured the extent to which product-placement type and exposure time explain the rate at which viewers recognize brand names affiliated with product placements in movies. Accordingly, in the current study, brand recognition was the measure of effectiveness.

4. Verhellen, Dens & De Pelsmacker (2013) investigated the effects of prominence on brand recognition and purchase intention of brands that appear in Youtube videos. They furthermore studied the moderating role of liking on these effects. Liking was therefore measured in the present study.

5. Dens, De Pelsmacker, Wouters & Purnawirawan (2012) investigated the interaction effect of prominence and plot connection on brand recognition of product placements in movies. Their study represented the main contribution to this study.

Nevertheless, this study presents a feature of originality in the sense that it applies the cited existent studies to *anime*-viewing and draws a comparison between traditional product placement and spoof-brand placements. In order to preserve the originality of this study, proper adjustments were made to the methodologies of previous studies.



2.2 Data collection procedure

For practical reasons, the survey was conducted online, through a Google form, and sent to as many participant as possible through a snowball sampling technique. The potential respondents were obtained mostly via Facebook, where they were directly sent the Google Form in a private message, in which they were asked to fill in the survey and, if possible, to share it with others. The survey was thus shared through social networks and blogs in order to reach the maximum number of respondents. No particular characteristic was required from recipients in order to get as many answers as possible. In total, roughly 900 people were reached with this technique, and 234 people answered the survey from April 7th, 2015 to April 17th, 2015, with a response rate of 26%.

The survey relied on a convenience or accidental sample. Convenience sampling is a technique where the sample is drawn by the part of the population that is close to hand. This way, subjects are selected because they are readily available and convenient. Although convenience sampling might draw biases in the study, it represents the least costly technique of sampling to the researcher, in terms of money, time and effort (Marshall, 1996: 522).

Because of the small size of the study, and considered that the sample resembled the characteristics of previous studies' samples, the convenience sample was accepted as suitable for the survey.



2.3 Content of the survey

The survey was created based on the previous literature, in particular on studies about measurement of product placement effectiveness in terms of brand recall and/or recognition as a consequence of exposure. The survey was created in three different languages: English, Japanese and Italian (see Appendixes B, C and D for question list). Translation assistance was offered by natives and bilinguals in order to insure the accuracy of the translation.

Following previous literature, this study used implicit measures. Because of this, in the questionnaire there were no questions concerning product placement directly. Implicit tests, i.e. tests where participants are not told to remember events, but simply to perform some tasks, are highly recommended for measuring the impact of exposure (Law & Braun, 200: 1060). Accordingly, the survey was named “Survey about Japanese anime” and no mention was done about product placement or spoof branding to the recipients.

A first set of questions was set up in order to determine average age, occupation, etc. Nationality was not asked, as which country respondents were born in was not considered influential on their behavior towards product placement. However, the country of residency was asked. This was to determine if the recipients lived in a country in which *anime* is accessible and/or popular. General attitudes, habits and preferences towards Japanese animation were measured with a second set of questions. These questions were created on the basis of the “Overseas consumer survey on Japanese contents” carried out by JETRO (Japan



External Trade Organization) in 2011. These questions helped determine how many respondents were *anime* watchers, how much time they usually would spend in *anime*-watching, how much money they would spend in *anime*, etc.

The final part of the survey reflected the very purpose of the study, and was created based on the existent literature, in order to measure brand recognition after exposure to spoof-brand placements. The methodology of previous studies on product placement's effectiveness in terms of brand recognition was generally based on showing extracts of TV shows or movies containing product placements and measuring the effects on the audiences as a result of the exposure. In order to fit this methodology into this study, extracts from *anime* episodes were chosen, in which spoof-brand placements were present. Afterwards, effects on the audiences due to the exposure to spoof-brand placements were measured. Because this study investigates the effects of spoof-brand placements compared to those of product placements, spoof-brand placements and product placements were considered equal. Previous research on product placement's effectiveness has shown that not all placements are equally effective (Balasubramanian et al., 2006: 1). Consequently, multiple videos with multiple types of placements were needed. Following the example of Dens et al. (2012), four spoof-brand placements were selected to reflect two levels of plot-connection (high vs low) and prominence (prominent vs subtle).

The videos were selected from "It's a SOMY", a page of the social media Tumblr, dedicated to collecting fake brand names in *anime* (available at



<http://animeadvertisements.tumblr.com/>). From the list, four videos were selected in order to find four spoof-brand placements of respectively (1) strong plot connection, high level of prominence; (2) weak plot connection, high level of prominence; (3) strong plot connection, low level of prominence; (4) weak plot connection, low level of prominence.

The first video was taken from *Inuyasha*, Episode 38 “Two hearts, one mind”, with a spoof placement of MacDonald’s. In this video, *anime*’s main character Kagome dines with her friends in a “WacDonald’s” restaurant. The spoof brand is visible throughout the whole video, and since it represents the location of the whole scene, this was considered a strong plot connection, prominent placement. In line with previous studies, this placement is supposed to have the highest rate of brand recognition.



Figure 15 Strong plot connection, prominent placement: Wacdonald’s.
Source: www.youtube.com

The second video was taken from *Death Note*, episode 1 “Rebirth”, with a spoof-brand placement of Panasonic. While main character Light Yagami is listening to music, television news about murders and other fatalities are being



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announced in the background. On a “Fanasonic” television screen, placed in the famous Shibuya crossing, images of television newscasts reporting this kind of tragic news are displayed. The spoof brand for Panasonic is highly visible in a six-second long scene, hence the placement was considered as a weak plot connection, prominent placement. Accordingly, this placement was supposed to have the third-highest rate of brand recognition.

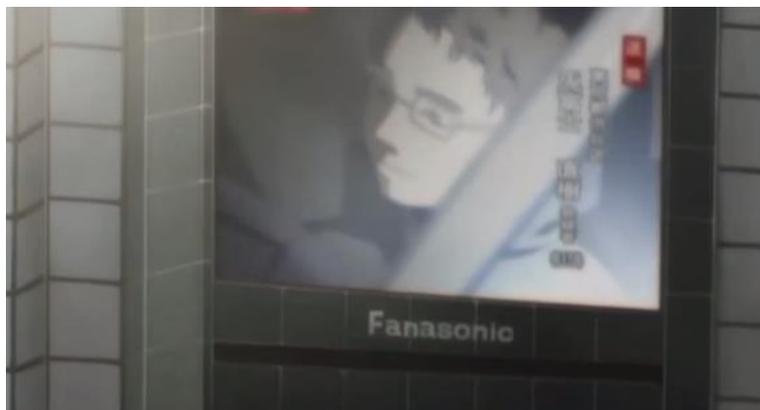


Figure 16 Weak plot connection, prominent placement: Fanasonic
Source: www.youtube.com

The third video was also an extract of *Death Note*, from episode 14, “Friend”, which featured a spoof-brand placement of Google Japan. The main character Light Yagami is searching for information about a girl named Misa, whom he had previously met earlier that day. He uses the search engine “Gentle Japan”, the logo of which is a clear spoof of Google Japan. Since the scene revolves around the search engine, but the logo appears for 1.5 seconds and is relatively small on the screen, the placement was considered a strong plot connection, subtle placement.

Hence, it is likely that this placement will have the second-highest rate of brand recognition.



Figure 17 Strong plot connection, subtle placement: Gentle Japan
Source: www.youtube.com

The final video, taken from *Welcome to the NHK!*, episode 2, contained a placement of “Warlboro”, spoof of Marlboro cigarettes. The *anime* revolves around the life of Tatsuhiro, an unemployed who leads a reclusive life as a *hikikomori*. The scene selected displays the messy room Tatsuhiro lives in, with different objects including Warlboro cigarettes. The brand is not fully visible and appears for less than 2 seconds. In addition, it is not related to the developing of the story. Accordingly, this final video was coded as weak plot connection, subtle placement. Hence, Marlboro is supposed to be the brand with the lowest rate of recognition.

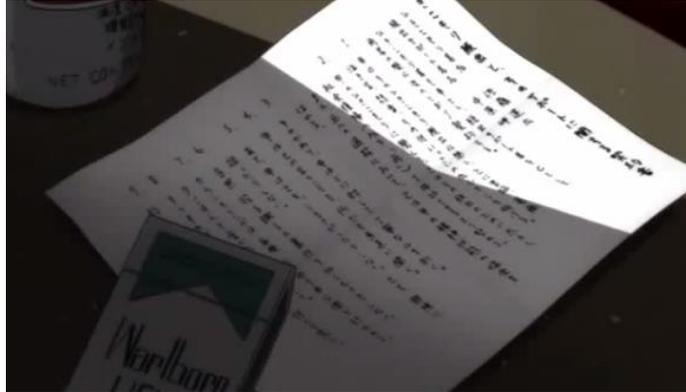


Figure 18 Weak plot connection, subtle placement: Warlboro
Source: www.youtube.com

Videos were selected in order to obtain results comparable to those obtained in previous studies on product placement effectiveness in terms of brand recognition. The selection of videos can be summed up as in Chart 1.

		Prominence	
		Subtle	Prominent
Plot connection	Weak	Warlboro	Fanasonic
	Strong	Gentle Japan	WacDonald's

Chart 1 Overview of spoof brands per condition in the videos used in the survey.

After viewing the videos, a set of questions was set up to measure the respondents' liking of the video. For this, a five-item seven-point Likert scale was set up. Following the study of Verhellen et al. (2013), one reverse-scaled item was inserted in the scale, in order to check the seriousness of the respondents and acquiescence bias.

Liking was measured, in line with previous literature (Dens et al., 2012), for multiple reasons. Firstly, for a practical reason: audience needed to be distracted for a certain amount of time after the viewing of the scene and before registering



brand recognition. Secondly, previous studies have proved how liking of the media program can influence attitudes of audiences towards brands and brand-placements (Balasubramanian et al., 2006: 115-141). In particular, low likeability tends to have a dual effect: it distracts from viewing, and consequently to brand recognition, and it causes unfavorable attitudes toward the brands (McCarty, 2004: 53). Therefore, before measuring brand recognition, it was necessary to assure no interferences from video liking were present.

Participants were finally asked to mark from a list which brand or brands they recognized as seeing in the video. Because spoof-brand placements and product placements were considered equal, the brands inserted in the list were existing brands, and not their spoof equivalent. The list contained four placed brands and three filler brands. Hence, spoof-brand placement effectiveness was measured as brand recognition. Recognition describes the form of memory that requires a person to judge whether or not a stimulus, located in a set of distracting stimuli, has been seen previously (Brennan et al., 2000: 325). It has been argued that brand recognition (i.e. recognizing the brand from a list) is a far more sensitive measure of learning about products than brand recall (i.e. participants are asked to write themselves which brand or brands they recall as appearing in the video) (Law and Braun, 2000).

Brand recognition was coded as 0 (not recognized) and 1 (recognized). The proportion of brand recognitions was then divided by the number of participant (234 people) to obtain ratio. The ultimate aim of the survey is to confirm previous



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literature's studies, hence obtaining as follows:

1. Highest brand recognition for the strong plot connection, prominent placement (Wadonald's);
2. Second highest brand recognition for the strong plot connection, subtle placement (Gentle Japan);
3. Second lowest brand recognition for the weak plot connection, prominent placement (Fanasonic);
4. Lowest brand recognition for the weak plot connection, subtle placement (Warlboro).



Chapter 3 – Results and Findings

Chapter 3 illustrates in details the results of the online surveys. It also considers the findings and implications (both theoretical and practical) deriving from this survey. Finally, a brief consideration about the limitations of the study and further studies is provided.

3.1 The sample

124 people answered the Italian form, 43 the English form, and 67 the Japanese form, for a total of 234 recipients, 104 males and 130 females. Considering the socio-demographic characteristics of our sample it can be noticed that the vast majority of recipients were young (Figure 19), half of them students, followed by employees (Figure 20).

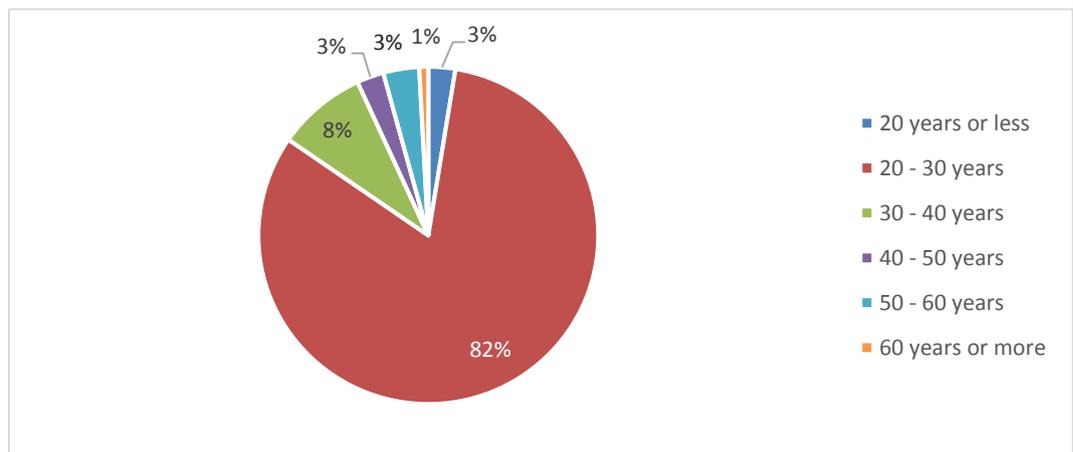


Figure 19 Recipients' Age

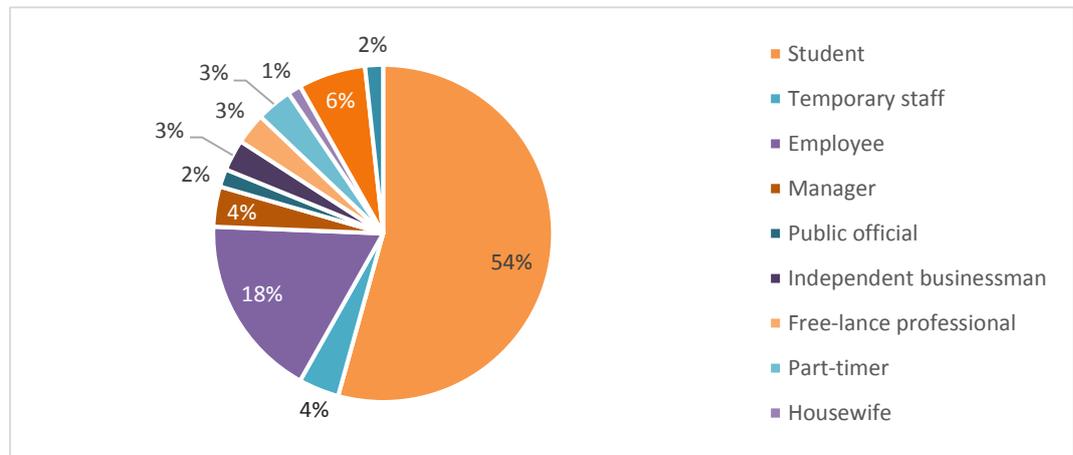


Figure 20 Recipients' Employment

48% of respondents currently reside in Italy (113 people), followed by Japan (38%, 89 people), and other countries. As shown in Figure 21, countries in which respondents reside are countries where *anime* are easily accessible and widely popular, as shown in Part 2 of the literature review. Therefore, it was assumed respondents were more or less familiar with *anime*.

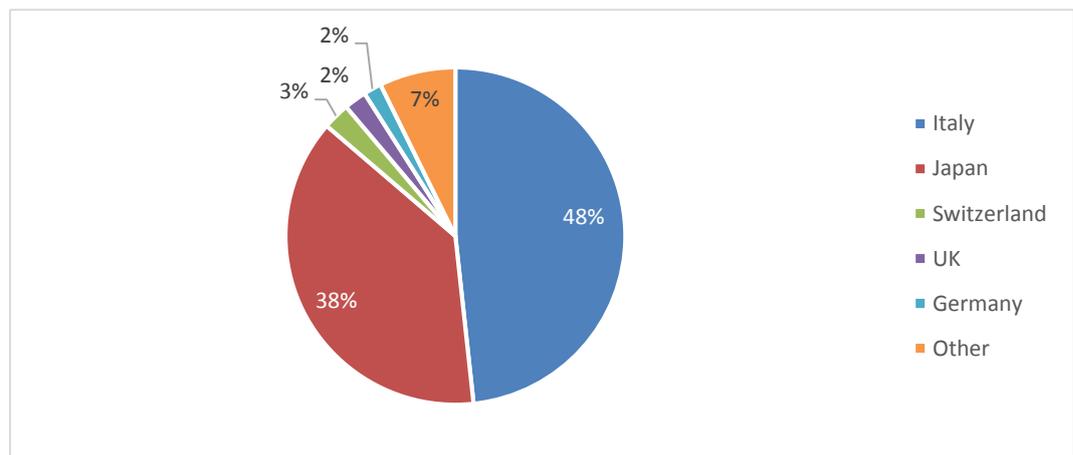


Figure 21 Respondents' Residency

214 people (91% of the respondents) stated they have already seen *anime*, while 20 people stated they have never seen *anime* (9% of the respondents).



Nevertheless, 85% watches *anime* not more than 2 hours a week (Figure 22). This results show that the sample is generally familiar with *anime*, but *anime* does not possess a preponderant role in their interests.

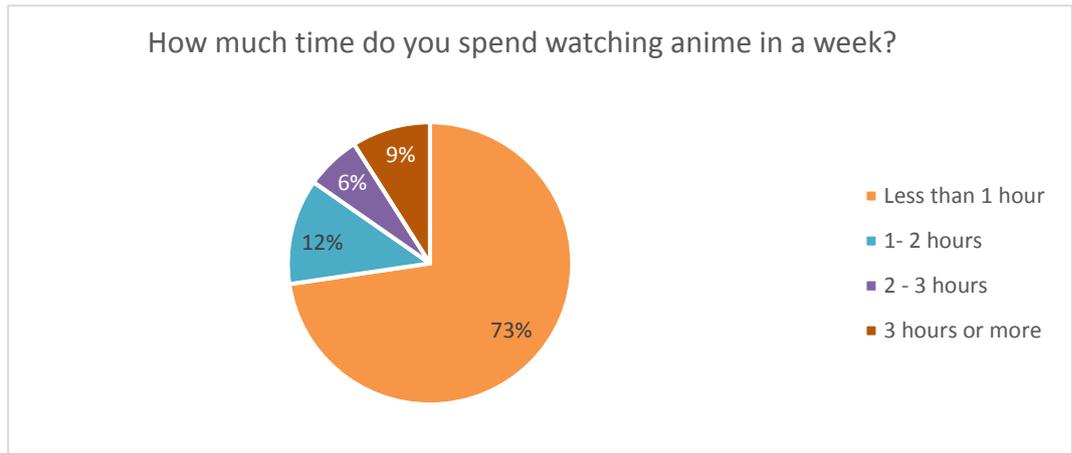


Figure 22 Recipients' average *anime*-watching time per month

The tool or media most used to view *anime* is Internet (free sites), followed by TV. This tendency is confirmed by the monthly average expense in *anime*, which the majority of recipients stated was 0 (See Figures 23 and 24). This fact is connected with socio-demographic characteristic of the sample. It is in fact assumable that, since the majority of the sample is young (less than 30 years of



age) and half of them are student, their monthly income is relatively low and they cannot afford to spend a high amount of money in *anime*-watching.

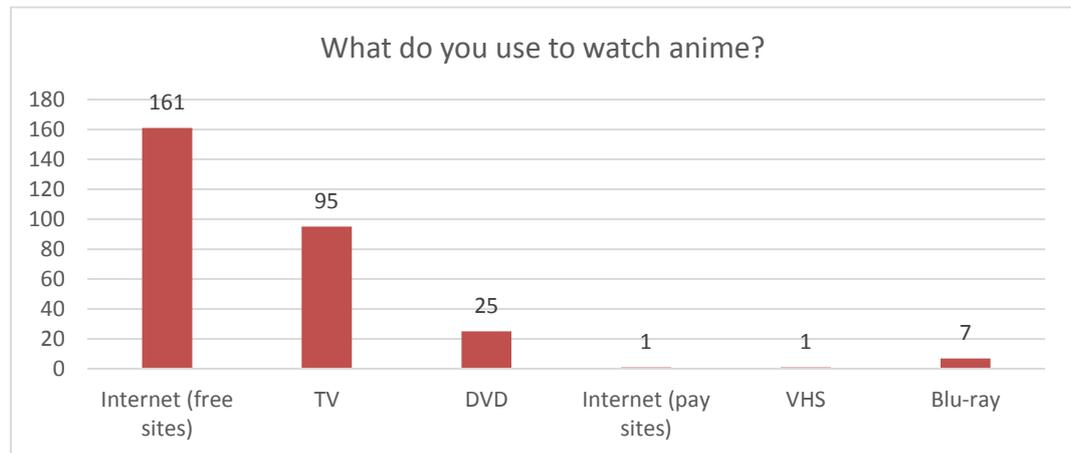


Figure 23 Tools and media used by viewers to watch *anime*

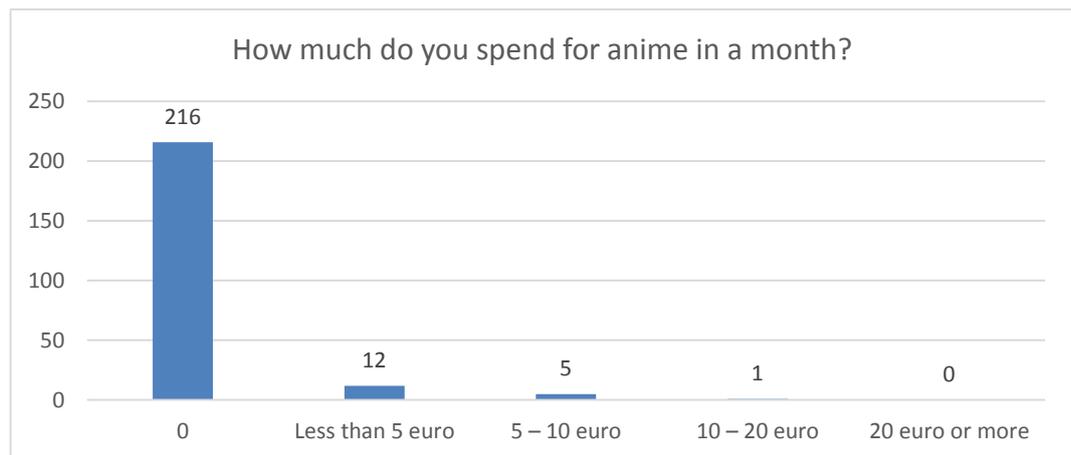


Figure 24 Recipients' monthly average expense in *anime*-watching

Recipients were asked to name a maximum of three titles between their favorite *animes*. 160 titles were named, showing a great variety of both genre and period (see Figure 25 for a brief list, Appendix E for the complete list). These results are generally in line with JETRO's "Overseas consumer survey on Japanese contents", therefore in line with an average *anime*-viewing audience. Hence, the recipients of this study can be considered an adequate target for the study.

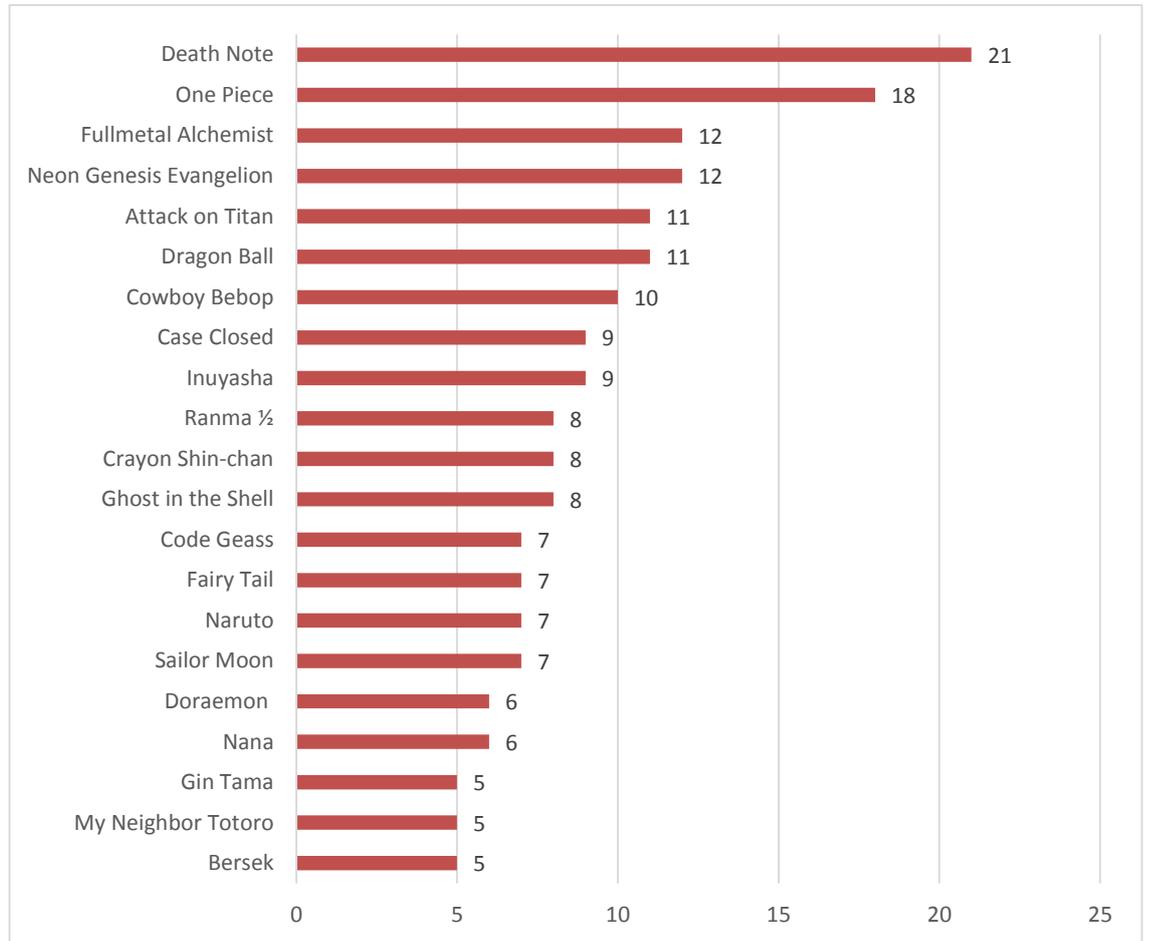


Figure 25 Top *anime* titles named by recipients

The average respondent's characteristics can be therefore summed up as following:

1. Young (20 – 30 years of age)
2. Student
3. Either Italian or Japanese
4. Watches *anime* less than 1 hour per month
5. Uses internet free sites to watch *anime*
6. Does not spend any money to watch *anime*



3.2 Spoof-brand exposure

As anticipated in Chapter 2, liking was measured with a 7-point (from “totally agree” to “totally disagree”) Likert scale, which recipients had to fill in after viewing each video (see Appendixes B, C and D for the complete scale). The scale was obtained based on the study by Verhellen et al. (2013) and featured statements like “I enjoyed this video”, “I would like to see this video again”, and so on. Respondents were asked to indicate to which degree they agreed with the statements, assigning a value from 1 to 7 to each one. Therefore, the greater the value, the greater the recipient’s likeability of the video (the value for the reverse-scaled item “I regret having seen this video” was calculated negatively).

Figure 26 shows the results for video liking of the first video shown, an extract of “Two hearts, one mind”, Episode 38 of *Inuyasha*. As the survey confirmed, this *anime* is very popular and in fact, the video created a relatively high likeability. Therefore, brand recognition is not influenced by liking-related factors. The video features the main character, Kagome, chatting with her classmates in a “WacDonald’s” restaurant, a clear spoof of the McDonalds’ fast food chain. As expected, Macdonald’s was the most recognized brand, with 221 recognitions (94.44% of the recipients).

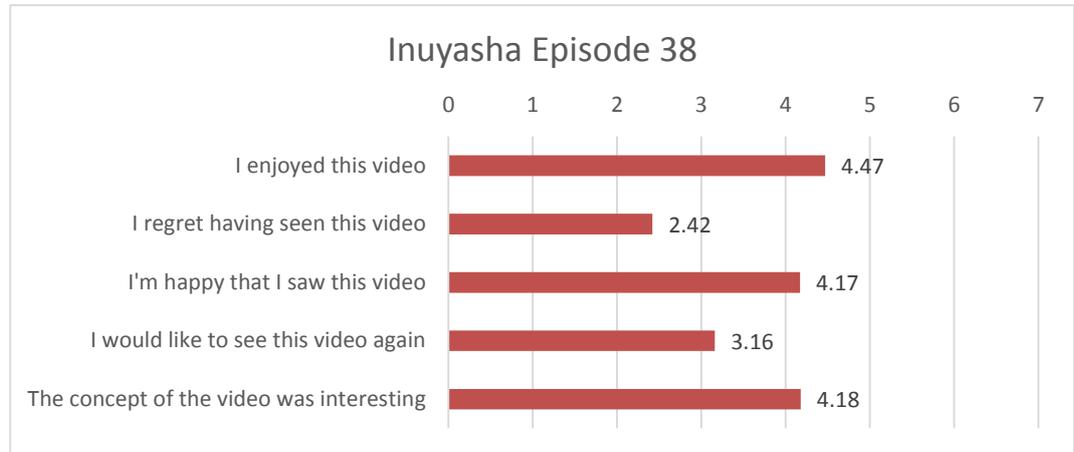


Figure 26 First video likeability

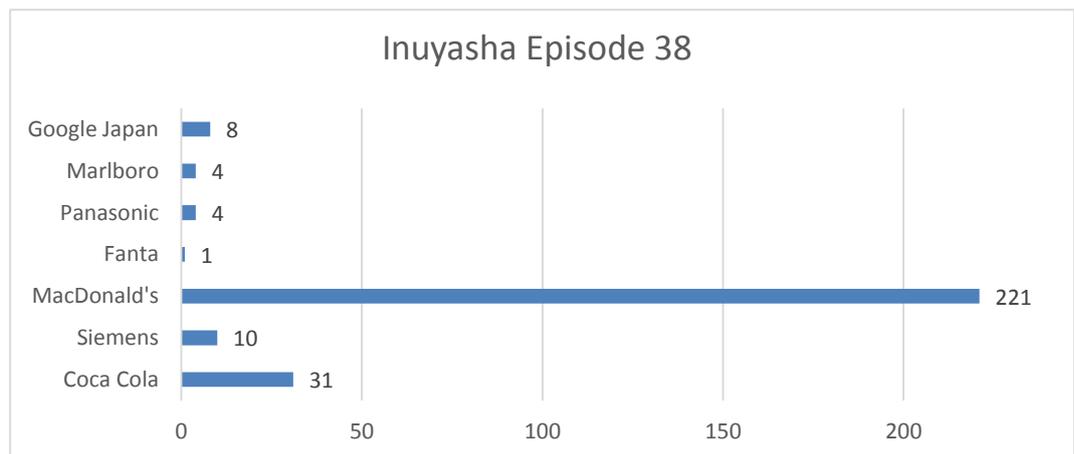


Figure 27 First video brand recognition

The second video, taken from *Death Note*, Episode 1, also registered relatively high liking, with all the parameters slightly inferior to 5. The video features a “Fanasonic” maxi-television on which news about murders in Tokyo are displayed, while a background voice describes other fatalities. As expected, the most recognized brand was Panasonic, with 189 recognition (80.76% of the recipients).

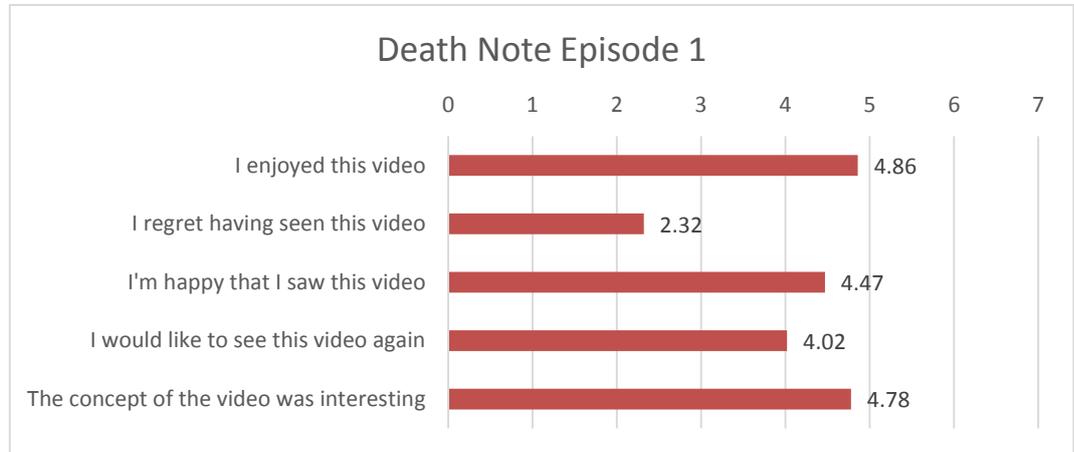


Figure 28 Second video Likeability

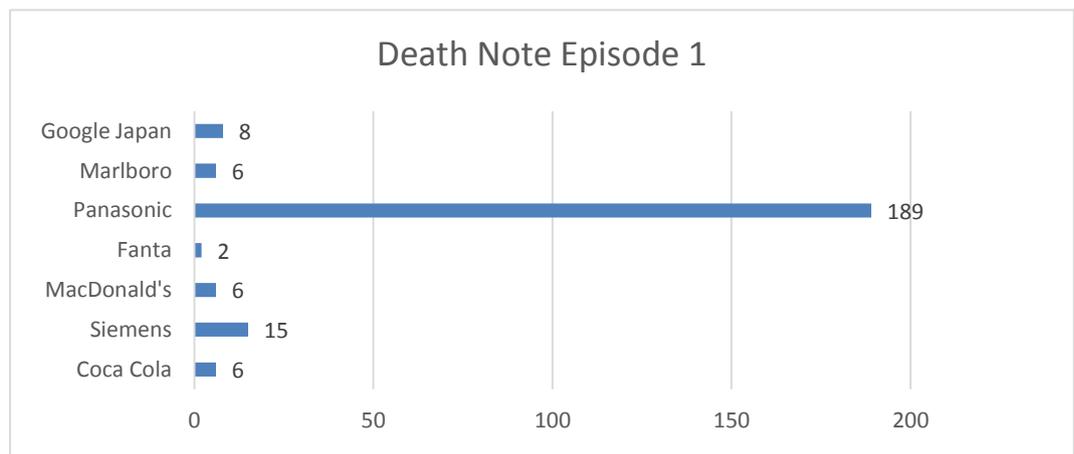


Figure 29 Second video Brand recognition

Third video registered a 4-point average likeability. The video featured main character Light searching for information about Misa on “Gentle Japan”, therefore the placement was considered highly plot-connected. Nevertheless, its prominence level was quite low. As expected, the highest recognition was attributed to Google Japan (87.60%).



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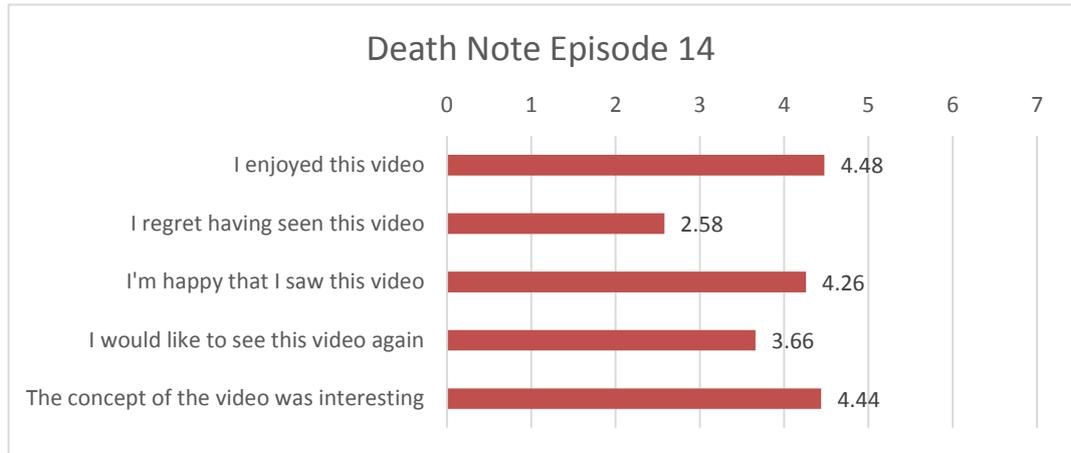


Figure 30 Third video Likeability

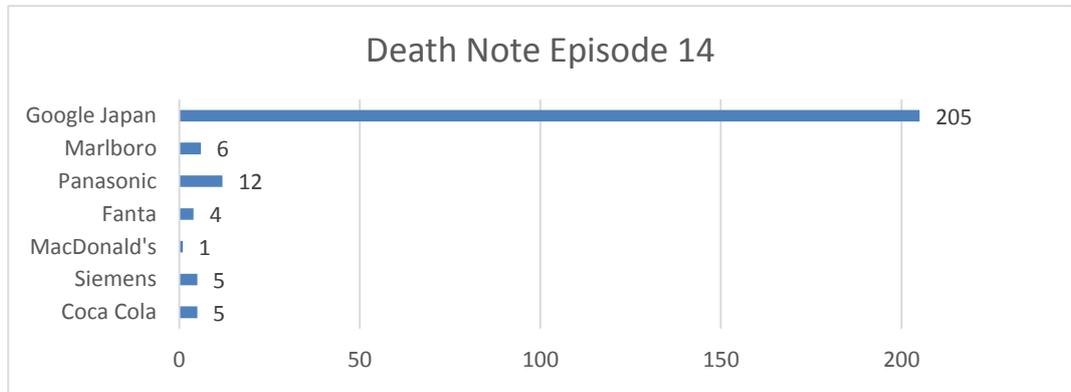


Figure 31 Third video Brand recognition



Finally, *Welcome to the NHK!* registered the lowest brand recognition (Marlboro, 66.23%) with an average likeability of almost 4 points. Likeability was also the lowest, supposedly because of the newness of the *anime* and consequently its relatively low popularity (it does not appear in the list of titles given by recipients). Brand recognition was expected to be the lowest because the brand is only partially visible on the screen and for a brief amount of time.

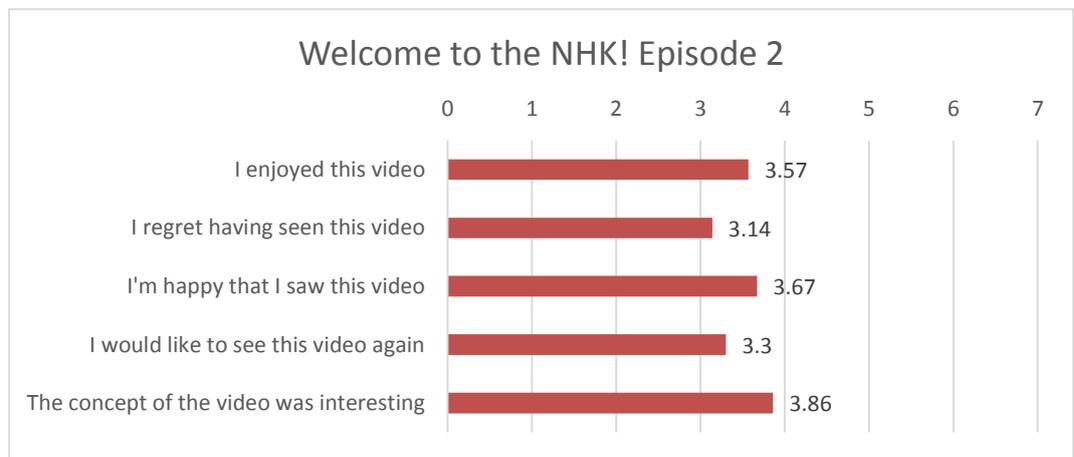


Figure 32 Fourth video Likeability

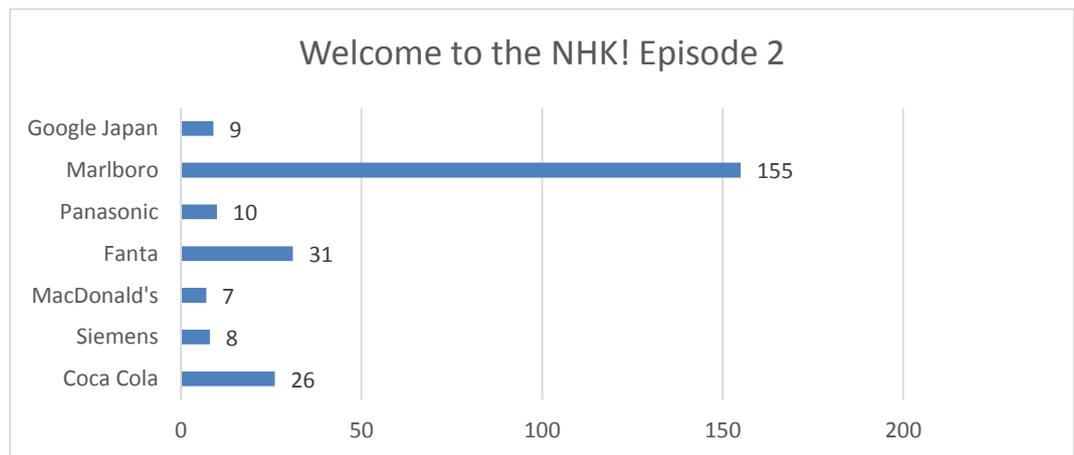


Figure 33 Fourth video Brand Recognition



Results of the survey can be therefore summed up as in Chart 2.

		Prominence	
		Subtle	Prominent
Plot connection	Weak	Warlboro (66.23%)	Fanasonic (80.76%)
	Strong	Gentle Japan (87.60%)	WacDonald's (94.44%)

Chart 2 Recognition ratio of spoof brands per condition in the videos used in the survey

For a further inquiry, a cross-result analysis was carried out in order to understand whether factors of age, sex and residency could influence brand recognition. As Figures 34, 35 and 36 illustrate, the results, even when separated into socio-demographic categories, remain roughly unaltered.

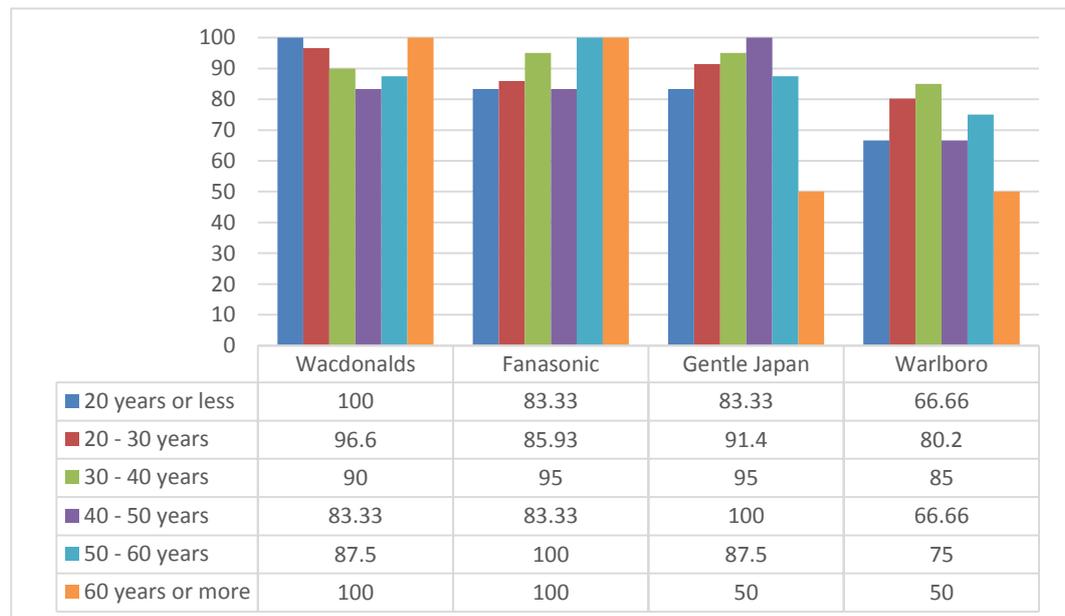


Figure 34 Brand recognition ratio per age groups

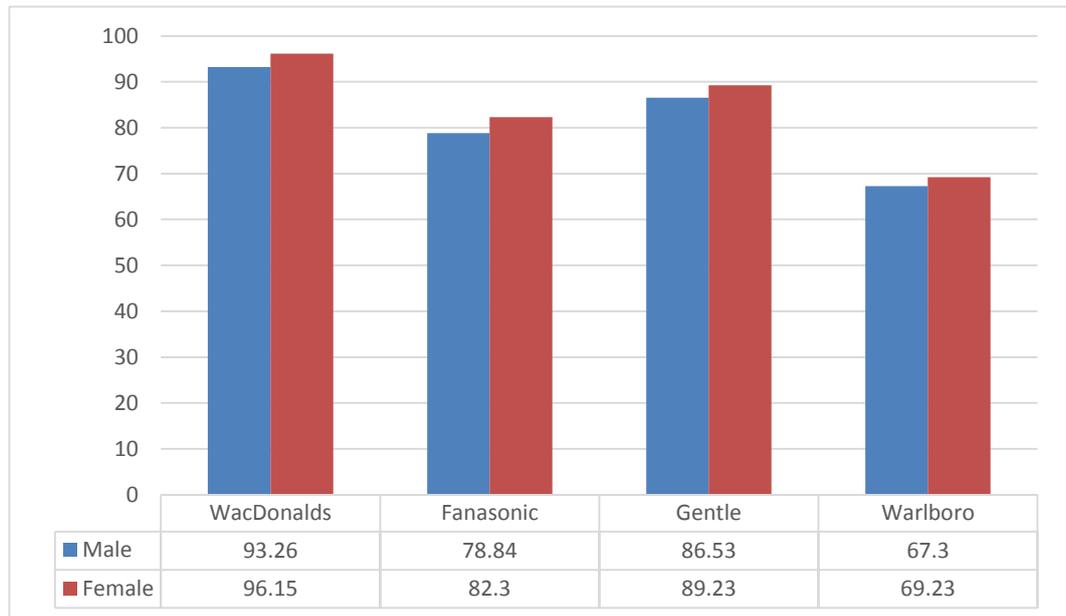


Figure 35 Brand recognition ratio per gender groups

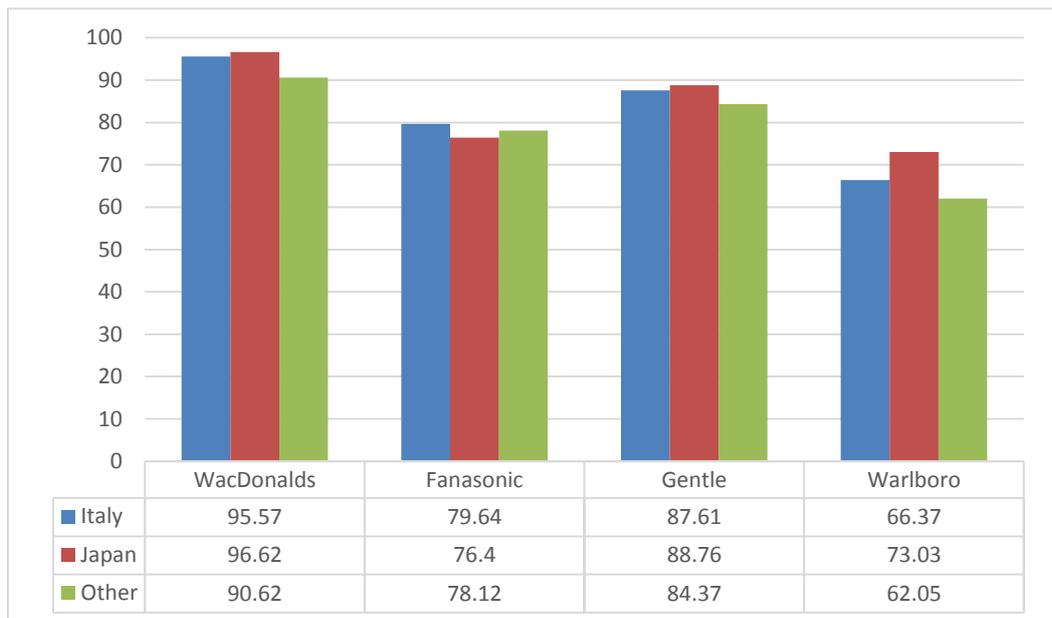


Figure 36 Brand recognition ratio per residency groups

These results are also in line with previous studies. As previous research has shown, in fact, socio-demographic factors such as age, gender and so on do not show variance in measures of product placement effectiveness. That is, viewers tend to have the same recognition rate, regardless of socio-demographic factors



(Balasubramanian et al., 2006: 127). Rather, socio-demographic factors (especially gender and age) seem to have an influence only on product placement acceptability and awareness about placements of “uncomfortable” products, such as weapons, alcohol and tobacco (for example, males tend to be more acceptant of placements of these products than female) (Gupta & Gould, 1997). Further research should focus on this topic related to *anime* viewing.

3.3 Findings

Throughout the literature review and the online survey described above, the expected results have been achieved. Brand recognition ratio of the survey of this study was compared with brand recognition as a result of product placement, analyzed in previous studies. This comparison showed that brand recognition after exposure to spoof-brand placements and brand recognition after exposure to product placements have similar effects. Therefore, the hypothesis of this study was confirmed by the results of the survey: effects in terms of brand recognition after exposure of spoof-brand placements and effects of product placement are not preponderantly different.

Hence, this study might prove that Japanese *anime* is a suitable context for product placement, just as much as movies, television programs, etc., and could represent a possible solution for budget-gathering problems, which the animation is currently facing in Japan.



Moreover, the study shows how the assumption that product placements and spoof-brand placements are roughly the same thing, is correct. The study, in fact, shows how spoof-brand placements work along the multidimensional features of product placement, of prominence (therefore modality) and plot connection. The anticipated “non-obtrusive” nature of product placement can be therefore found in spoof-brand placements, as revealed from the study in different levels of brand recognition by the viewers, depending on the placement. The first anticipated crucial characteristic of product placement, though, does not apply to current spoof-brand placements: the commercial nature of placements. As the study has theorized, therefore, spoof-brand placements and product placements are basically the same thing, the only difference being in the fact that spoof-brand placements do not imply a payment from the sponsored brand.

Finally, as the literature review has pointed out, *anime* possess features that are required to operate a correct product placement. Not only has its suitability been proved in a theoretical way, with the comparison of the effects in term of brand recognition, but in a practical way. The literature review has, in fact, pointed out how *anime*-related activities, such as character tie-ins and character merchandising, resemble product placement-related activities, such as tie-ins and reverse product placement. In other words, it is likely that product placements in *anime* might be easily integrated with product placement-related activities, as it is actually already happening in the *anime* world. This represents a further prove to the suitability of *anime* for product placement.



3.4 Theoretical Implications

As mentioned before, studies on product placement have been focusing on various themes, particularly on its effectiveness in terms of brand recall/recognition, brand awareness, brand attitude, etc. On the line of these studies, and as a result of this paper, further inquiries might be performed on Japanese Medias, and in particular Japanese *anime*. For example, studies on repetition, duration, modality and other features of spoof-brand placements could be performed.

In the literature review, this study has pointed out how product placement in *anime* has been considered “not suitable” or “not advisable” because of the fictional contents of *anime*, in which brands might be hard to place. Although further research must investigate this point, the study pointed out how these critics should not be considered in absolute terms. Certainly, this study cannot demonstrate that Japanese *anime* is a suitable context for product placement in all cases. *Anime* should therefore be considered as a possible suitable context for product placement.

3.5 Practical Implications

As the research shows, effects on *anime* audience of spoof-brand placements are similar to those of product placements in movies and other media channels. Furthermore, the study's literature review has pointed out how *anime*-related activities, such as character merchandising, resemble product placement-related



activities, revealing *anime* is a suitable context for product placement, but also for the promotion activities connected to it. In this case, Japanese *anime* studios might adapt their strategies of budget research with turning spoof brands into paid product placements.

As mentioned in the literature review, product placement has represented an important strategy to gather budget, and sometimes to increase revenues, even before the publication of art works. Product placement could be a possible solution to the scarceness of budget the animation industry is currently facing, as described in Chapter 1, and could thus improve working conditions of animators and ultimately the quality of the work itself. This consideration might be an argument against the anti-commercialization positions held by *anime* writers and producers, described in the literature review. With the improvement of working condition due to higher budgets, it is assumable that the artistic quality of *anime* might be improved after the insertion of product placements.

Finally, as the literature review has pointed out, the dichotomy of film versus television *anime* does not represent an obstacle for recurring to product placement in *anime*, as product placement currently exists and is highly successful in both media channels.



3.6 Limitations and future research

The research presents various limitations due to the small size of the sample examined. Therefore, the results cannot be considered in absolute terms. The research wishes to present itself as a starting point for further researches.

Other limitations derive from scarceness or (at least) low accessibility of academic studies on the topic of product placement in Japan and in Japanese Media. This paper wishes thus to represent an integrative model for studies of product placement in Japan and the Japanese Media.

The purpose of the present study was to determine the suitability of *anime* to product placement, therefore it considered *anime* in a holistic way. However, as described in Part 3 of the literature review, *anime* possess multiple features and different genres. More attention should be focused on the many facets of *anime* in future researches.

As previous cross-cultural analyses have shown, product placement faces different levels of acceptance and reception in different cultures (Guido et al, 2012; McKechnie and Zhou, 2003; Lee et al., 2011). Moreover, differences of gender, sex, age, etc. seem to have an impact on product placement acceptance, although not on brand recognition. For example, males are more acceptant of placements of product such as tobacco, guns and alcohol (Gupta and Gould, 1997: 37-50). Hence, attention should be paid to these differences, when considering *anime* audiences.



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Appendix A

Kyary ANAN lyrics

Artist: Kyary Pamyupamyu (きゃりーぱみゅぱみゅ)

Album: Pamyu pamyu Revolution

Year: 2012

Japanese

あん あんああんあん

ぱみゅぱみゅ

あん あんああんあん

きゃりーぱみゅぱみゅ

僕らは働くよ夢みて

今日も明日もバイトがんばろうね

あれもこれも欲しい 働こ

今週も来週もがんばろうね

あん あんああんあん

ぱみゅぱみゅ

あん あんああんあん

きゃりーぱみゅぱみゅ

English

An an ah-a an

Pamyupamyu

An an ah-a an

Kyary Pamyupamyu

We're going to work, yeah, dreaming

Let's do our best today and tomorrow

I want this, I want that, let's work

Let's do our best this week and the next

An an ah-a an

Pamyupamyu

An an ah-a an

Kyary Pamyupamyu



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Appendix B - Online Survey Question List (English)

Thank you for your collaboration! This survey is anonymous and will only take a few minutes! Please read all the questions carefully and answer as honestly as possible. Thank you very much!

Page 1

—
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30123 Venezia

Age

Please select your age range

- 20 years or less
- 20 – 30 years
- 30 – 40 years
- 40 – 50 years
- 50 – 60 years
- 60 years or more

Sex

- Female
- Male

Employment

Please select one answer from the list

- Student
- Temporary staff
- Employee
- Manager
- Public official
- Independent businessman



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- Free-lance professional
- Part-timer
- Housewife
- Unemployed
- Other

Where do you currently live?

- Italy
- Japan
- Other

Page 2

Have you ever watched anime?

- Yes
- No

How much time do you spend watching anime in a week?

- Less than 1 hour
- 1 – 2 hours
- 2 – 3 hours
- 3 hours or more

What do you use to watch anime?

- Internet (free sites)
- TV
- DVD
- Internet (pay sites)
- VHS
- Blu-ray



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- Other

How much do you spend for anime in a month?

- 0
- Less than 5 dollars
- 5 – 10 dollars
- 10 – 20 dollars
- 10 – 20 dollars
- 20 dollars or more

What is your favorite anime?

(Write up to 3 titles)

Page 3

Videos:

1. Inuyasha, episode 38; brand: Macdonald's
2. Death Note, episode 1; brand: Panasonic
3. Death Note, episode 14; brand: Google Japan
4. Welcome to the NHK!, episode 2; brand: Marlboro

Indicate on the scale below to what extent you agree to the following statements:

(Totally disagree; disagree; rather disagree; neither agree nor disagree; rather agree; agree; totally agree)

- I enjoyed this video
- I regret having seen this video



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- I'm happy that I saw this video
- I would like to see this video again
- The concept of this video was interesting

Below is a list of brands, please indicate which brand(s) appeared in the video:

- Coca Cola
- Siemens
- MacDonald's
- Fanta
- Panasonic
- Marlboro
- Google Japan



APPENDIX C - Online Survey Question List (Japanese)

今回のアンケートは「日本のアニメ」に関するアンケートです。質問になるべく正直に答えてください。ご協力をありがとうございます。

年齢

あなたの年齢を教えてください

- 20歳未満
- 20代
- 30代
- 40代
- 50代
- 60歳以上

性別

- 女性
- 男性

職業

- 学生・生徒
- 派遣社員
- 会社員
- 会社役員
- 公務員
- 自営業
- 自由業



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- パート・アルバイト
- 主婦
- 無職
- その他

お住まい

- イタリア
- 日本

日本のアニメをご覧になったことがありますか？

- はい
- いいえ

1 週間にどれぐらいアニメを視聴していますか？

- 1 時間以下
- 1 時間~2 時間
- 2 時間~3 時間
- 3 時間以上

アニメをどういうメディア(手段)で見えていますか？

- インターネット(無料サイト)
- テレビ
- DVD
- インターネット(有料サイト)
- VHS
- Blu-ray
- その他



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1ヶ月間にアニメにいくら使っていますか？

- かけない
- 1000円以下
- 1000円~2000円
- 2000円~3000円
- 3000円以上

好きなアニメを記載してください

3つまで書いてください

ビデオ

1. 犬夜叉、第38話 (MacDonald's)
2. デスノート、第1話 (Panasonic)
3. デスノート、第14話 (Google Japan)
4. NHKによろこそ！、第2話 (Marlboro)

質問ごとに、あなたの意見に最もふさわしい答えを選んでください

(全くそう思わない、そう思わない、どちらかというと思わない、わからない、どちらかというと思ふ、そう思う、まったくそう思う)

- このビデオはよかった
- このビデオを見て残念だ
- このビデオを見てうれしい
- このビデオまた見たい
- このビデオのコンセプトが好きだ



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以下は商品・ブランドのリストです。ビデオに登場した商品・ブランドを示してください。

- Coca Cola
- Siemens
- MacDonald's
- Fanta
- Panasonic
- Marlboro
- Google Japan



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APPENDIX D - Online Survey Question List (Italian)

Grazie per la tua partecipazione! Il questionario è anonimo e durerà solo pochi minuti. Per favore, leggi attentamente le domande e rispondi nel modo più sincero possibile! Apprezzo molto la tua collaborazione.

Età

Per favore seleziona la tua fascia d'età

- Fino a 20 anni
- 20 – 30 anni
- 30 – 40 anni
- 40 – 50 anni
- 50 – 60 anni
- Più di 60 anni

Sesso

- M
- F

Occupazione

Selezionare una risposta

- Studente
- Impiegato a tempo determinato
- Impiegato
- Manager
- Dipendente pubblico
- Libero professionista
- Lavoratore free-lance
- Lavoratore part-time



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- Casalinga
- Disoccupato
- Altro

Residenza

- Italia
- Giappone
- Altro

Hai mai guardato anime?

- Sì
- No

Quante volte alla settimana guardi anime?

- Meno di un'ora
- 1 o 2 ore
- 2 o 3 ore
- Più di 3 ore

Cosa usi per guardare gli anime?

- Internet (siti gratis)
- Televisione
- Dvd
- VHS
- Internet (siti a pagamento)
- Blu-ray
- Altro



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Quanto spendi per guardare anime al mese?

- 0
- Meno di 5 €
- Dai 5 ai 10 €
- Dai 10 ai 20 €
- Più di 20 €

Qual è il tuo anime preferito?

Scrivi fino a 3 titoli di *anime*

Video:

1. Inuyasha, episodio 38 (MacDonald's)
2. Death Note, episodio 1 (Panasonic)
3. Death Note, episodio 14 (Google Japan)
4. Welcome to the NHK!, episodio 2 (Marlboro)

Per ogni domanda indica nella scala quanto sei d'accordo con le affermazioni

(Per niente d'accordo, non d'accordo, non molto d'accordo, non so, abbastanza d'accordo, d'accordo, decisamente d'accordo)

- Questo video mi è piaciuto
- Sono pentito/a di aver visto questo video
- Sono contento/a di aver visto questo video
- Vorrei vedere di nuovo questo video
- Mi è piaciuta l'idea generale del video



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Qui c'è una lista di marchi e prodotti. Per favore indica quale/i apparivano nel video:

- Coca Cola
- Siemens
- MacDonald's
- Fanta
- Panasonic
- Marlboro
- Google Japan



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APPENDIX E – *Anime* titles given by recipients

1.	<i>Death Note</i>	21
2.	<i>One Piece</i>	18
3.	<i>Fullmetal Alchemist</i>	12
4.	<i>Neon Genesis Evangelion</i>	12
5.	<i>Attack on Titan</i>	11
6.	<i>Dragon Ball</i>	11
7.	<i>Cowboy Bebop</i>	10
8.	<i>Case Closed</i>	9
9.	<i>Inuyasha</i>	9
10.	<i>Ranma ½</i>	8
11.	<i>Crayon Shin-chan</i>	8
12.	<i>Ghost in the Shell</i>	8
13.	<i>Code Geass</i>	7
14.	<i>Fairy Tail</i>	7
15.	<i>Naruto</i>	7
16.	<i>Sailor Moon</i>	7
17.	<i>Doraemon</i>	6
18.	<i>Nana</i>	6
19.	<i>Gin Tama</i>	5
20.	<i>My Neighbor Totoro</i>	5
21.	<i>Berserk</i>	5
22.	<i>Samurai Champloo</i>	4
23.	<i>Slam Dunk</i>	4
24.	<i>Sword Art Online</i>	4
25.	<i>Cardcaptor Sakura</i>	4
26.	<i>Love Live!</i>	4
27.	<i>Akira</i>	3
28.	<i>Black Butler</i>	3
29.	<i>Fate/Zero</i>	3
30.	<i>Gurren Lagann</i>	3
31.	<i>Hetalia: Axis Powers</i>	3
32.	<i>Lupin III</i>	3
33.	<i>Mushishi</i>	3
34.	<i>Princess Mononoke</i>	3
35.	<i>Puella Magi Madoka Magica</i>	3
36.	<i>Rurouni Kenshin</i>	3
37.	<i>Pokémon</i>	3
38.	<i>Pretty Cure</i>	3
39.	<i>Ace of Diamond</i>	2
40.	<i>BECK: Mongolian Chop Squad</i>	2
41.	<i>Black Lagoon</i>	2
42.	<i>Captain Tsubasa</i>	2
43.	<i>Future Diary</i>	2
44.	<i>Great Teacher Onizuka</i>	2
45.	<i>Gurren Lagann</i>	2
46.	<i>Haikyū!!</i>	2
47.	<i>Hajime no Ippo</i>	2
48.	<i>Heidi</i>	2
49.	<i>Kare Kano</i>	2
50.	<i>Kill la Kill</i>	2
51.	<i>Last Exile</i>	2
52.	<i>Marmalade Boy</i>	2
53.	<i>Nausicaä of the Valley of the Wind</i>	2



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54.	<i>Perfect Blue</i>	2
55.	<i>Psycho-Pass</i>	2
56.	<i>Saiyuki</i>	2
57.	<i>Sazae-san</i>	2
58.	<i>Silver Spoon</i>	2
59.	<i>Toradora!</i>	2
60.	<i>Touch</i>	2
61.	<i>Urusei Yatsura</i>	2
62.	<i>Your Lie in April</i>	2
63.	<i>Gantz</i>	2
64.	<i>Non Non Biyori</i>	2
65.	<i>Parasyte</i>	2
66.	<i>5 Centimeters Per Second</i>	1
67.	<i>Akatsuki no Yona</i>	1
68.	<i>Angel Beats!</i>	1
69.	<i>Anohana</i>	1
70.	<i>Arakawa Under the Bridge</i>	1
71.	<i>Attacker You!</i>	1
72.	<i>Bakemonogatari</i>	1
73.	<i>Bakuman</i>	1
74.	<i>Basilisk</i>	1
75.	<i>Blame!</i>	1
76.	<i>Bleach</i>	1
77.	<i>Candy Candy</i>	1
78.	<i>Castle in the Sky</i>	1
79.	<i>Cat's Eye</i>	1
80.	<i>Celestial Method</i>	1
81.	<i>City Hunter</i>	1
82.	<i>Clannad</i>	1
83.	<i>Creamy Mami, the Magic Angel</i>	1
84.	<i>Cromartie High School</i>	1
85.	<i>Cute High Earth Defense Club Love!</i>	1
86.	<i>Daily Lives of High School Boys</i>	1
87.	<i>Death Parade</i>	1
88.	<i>Dennō Coil</i>	1
89.	<i>Digimon</i>	1
90.	<i>Dokaben</i>	1
91.	<i>Durarara!!</i>	1
92.	<i>First Love Limited</i>	1
93.	<i>Fist of the North Star</i>	1
94.	<i>Free!</i>	1
95.	<i>Galaxy Express 999</i>	1
96.	<i>Gosick</i>	1
97.	<i>Hanasakeru Seishōnen</i>	1
98.	<i>HeartCatch PreCure!</i>	1
99.	<i>Hellsing</i>	1
100.	<i>Howl's Moving Castle</i>	1
101.	<i>Hōzuki no Reitetsu</i>	1
102.	<i>Initial D</i>	1
103.	<i>Jarinko Chie</i>	1
104.	<i>JoJo's Bizarre Adventure</i>	1
105.	<i>Kiki's Delivery Service</i>	1
106.	<i>Kimi ni Todoke</i>	1
107.	<i>Kindaichi Case Files</i>	1
108.	<i>Knights of Sidonia</i>	1
109.	<i>Kodocha</i>	1



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110. <i>K-On!</i>	1
111. <i>Kuroko's Basketball</i>	1
112. <i>Legend of the Galactic Heroes</i>	1
113. <i>Level E</i>	1
114. <i>Major</i>	1
115. <i>Monthly Girls' Nozaki-kun</i>	1
116. <i>Nagi-Asu: A Lull in the Sea</i>	1
117. <i>Natsume's Book of Friends</i>	1
118. <i>Nihonjin no Shiranai Nihongo</i>	1
119. <i>One Week Friends</i>	1
120. <i>Ouran High School Host Club</i>	1
121. <i>Paradise Kiss</i>	1
122. <i>Penguindrum</i>	1
123. <i>Planetes</i>	1
124. <i>Ponyo</i>	1
125. <i>Psychiatrist Irabu</i>	1
126. <i>Rascal the Raccoon</i>	1
127. <i>Reborn!</i>	1
128. <i>Revolutionary Girl Utena</i>	1
129. <i>Riddle Story of Devil</i>	1
130. <i>Romeo's Blue Skies</i>	1
131. <i>Saint Seiya</i>	1
132. <i>School Rumble</i>	1
133. <i>Skip Beat!</i>	1
134. <i>Sōten Kōro</i>	1
135. <i>Soul Eater</i>	1
136. <i>Spirited Away</i>	1
137. <i>Tamako Market</i>	1
138. <i>Tenchi Muyo!</i>	1
139. <i>The Garden of Words</i>	1
140. <i>The Girl Who Leapt Through Time</i>	1
141. <i>The Rolling Girls</i>	1
142. <i>The Rose of Versailles</i>	1
143. <i>The Story of Saiunkoku</i>	1
144. <i>The Tale of the Princess Kaguya</i>	1
145. <i>Tiger & Bunny</i>	1
146. <i>Tiger Mask</i>	1
147. <i>Toriko</i>	1
148. <i>Trigun</i>	1
149. <i>Tsurikichi Sanpei</i>	1
150. <i>Uta no Prince-sama</i>	1
151. <i>Voltron</i>	1
152. <i>Yawara!</i>	1
153. <i>Yo-Kai Watch</i>	1
154. <i>Yowamushi Pedal</i>	1
155. <i>YuYu Hakusho</i>	1
156. <i>Future Boy Conan</i>	1
157. <i>Hidamari Sketch</i>	1
158. <i>The Great Adventure of Horus, Prince of the Sun</i>	1
159. <i>Kin-iro Mosaic</i>	1
160. <i>Nodame Cantabile</i>	1



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