

London, Lyrics, & Louis Vuitton: A Cross-Cultural Content

Analysis of Product Placement in Popular Music

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Abstract

The search for alternative forms of advertising corresponds with the proliferation of traditional advertising clutter. One method that has seen an increase in exploration is product placement. Though commonly applied to visual media, this study examines this practice in song lyrics (i.e. lyrical product placement). The current study seeks to add a cross-cultural dimension by evaluating the use of lyrical product placement in the top 100 songs from the U.S., Europe, and Japan from 2010 ($N = 300$). Findings indicate regional differences in lyrical product placement and thus opportunities for diversification in the use of lyrical product placement across regions.

Music sales globally constitute a \$17.3 billion a year industry (IFPI, 2011). While the industry contributes to the global economy through monetary value, there is also the additional component that doesn't receive adequate attention, product placement. Recently there has been an increase in the level of advertising resistance expressed by consumers (Franzen, 1994), resulting in organizations acknowledging a need for alternative methods of conveying their products/services to consumers. One method that has increased in popularity among practitioners and researchers alike is the use of product placement. Though product placement isn't a new form of advertising, originating in cinema in 1896 (Mannoni, 2000), the interest in this form of advertising has shown an ebb and flow in research and application. As the context in which advertisements are presented can impact resistance or preference of the consumer (Dahlen & Edenius, 2007), it is crucial to examine the different functional and cultural contexts available for product placement as there has been an increase in this practice. While previous research has shown that the use of product placement in movies has different levels of acceptance in different countries (Eisend, 2009; Gould, Gupta, & Grabner-Krauter, 2000; and Karrh, Frith, & Callison, 2001), research thus far has yet to look at the similarities and differences in lyrical product placement between different global cultures. While cross-cultural research is imperative, the value of lyrical product placement provides additional incentives as Goldman (2007) describes the music industry as an emerging market for advertisements, since there is limited saturation of this market. The purpose of the current research is to provide an initial examination of the cultural differences in the utilization of lyrical product placement between three regions.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The average American is exposed to over 3000 traditional advertisements everyday, excluding product placements (Verklin & Kanner, 2007). While the notion that individuals are exposed to more advertisements today than they have ever been in the past might at first seem promising to advertisers, there are some consequences to the increased volume of exposure (Rumbo, 2002; Du Plessis, 2005). Some scholars contend that due to the increased number of advertisements, consumers are adapting “advertising avoidance” strategies that include cognitive, behavioral, and physical methods of circumventing advertisements (Speck & Elliot, 1997). Another consequence of the increased advertising clutter (Rumbo, 2002), is that consumers have become so used to advertisements that when they are exposed to an advertisement they invoke an advertising schema (Friestad & Wright, 1994, 1995). The advertising schema allows consumers to interpret an ad as a persuasive attempt and consumers are automatically skeptical toward advertising and wary of its influence (Dahlen, 2005; Hoch, 2002). Thus when an advertised message is perceived, there is reduced credibility of the message and less favorable evaluations (Stafford & Stafford, 2002). One way to reduce the negative elements associated with traditional advertising is to use product placements.

Product Placement

Product placement originated as a means to help reduce the costs of movie production (Newell, Salmon, & Chang, 2006), but has since evolved into a popular approach for advertising and public relations practitioners (Pardun & McKee, 1999). The definitions associated with product placement have evolved as the media, use, and acceptance has changed (see Karrh, 1998 for a review of the definition evolution). The history and evolution of product placement has been long and turbulent, with varying levels of acceptance (Galician & Bourdeau, 2004). While the origin of product placement in cinema dates back to 1986 (Mannoni, 2000), its expansion in

other media wasn't far behind with the first product placement found in music dating back to 1903 (Biggar, 2006). The recent increase in product placement has been attributed to a variety of factors. The first of which is the nature of product placement itself. Product placement is considered a hybrid form of communication (Balasubramanian, 1994) that has the benefits of both public relations and advertising (credibility and control) without the consequences associated with either (lack of sponsor control and non-credible source). In fact, Karrh, McKee, and Pardun (2003) found that product placement can have a greater impact with consumers than is typically displayed in comparable advertising exposures. Further expanding this notion, Wipperfurth (2005) suggested that product placement provides "marketing without marketing." Another factor contributing to its increased application is the "shelf life" associated with the vehicles in which it is placed. Movies, music, and TV shows often have shelf lives of decades or more, through syndication, video rentals, and audio sales (Karrh, 1998). Product placement also has the benefit of "brand associations" (Keller, 1993). Brand associations can be developed from a variety of sources including celebrity endorsements, which Karrh (1998) contends product placement serves as an "implied endorsement" from celebrities. McCracken (1989) suggests there is meaning transfer from the celebrity endorsement, where an individual's interpretation of the celebrities' public image is transferred to the product when the two are paired in advertisement, and theoretically product placements. Thus product placement also acts as a socialization agent (Homer, 2009). These factors taken together help to explain the notoriety of product placement in general, but there is limited research examining the prominence and influence product placement exerts when the medium is music.

Music

As one of the oldest forms of entertainment and cultural transmission, music has been present in every known culture (Wallin, Merker, & Brown, 2000). Through a number of technological advancements (MP3 players, online stores, etc.) there has been an increase in the availability and quantity of music individuals are exposed to (Pettijohn & Sacco, 2009), with the average adolescent listening to three or more hours of music daily (Boutin-Foster et al., 2006). North and Hargreaves (2007) propose that music can serve as a representation of attitudes, beliefs, and needs of consumers, while Boutin-Foster et al. (2006) expand this notion by suggesting that music is a form of socialization that provides cues for normative values and drives expectations. Through the accompaniment of lyrics to music, songs allow individuals to communicate emotions and express opinions and attitudes, thus serving as an important form of communication (Pettijohn & Sacco, 2009). In fact, Martino, Collins, Elliott, Strachman, Kanouse, and Berry (2006) contend that music can serve as an informal learning tool, providing guidance on how one should view society. As music is a pervasive medium that has a long history of influencing individuals, the examination of how product placement is being utilized in music provides an important area of study.

The use of product placement in music has increased substantially over the past decade, and music executives assert this trend is the future of the music industry (Stadmiller, 2007). Though this practice shouldn't be implemented without caution, as there is a risk of losing credibility when consumers feel they are deceived by this practice or when the artist behaves in a detrimental manner (High, 2009). Some scholars view the music industry's increased use of product placement as "selling out" (Allan, 2005). Regardless of one's stance on the issue, the use of product placement in the music industry isn't going away, and there is an expected "steady stream" of product placement in music deals, as it also provides supplemental revenue

for the music industry (Kim, 2002). The use of product placement in music is usually examined such that there are comparisons between different genres within one country (Markert, 2001; Mohammed-Baksh & Callison, 2007; Martin & Collins, 2002), resulting in information suggesting there are differences between genres. As previous studies have examined the differences in genres, the current study seeks to examine cross-cultural similarities and differences between regions without limiting the selection based on genre.

Cross-Cultural Differences

With the ever-pressing global nature of communication and commerce, there is an amplified importance in evaluating the impact of culture in socialization. Globalization and integration processes have increased the breath and depth of international trade (Bernatonyte & Normantience, 2007), and thus added another dimension for companies to consider when constructing advertising and marketing campaigns. Levitt (1983) suggested that the increased globalization of markets would result in homogenous wants and needs of consumers. An application of this view can be seen with the cross-border music channels and global communications that help to construct similar values regardless of the consumers' country of origin (De Mooij, 2003). The process of meaning transfer for products and product placements is a cultural phenomenon (Russel, 1998). While there are differences in the types of meaning transfer established in specific countries that exist regardless of technological advances and trends (White, 2000), there are also significant cultural resemblances. While there is evidence to suggest there is a convergence of values across borders, there is also a divergence that needs to be considered (De Mooij, 2003). Kolter (1986) advocates adapting advertising techniques to reach buyers in different markets by fitting the message to each particular region because there are insurmountable differences between regions.

Gould, Gupta, and Grabner-Krauter (2000) contend that the understanding of cross-national/cultural product placement is an important extension of the debate in traditional advertising and marketing techniques.

A primary factor of successful international advertising campaigns is the understanding of cultural differences (Eisend, 2009). Such that cultural values influence, and are influenced by, different marketing techniques (Belk & Pollay, 1985). The meaning associated with products is a cultural phenomenon (McCracken, 1986) in which consumers apply learned meaning and value associated with their cultural heritage. More specifically consumer socialization is the process in which individuals develop consumption skills, knowledge and attitudes (Ward, 1974; Moschis & Churchill, 1978). Consumer socialization is theoretically based in cognitive development (focusing on life stages and environmental interaction) and social learning models (learning takes place through an interaction with socializing agents, family, friends, media, etc). Moschis (1987) purported the content and sources of learning and learning experiences may differ across cultures as different cultures exhibit different norms and values. John (1999) suggests that culture is a factor leading to differences in the socialization process. In addition, Singh, Kwon, and Pereira (2003) offered support in their study by revealing that ethnic subcultures differ in their susceptibility of socializing agents (media, parents, peers).

There are demographic and cross-cultural differences in consumer responses to product placement (Hudson & Hudson, 2006), yet research has shown that consumers have an overall positive view of product placement (Nebenzahl & Secunda, 1993). For example, European movie watchers object more than North Americans to the use of product placement (Hall 2004), while there is a general acceptance of product placement in Asia-Pacific consumers (McKechnie

& Zhou, 2003). Shao, Shao, and Shao (1994) stress the importance of the environment, such as cultural differences, in which advertising plans must be examined to determine their viability. One of the elements associated with cultural differences is the ethical concern about product placement (Eisend, 2009). Gould, Gupta, and Grabner-Krauter (2000) examined the perception of consumers from three countries (U.S., France, and Australia) and found that they differed on their reaction to product placement in movies, such that American consumers displayed the highest propensity to buy products. Along a similar vein, Chinese (McKechnie & Zhou, 2003) Australian (Brennan, Rosenberger, & Hementera, 2004) and Italian (Guido, Peluso, Tedeschi, Nicole, Lauretti, & Caciula, 2010) consumers hold a lower level of acceptance of product placement in movies than American consumers. The practice of using product placement cinema has, until recently, been viewed as a Hollywood practice (Roy & Bhattacharya, 2006). Castillo (2010) reported that the U.S. had the highest level of product placement in the world, but suggested that European nations will increase their use of product placement over the course of the next few years. While previous research has suggested there is a cultural difference in the acceptability of product placement in cinema, there is little research examining this technique in music. Prior to the examination of the acceptance of product placement in music across different regions, it is important to examine the prevalence of this practice in different cultures. Based on previous research examining the prevalence of product placement in American cinema, the following hypothesis and research questions serve as the starting point in examining the role product placement serves in popular music across three regions:

H1: The U.S. will have the greatest frequency of lyrical product placement.

RQ1: Within each region, what product/service category is the most frequently mentioned in lyrics?

RQ2: Will there be a difference in the characteristics of the songs that use product placement between and within regions (such as gender and rank influence)?

Luxury Branding

Popular culture provides consumers with identity and lifestyle ideals (Cooper, Schembri, & Miller, 2010) which they try to achieve through consumer behavior. Specifically addressing luxury brands, Mandel, Petrova, and Cialdini (2006) suggest that these brands have become desired objects not only through traditional forms of advertising, but also through depictions on the big screen and in association with particular lifestyles. In fact, brand consumption serves a symbolic function of establishing who the consumer is or who they want to be (Keller, 1993). Consumers attach social meaning to brands through being exposed to the interaction that takes place between the characters and specific brands (Cooper, Schembri & Miller, 2010). The frequency in which luxury brands are utilized in music has been examined within the hip-hop genre, showing over 70% of the brands mentioned to be luxury items (Mohammed-Baksh & Callison, 2007). While most of the research associated with luxury brands focus on cinema or a specific genre of music (hip-hop), the current study seeks to determine the use of luxury brand product placement across cultures. Thus the following research question is posed:

RQ3: Will there be a difference in the frequency of luxury product placement usage across the different regions examined?

Product Placement Location

While the structure of a song can vary by region and genre, there is at least one element within a song that is duplicated, the chorus. Goto (2003) suggests that the chorus section is the most representative and prominent thematic section in the music structure of the song. As such,

listeners are able to easily understand this section due to its repetitive nature. Advertising scholars have debated the effective frequency in which a consumer needs to be exposed to an advertisement, with Krugman (2000) contending that only after the third exposure will an individual start to process and determine if the advertisement is relevant while others suggest that there are other variables that need to be considered and a definitive number can't be assigned (Longman 1997). The benefit of product placement in music is that individuals will usually listen to songs more than once, contributing to the "shelf-life" and frequency in which the consumer is exposed to the product placement. With the exception of de Gregorio and Sung (2009), there has been a dearth of research examining the location of product placement within a song. The authors found that 16.6% of songs contained product placements in the chorus or in a combination of chorus and non-chorus of the song lyrics. In order to expand upon this research and add a cross-cultural component, the following research question is posed:

RQ4: Will the highest frequency of lyrical product placement be found in the chorus or non-chorus portion of lyrics for each region examined?

METHOD

In order to address the above-mentioned hypothesis and research questions, a content analysis was conducted. Krippendorff (2004) defines content analysis as "a research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from texts (or other meaningful matter) to the contexts of their use" (p. 18). Specifically addressing quantitative content analysis, Riffe, Lacy and Fico (2005) define this method as "the systematic and replicable examination of symbols of communication, ...to describe the communication, draw inferences about its meaning, or infer from the communication to its context, both of production and consumption" (p. 25). As lyrics

serve as an important form of communication and communicate with audiences in a manner similar to personal conversations (Pettijohn & Sacco, 2009), a quantitative content analysis was the appropriate method. The analysis of lyrics through content analysis has been applied previously by de Gregorio & Sung (2009), Mohammed-Baksh and Callison (2007), Friedman (1986), to name a few, but there is a dearth of the use of this practice in cross-cultural research.

Sample

The population from which the sample was obtained consisted of all songs within the U.S., Europe, and Japan in 2010. These regions were selected based on their classification in Billboard's charts and availability of data. While two countries were examined, the European region was analyzed in its entirety due to lack of billboard data for individual European countries. As one of the important elements of cross-cultural research is the need to focus on a particular time and space to minimize the introduction of random error (Ember & Ember, 2009), the current study focused on the same year for each of the regions. In order to establish a sampling frame, the Billboard top 100 year-end songs in 2010 from each region was used. This sampling frame provided a relevance/purposive sample that represented the most popular songs within each region. Billboard's rating of top songs are based on a formula utilizing sales and airplay. The year-end charts are calculated based on the cumulative total of yearlong sales and airplay, as to give an accurate estimation of the song's popularity throughout the entire year. As the sampling frame resulted in a manageable size of 300 songs, all songs were examined. The lyrics for each song was obtained through popular music websites, www.AZLyrics and www.elyrics.com, (Mohammed-Baksh & Callison, 2007). Several of the Japanese songs needed to be translated, this was completed using a website (www.jpopasia.com) and graduate students from the classical language department.

For the sake of obtaining an accurate assessment of the frequency of product placement in popular music found in all regions, when a particular song appeared on the charts of multiple regions it was coded for each region. If there were multiple songs from the same artist or group they were included as well (de Gregorio & Sung, 2009).

Units of Analysis

In order to address the research questions and hypothesis posed in this research, there were two levels of analysis. The first level of analysis was at the song level. The variables of interest at this level are the gender of the artist/group, region, rank, title, and total number of mentions. The second level of analysis was the brand placement. The lyrics were coded to determine the number and frequency of brands, number and frequency of product category, whether the product was a luxury item, total number of brand mentions, and the location of the product placement in either the chorus or non-chorus.

Variables

The manifest song level variables were coded first. The title, region, and artist/group were recorded initially, by simply recording this information from the song. The region was coded as falling into one of three mutually exclusive nominal categories of U.S., Japan, and Europe, as derived from the Billboard charts the songs originated. The rank of the song was then recorded, resulting in a range from 1-100 for each region. Next the coder determined the gender of the artist/group. When the coder had a doubt as to the gender of the artist/group, the coder sought outside information to determine the gender. For instances where a combination of both male and female artists was found, the coder recorded the gender as both, regardless of the ratio of gender (i.e. 1 male and 3 females was coded as both).

The next variables consisted of items at the lyrical level and were analyzed for every brand mentioned. The lyrics were analyzed to determine if there was a brand mentioned. The definition of brand that was used for this analysis was an adaptation of Friedman's (1986) definition "a distinctive commercial term used by a firm to identify and/or promote itself or one of its consumer products or service" (p.70), with the addition of slang terms associated with a brand (de Gregorio & Sung, 2009; Mohammed-Baksh & Callison, 2007). As such a mention of "Benz" was counted as a brand mention for Mercedes-Benz automobiles. After the brand name was recorded, it was then determined if it was a luxury or non-luxury brand. Examples of luxury brands include Mercedes-Benz, Lexus, Tiffany's, and so forth. Items that didn't fall into this category include Kleenex and Target. Similar distinctions were made by Mohammed-Baksh and Callison (2007). Next the brand was assigned to a product category.

There have been several different quantities and types of product categories utilized in product placement research, but previous research has shown that for lyrical product placement that 9 (de Gregorio & Sung, 2007) suffice. As this was a preliminary study examining different regions, the use of 9 product categories provided an exhaustive and mutually exclusive assessment of different product mentions. The brand was categorized into one of the following mutually exclusive nominal product categories: 1) food & non-alcoholic beverages, including restaurants, soda, chips, etc.; 2) travel/destination, such as G6 jets, hotels, or specific destination cities (Miami, Las Vegas, ect.); 3) alcoholic beverages, including beer, liquor, wine, champagne, etc.; 4) personal care/cosmetics/accessories, jewelry, watches, prescription drugs, beauty products fall into this category; 5) banking/finance/insurance, includes insurance companies, investment firms, and so forth; 6) entertainment media, such as films released, games, sitcoms or electronic devices; 7) automobile/auto-related, specific car manufacturers or car accessories

fall into this category; 8) clothing, shoes, and athletic brands, fashion brands, specific sport teams, sporting equipment, or designer mentions fit in this category; and 9) other, all products that don't fit into the above-mentioned categories were placed in this category.

Following the classification of the brand into a product category, the coder determined where in the song the brand was located. The lyrics were divided into two mutually exclusive categories of chorus and non-chorus. Goto (2003) defines the chorus as a portion of the song that includes the replication of certain elements of the song. The coder determined if the brand was located in this portion of the song. If it was, the coder counted the number of times the brand was mentioned and recorded the number. If the brand was not located in the chorus, the coder recorded the frequency of mentions and recorded this number in the non-chorus category. There were instances where a brand was mentioned in both the chorus and non-chorus of a song, the coder was instructed to follow the same procedure as described above, but had two separate frequencies for chorus and non-chorus placements. If the song didn't contain any brand mentions the coder recorded a frequency of zero for both chorus and non-chorus categories.

The final variables assessed were the quantity of unique brands present in the song and the quantity of total brand mentions in the song. The coders determined the quantity of unique brands in each song by adding the total brands mentioned throughout the song, not the number of mentions for each brand. Thus if two brands (Lexus and Miller) were mentioned five times each in a song, the quantity of unique brands was recorded as two. To determine the total number of brand mentions in the song, the coders summed the total number of mentions in each song. Using the previous example, the total number of brand mentions would be ten. This provided ratio level data that allowed for more detailed levels of analysis.

Since there was some subjectivity associated with the determination of a brand and the product category in which it should be placed, the two coders underwent two levels of training. This helped to ensure that the coders were able to view the content in the same way and were able to code the content independently (Neuendorf, 2002). The initial stage of training involved the coders reviewing the codesheet and codebook in order to determine if there was any ambiguity in the coding protocol or the definitions of variables provided. Coders then discussed the coding scheme in relation to similar songs beyond the scope of the sample utilized. This stage of training allowed the coders to be familiar with the type of content they are analyzing, and also increased the coders' comfort level without the potential of confounds with coding the final sample (Riffe et al., 2005). A random sample of songs from the total population was then selected, consisting of over 10% ($n = 45$), of the final sample to determine the final level of intercoder reliability. Once the content was coded, intercoder reliability was calculated using Krippendorff's Alpha and percent agreement. Krippendorff's alpha is appropriate because it controls for chance and can be used on different levels of measurement (Lombard, Synder-Dutch, & Bracken, 2002). Intercoder reliability calculations resulted in Krippendorff's alphas and percent agreement of .85 (93.3%) for total brands, .95 (97.8%) for total brand mentions, .96 (97.3%) for brand category, .88 (97.3) for non-chorus mentions, and .93 (97.3%) for luxury. The remaining variables of chorus mentions, gender, rank, and region all had an alpha of 1.00 and percent agreement of 100%. As the intercoder reliability for all variables had an alpha of .8 or higher (Krippendorff, 2004), intercoder reliability was established.

RESULTS

H1 addressed the differences in the frequency of lyrical product placement between the different regions, predicting that the U.S. would have the highest frequency of all countries. Of

the 300 songs examined there were 65 songs that contained at least one lyrical product placement. The U.S. sample included 38 (58.46%) songs containing product placement while Europe and Japan had fewer mentions, with 24 (36.92%) and 3 (4.62%) songs containing lyrical product placements, respectively. Therefore, H1 was supported.

Research question one pertained to the frequency of product categories containing lyrical product placement for each region. As reported in Table 1, the most frequent product category for U.S., Europe, and Japan was travel/destination (34.86%, 49.18%, and 62.50%, respectively). In fact the rank order of product categories for both the U.S. and Europe were identical, with entertainment media being the second most frequent product category followed by clothing, automobile/auto-related, food, alcoholic beverages, personal care, other, and finally banking/financing. Additionally, travel/destination and entertainment media accounted for a majority of the product placements for the U.S. and Europe (57.80% and 63.93%, respectively). Japan had three categories (food, alcohol, and automobile/auto-related) that only had one mention, while the remainder of the product categories didn't contain any brand mentions.

Research question two inquired about the differences in the characteristics of the songs of each region that contained lyrical product placement. Within both the U.S. and Europe there was a higher percentage of male artists/groups that included lyrical product placement (55.26% and 45.83%, respectively) than female artists/groups (21.05% and 25.00%, respectively) or mixed groups (23.68% and 29.17%, respectively). Japan had an equal distribution between all gender combinations. Consistent across all regions, the top 25 songs contained the largest percent of lyrical product placement (36.84% for the U.S.; 33.33% for Europe; and 100.00% for Japan). As reported in Table 2, there are some variations among the remaining quartiles with Europe having 29.17% of product mentions in the bottom quartile, while the U.S. has only 15.79% of mentions.

The third research question sought to determine if there was a difference in the use of luxury brands by region. Luxury brands accounted for only 32.02% of all brands mentioned, the usage of luxury brands between the three regions demonstrated a similar pattern. Of the product categories containing luxury brands alcohol, automobile/auto related, and personal care contained more luxury products than utilitarian products. As reported in Table 2, the U.S. used luxury brands 33.94% of the time, while Europe and Japan only used luxury brands 29.51% and 25.00%, respectively, of the time. Additionally, the use of luxury brands occurred most frequently by mixed-gendered groups in the U.S. and Japan (51.35% and 100.00%, respectively), while the European region use of luxury brands was dominated by male artists/groups with 55.55% of the luxury brands falling into this category.

The final research question sought to examine if there was a difference between the regions and the location of lyrical product placement. Consistent across all regions, the non-chorus portion of the song contained a dominant percentage of the lyrical product placement (89.47% of the U.S.; 87.50% of Europe; and 100.00% of Japan). In fact, of the 65 songs that were coded that contained lyrical product placement only twelve songs had placements in the chorus.

DISCUSSION

The current study contributed to the lacuna of cross-cultural research examining product placement. While previous studies have examined product placement through movies, the analysis conducted in this study provides a glimpse of how lyrical product placement is utilized across three regions. As described previously the region with the highest lyrical product placement was the U.S. followed by Europe and Japan, respectively. While Japan had songs with

lyrical product placement, these were songs that were present across all three genres. Japan was the only region that didn't have a unique song with product placement. A possible explanation for the absence of product placements in Japanese lyrics is that Japan is a collectivist society in which bragging about individual accomplishments is frowned upon. Consistent with consumer socialization, the powerful normative influence of a collectivist culture would lead to fewer instances of lyrical product placements. One of the contributing factors to the limited number of lyrical product placements in Europe suggested by Castillo (2010) is the restrictive nature of the advertising regulations found in Europe. Until recently the use of product placement was forbidden in European countries, thus the lower number of lyrical product placements could be due to the early stages of determining how this form of advertising fits into an overall advertising campaign.

The travel/destination product category contained the highest frequency of lyrical product placement. Overall, this study suggests there is consistency between the types of products utilized in product placement across the three regions. This finding lends support to Kim (2006), who suggested that the use of popular music to support tourism would be beneficial since artists are already including other product mentions in their songs. The tourism industry is a multi-billion dollar industry that could establish a mutually beneficial relationship with music artists. Entertainment media as the second highest product category shows the ease in which there is crossover between different types of entertainment, as has been seen with artists that have been popular in one medium and then become prominent in other media (i.e. Justin Timberlake). The mention of automobile/auto-related products frequently was consistent with previous studies examining U.S. lyrical product placement (de Gregorio & Sung, 2009; Mohammed-Baksh & Callison, 2007, examining only rap).

The characteristics of the songs that contained lyrical product placement demonstrate that male artists/groups used lyrical product placement more frequently than females or groups. The most popular songs in 2010, termed the “year that went pop” (Herrera, 2010), were skewed towards male artists describing their accomplishments, while female artists used less materialistic lyrics. While previous research examining rap music (a predominantly male artist genre) has demonstrated a dominance of male artists using product placement (Mohammed-Baksh and Callison 2007), the current study expands upon this research to suggest that when examining top songs regardless of genre, males use lyrical product placement more frequently. The rank of the songs that contained product placement, the largest percentage located in the top 25 songs, suggests that listeners may not have an aversion to lyrical product placement and will still enjoy a song that contains product placements. As such, advertisers should consider lyrical placement since the top songs by definition will provide high exposure and repetition.

The mention of luxury brands was not as common as utilitarian brands across all regions. Previous research has suggested that the use of luxury brands is a form of bragging about how far the artist has come (Mohammed-Baksh & Callison, 2007), but the use of utilitarian brands to describe where the artist came from is also prevalent. Mentioning the type of automobiles one drives and alcohol one drinks is a method of displaying high status. Thus the predominance of luxury brands in these categories helps to support the notion of the artist bragging about how they have obtained success.

The content analysis revealed that an overwhelming majority of lyrical product placements occur in the non-chorus portion of songs, which was consistent with the de Gregrio and Sung’s (2009) finding within U.S. songs. Researchers have speculated that the lack of lyrical product placements in the chorus is an indication that the use of brands in lyrics is not

strategically placed, but this may not be the full story. One of the issues that advertisers must combat is advertising “wear-out” where the advertisement actually becomes less effective (Tellis, 2009). Due to the long shelf life of songs and the anticipated repeated exposure, advertisers may favor non-chorus elements of a song to potentially avoid wear-out and consumer annoyance.

This study provides a glimpse into the cross-cultural aspects of lyrical product placement and may offer guidance to practitioners as to the types of markets they should target using product placement. Though there are limited occurrences of lyrical product placement in Japan, the Asian-Pacific market has a general acceptance of product placement (McKechnie & Zhou, 2003). As such, practitioners might consider finding ways of including lyrical product placement in Japanese songs. Another practical implication is further developing a global brand through lyrical product placement. Several of the songs were present on at least two of the regions examined and could result in a higher global exposure to the brand if lyrical product placement was utilized.

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

This study examined the top 100 songs of 2010 from three regions. While this provides an initial starting point to determine the prevalence of lyrical product placement throughout the globe, there are some limitations that were incurred. There were only 65 songs that contained lyrical product placement in the total sample. While this is very telling of the current industry, future research should examine a broader range of countries. Future lyrical product placement research should mimic the research stream pursued by researchers examining product placement in cinema by examining the use and acceptance of product placement within different countries.

As the current study provided information as to the frequencies of lyrical product placement, future research should examine the acceptance of and impact on consumers through the lens of consumer socialization. This perspective would offer practitioners valuable insight into how to better utilize lyrical product placement. Research has examined the acceptance of lyrical product placement between different genres (Sung & de Gregorio, 2008), but there is a dearth of data examining the differences between countries or regions. Finally, additional research should examine the influence product placement can have on the consumer socialization process. While previous research has addressed the impact of media (usually TV) on consumer socialization, there is a lack of research examining the influence product placements have on consumer behavior.

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Table 1
Product Category Featured in Lyrics by Region

Product Category	Region		
	U.S.	Europe	Japan
Food & non-alcoholic beverages	6.42%	6.56%	12.50%
Travel/destination	34.86%	49.18%	62.50%
Alcoholic beverages	6.42%	3.28%	12.50%
Banking/finance/insurance	0.92%	0.00%	0.00%
Automobile/auto-related	9.17%	9.84%	12.50%
Entertainment Media	22.94%	14.75%	0.00%
Clothing, shoes, & athletic brands	10.09%	13.11%	0.00%
Personal care/cosmetics/accessories	5.50%	1.64%	0.00%
Other	3.67%	1.64%	0.00%
	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%

Table 2
Song Characteristics by Region

Gender	Region		
	U.S.	Europe	Japan
Male	55.26%	45.83%	33.33%
Female	21.05%	25.00%	33.33%
Mixed Group	23.68%	29.17%	33.33%
	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%
Rank			
1 to 25	36.84%	33.33%	100.00%
26-50	23.68%	12.50%	0.00%
51-75	23.68%	25.00%	0.00%
76-100	15.79%	29.17%	0.00%
	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%

Table 3
Brand and Location Characteristics by Region

Characteristics	Region		
	U.S.	Europe	Japan
Luxury	33.94%	29.51%	25.00%
Non-Luxury	66.06%	70.49%	75.00%
	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%
Chorus	15.79%	20.83%	33.33%
Non-chorus	89.47%	87.50%	100.00%

***Note:** Chorus and non-chorus vertical percentages do not total 100% due to some songs having product placements in both.