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Let it Rock

**The Effects of Brand Name Placement in Songs on
Attitudes toward the Artist and the Brand**

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Among the various types of hybrid messages, product placement appears as one of the most widely used and constitutes the object of this research. Focusing on brand placement in song lyrics, this paper analyses its particular influence over consumers' attitude toward the brand and artist. Several factors identified in the literature for their importance were manipulated in this experiment: The congruence the artist-brand dyad, as well as the communication strength and valence. This research delivers novel results for academics, practitioners and artists in the context of product placement in songs, and sets the basis for further research.

Extended Abstract

Among the various types of hybrid messages, product placement appears as one of the most widely used and constitutes the object of this research. This paper focuses on a specific type of product placement, brand placement in song lyrics and particularly on its impact over consumers' attitude toward the brand and the artist. Several factors identified in the literature for their importance were manipulated in this experiment: The congruence or not of the artist-brand dyad, strength and valence. The last two elements were explicitly stated as important for future research in different media (Russell and Stern, 2006).

Whereas incongruent information triggers cognitive elaboration and auditors' attention improving the memory of the placement, it also elicits suspicions about the reasons why the brand is featured (e.g. to persuade them), thus, triggering unfavourable effects on evaluation and counter-argumentation (Russell, 2002). Differing slightly from Russell's (2002) definition, in this research congruence was conceptualized as the fit or match between the brand and the artist (i.e.: Does an artist and a brand match together). With the purpose of obtaining an encompassing picture of this phenomenon, in a first study we probed our model in an incongruent artist-brand dyad, and in a second study we probed the congruent artist-brand dyad.

Concerning communication, as proposed by Balasubramanian (1994), putting forward a product advantaged rather than its disadvantages enhances the attitude toward it, and vice versa when the communication of a product is negative. It is reasonable to think that audiences perceiving positive arguments of a brand in a song will perceive the communication as influencing them, thus, elaborating contra-argumentation and eliciting less favourable attitudes toward both artists and brands.

As elaborated in our paper, across our two studies, we sustained the hypotheses that individuals will have more positive attitudes toward artists and brands when the communication valence is negative, compared to a less favourable attitude when the communication valence is positive.

In the context of product placement in movies or sitcoms, strength was operationalized by fore or background placement or by visual-only or visual plus verbal placements (Russell and Stern, 2006). As this study concerns music songs, strength was operationalized as the repetition of a brand name in the lyrics, so as to reinforce its association with the artist.

In our study we argued that the artist-brand congruent/incongruent dyad will bear different results depending on the strength. In an incongruent artist-brand dyad context we hypothesize an interaction effect observable on the attitude toward the artist and the brand; in a congruent artist-brand dyad context we hypothesize an interaction effect observable on the attitude toward the brand only.

A scenario based experiment was designed and implemented to test the hypotheses. Eight scenarios were crafted (four scenarios per study); each of them combined the effect of communication valence (positive/negative) and strength (repeated/not repeated). One artist was chosen and remained constant across all eight scenarios. Two brands were chosen to create an incoherent artist-brand dyad (used in study one) and a coherent artist-brand dyad (used in study two). These were chosen while executing several pretests after which we obtained the appropriate stimuli for the experiment. To avoid likeability, neutral artist and brands were selected. All results were statistical proven.

The studies were carried among a sample of undergraduate students. They were given two booklets presented as unrelated studies which belonged to two separate studies from different

researchers. The first booklet was presented as a study about general attitudes on celebrities and brands; the second booklet was presented as a study about new trends in music industry, where four scenarios were presented. In these scenarios respondents were asked to imagine a situation in which they were invited by a music company to listening to new songs of a given artist, in order to assess his/her new album. In each scenario, amongst some general information, it was explained that the artist mentioned (either in a positive or negative valence) a brand (either incongruent for study one or congruent for study two) in his song lyrics once, or several times (strength). Finally, respondents were asked about their attitude toward the artist and the brand. A five item 7 point Likert scale (Aggarwal, 2004) was used, and the attitude scales for the artist and the brand. Several manipulation checks were executed to ascertain that the scenarios were correctly understood by respondents; results were statistically confirmed.

Two times 2 X 2 (valence: positive vs. negative; strength: none repeated vs. repeated) between -participant ANCOVA's were performed to measure the effect of treatments over attitudes toward the artist and toward the brand. Our results supported most of our hypothesis. Specifically, when brands were communicated negatively, individuals elicited more positive attitudes toward artists and brands compared to less positive attitudes toward artists and brands when these were communicated positively. A two way interaction between valence and strength was found i) for the incoherent artist-brand dyad on attitude toward the artist ii) for the coherent artist-brand dyad on the attitude toward the brand.

This novel research delivered important result concerning the attitudes of individuals toward brands and artists in the context of product placement in song lyrics. Because of its pioneering character, in this first trial it was judged prudent to address respondent's reactions concerning product placement in songs over general attitude only, instead of including other constructs such as recall and affect. Since results confirm the existence of an effect over general attitude, this research is expected to be a foundation for future investigations that may address the effect of product placement on recall and affect, enriching the manipulations with more complex execution parameters, for example: a) effect of product placement depending on the level of involvement with the music, b) mother tongue vs. foreign language effects on memory and attitude.

Moreover, this research bears considerable implications for brand managers and artists, since misused valence can discount individuals' attitude over the brand and the artist. Finally, the research proposed several findings which could be worth considering in better law framing, due to the ethical implications that hybrid messages contain.

Let it Rock: The Effects of Brand Name Placement in Songs on Attitudes toward the Artist and the Brand

Introduction

"Now I got to give a shoutout to Seagram Gin cus I drink it, and they paying me for it."

Freek-a-leek, Petey Pablo

In an oversaturated advertising world with increasing technological innovations (e.g. ad-skipping digital video recorder), companies have to become particularly inventive to get noticed. They mostly rely on two non-personal communication devices to expose consumers to product related information: advertising and publicity (Balasubramanian 1994). The former is the deliberated act of paying to place a product message in which the sponsor is clearly identified and controls the content and format; the latter is none paid message by the sponsor (Balasubramanian 1994). Whereas advertising presents the advantage of controlling the message conveyed, it presents the disadvantage of being rejected by audiences when a sponsor is identified. On the other hand, publicity presents the disadvantage of having no control over how information is communicated, but has the advantage of not being rejected, as no sponsor is clearly recognized. The merger of these two commercial communication modalities is called hybrid messaging (Balasubramanian 1994) which presents the advantages of both, advertising and publicity, but dodges their disadvantages. As defined by Balasubramanian (1994, 30), hybrid messages include "all paid attempts to influence audiences for commercial benefit using communications that project a non-commercial character; under these circumstances, audiences are likely to be unaware of the commercial influence attempts and / or to process the content of such communication differently than they process commercial messages". Among the various types of hybrid messages, product placement appears as one of the most widely used and constitutes the object of this research.

Worldwide product placement in all media was worth \$3.5 billion in 2004, a 200% increase from 1994 (Gettelman and Gilson 2007), and it is expected to grow at a rate of 15% until 2009 in all media (Goo 2006).

This paper focuses on a specific case of product placement, namely brand placement in song lyrics. Although this phenomenon is not new, in 23 B.C. Horace is supposed to have written odes to wines under the pressure of winemakers (Gettelman and Gilson 2007), in 1994 it was still classified as a emergent hybrid message (Balasubramanian 1994). Whereas an increasing stream of research analyzed brand placement in movies, television or games (Avery and Ferraro 2000; Ferraro and Avery 2000; Karrh et al. 2003; La Ferle and Edwards 2006; Nelson et al. 2006; Russell 2002; Russell and Belch 2005; Russell et al. 2004; Russell and Stern 2006; Yang et al. 2006), research on brand placement, the process that affects individuals' attitude toward the product and a specific focus in songs, is still unattended (Russell and Belch 2005).

This research is novel in several aspects and we expect it will represent a step forward toward a future framework providing a deeper understanding of the different mechanisms at play. In particular, we investigated consumers' attitudes toward the brand and the artist. Since an artist can be considered as a brand by itself (Holt 2002), it is thereof crucial to examine the influence of product placement not only on the company being placed but also on the artist accepting the placement in his artistic piece. Even more interestingly, is the fit between artist and brand. Whereas an association with certain brands may improve an artist's image, it may be perceived as detrimental for the brand's image or inversely. As an anecdotic example, rap mogul Shawn Carter alias "Jay-Z" used to talk about Cristal Champagne in several of his songs. However, when asked about this association, Frederic Rouzaud, managing director of Cristal Champagne producer Louis Roederer, answered that they see this association with "curiosity and serenity" and that "we can't forbid people from buying it" (Rachman, 2006).

After this statement, Jay-Z replaced Cristal by another brand in his night clubs and in his song lyrics. This story epitomizes the challenge an artist-brand association represents.

Once an artist has chosen to associate with a brand, two basic choices are provided. In a first stance, artists can choose to talk about brands in a positive or in a negative manner (valence of the mention). In a second stance, artists can choose to mention a brand once or several times (strength of the mention). These two issues (strength and valence) were studied in one media context (television) and have been explicitly stated as important future research opportunities (Russell and Stern 2006). Through two experiments, including each time a relevant literature review, hypotheses, results and a short discussion, we tested the impact of repetition and valence on consumers' attitudes toward artists and brands in song lyrics. In conclusion, a more general discussion including limitations and crucial future research avenues will be elaborated.

Study 1

According to Karrh (1998, 33), product or brand placement refers to "the paid inclusion of branded products or brand identifiers through audio and/or visual means within mass media programs". Product placements can only exist if there is a trade-off between the sponsor and the media (Balasubramanian 1994). Whereas the former has to perceive a considerable value added from the advertising, the latter must be motivated by an economic incentive. Although partnerships are created to bring benefits to both the sponsor and the media, this mutual partnership can be detrimental to both as well. Whether it is beneficial or not and for whom depends on factors which will be manipulated in this study. Regardless of the outcome, though, due to their intertwined partnership, the outcomes will be analysed not only for the brand but for the artist as well. Unlike other literature stream, like co-branding literature (e.g.

Rao, et al. 1999), research on product placement only rarely investigated the impact on both stakeholders.

Congruence

Effectiveness of product placement has been previously studied by scholars. In the context of movies, it has been found that product placements which enhance realism of movie scenarios are welcome by audiences (Russell 2002; Russell and Stern 2006). On the other hand, the author suggests that when it elicits suspicion, audiences could perceive it as less acceptable or elaborate counter-arguments. Suspicion is elicited when the product is perceived by the audience as "out of the context". Indeed, Russell (2002) develops the notion of congruence as a major factor determining audiences' reactions toward product placement. Whereas incongruent information triggers cognitive elaboration and auditors' attention, thus improving the memory of the placement, it also elicits suspicions about the reasons why the brand appears in the show, thus, triggering an unfavourable effect on evaluation and counter-argumentation. Unlike Russell (2002), in this research congruence was conceptualized as the fit or match between the brand and the artist (i.e. does an artist and a brand match together?). These combinations (artist-brand) can be incongruent or congruent. In order to obtain an encompassing picture of this phenomenon, in a first study we probed our model in an incongruent artist-brand dyad, then, in a second study we probed the congruent artist-brand dyad.

Valence

Balasubramanian (1994) proposes that communicating positively a product (i.e. putting forward its advantaged rather than its disadvantages) enhances attitudes toward it, and vice versa when the communication of a product is negative; negative communication modalities

lead to less favourable attitudes by audiences. Consequently, it is reasonable to suppose that negative communication modality is odds to what advertisers would consider doing in order to enhance attitudes toward the brand for which they are responsible. So, if audiences perceive the mentioning of a brand inside a song as a negative one, it is reasonable to think that audiences will perceive the communication as going against the best interest of the firm. Therefore, when individuals perceive negative comments about products or brands inside songs, they will refute the hypothesis of a possible alliance between a firm and an artist, as it goes against the logic of the partnership. The latter will lead to better attitudes toward the brand, as opposed to less good attitudes if audiences perceive that artists and brands are trying to influence them by making positive comments about products. Building on Holt's (2002) work about post modern branding, we extend his framework as follows. We pose that artists conveying positive commentaries about brands will tend to be perceived as partnering with firms, as opposed to those artists free of compromises, making negative comments about brands, who will be perceived as creative contributors of art. Thus, receiving better attitudes from auditors when criticizing brands, compared to less favourable attitudes from auditors when flattering brands.

We therefore hypothesize for an incongruent artist-brand dyad that:

- H1:** *Individuals will have more positive attitudes toward artists that communicate negatively brands, and less positive attitude toward artists that communicate positively brands.*
- H2:** *Individuals will have more positive attitudes toward brands that are negatively communicated, and less positive attitudes toward brands that are positively communicated.*

Strength

However, the influence of communication modality will be moderated by the strength of the relationship between the artist and the brand. In the context of product placement in movies or sitcoms, strength was operationalized by fore or background placement or by visual only or visual and verbal placements (Russell and Stern 2006). As this study concerns music songs, strength was implemented by repeating a brand name as to reinforce the association with the artist. Balasubramanian et al. (2006) emphasized the potential importance certain execution factors could have on the effectiveness of product placement. In particular, the author also underlined the importance of "repetition" as an operationalization mode that could have a significant influence on product placement effectiveness. Gupta and Gould (1997) found that attitudes toward product placement are less favourable if audiences perceive an obvious commercial purpose or if the presence of the product is frequently repeated.

Therefore, depending on whether the product will be communicated negatively or positively, the effect of repetition will be a catalyser of the effect of such communication over attitudes, as proposed hereafter:

H3: *Individuals will have more positive attitudes toward artists when these will repeatedly communicate brands negatively, and less positive attitudes toward artists that repeatedly communicate brands positively.*

H4: *Individuals will have more positive attitudes toward brands that are repeatedly negatively communicated, and less positive attitudes toward brands that are repeatedly positively communicated*

Method

In order to assess the impact of moderating variables over attitudes toward the artist and the brand, a scenario based experiment was designed and implemented. Mental imagery was used because research suggests that experiences resulting from mental images can be as strong as real experiences (Dadds, Bovbjerg, Redd, and Cutmore 1997; Kosslyn 1994). Four scenarios were crafted. Each of them combined the effect of communication valence (positive/negative) and strength (repeated/not repeated). One artist and one incoherent brand were chosen and remained constant across scenarios.

Pretests

Pretests had to be performed in order to choose the appropriate stimuli for the experiment. We had to choose an artist and an incoherent brand. To avoid as much as possible the impact of likeability, neutral artist and brands were selected. Artists and brands were considered neutral when they were equally liked, not liked or when there was no significant difference between positive, negative or neutral attitudes.

Artist

A sample of 26 students aged between 18 and 27 years ($M = 21.12$, $SD = 2.23$) responded to this first survey. 26 artists representing diverse kinds of music (pop, rock and rap), singing in different languages and half of them being women were pretested. Respondents had to say if they like, dislike or do not know the artist.

To select the artist, we performed a chi-square test. Robbie Williams appeared as being known by all the respondents, half of them (12) like him and half do not (12) ($\chi^2 = 0.00$, sig = *n.s.*). Two respondents did not indicate their attitudes toward Robbie Williams.

Brand

An independent sample of 20 students aged between 19 and 27 years ($M = 22.05$, $SD = 2.11$) answered this survey. Half of the respondents (10) were women and half (10) were men. Eighteen brands representing different product categories (e.g.: cars, household equipments, alcoholic beverages) coming from different countries. Respondents had to decide if the brand was or was not coherent with Robbie Williams (one item question). Electrolux was perceived as being highly incoherent with Robbie Williams (2 respondents perceived Electrolux as coherent vs. 18 perceived it as non coherent, $\chi^2 = 12.8$, sig= .000).

Moreover, Electrolux was evaluated by a third independent sample of 20 students aged between 18 and 30 years ($M = 22.42$, $SD = 2.93$) on their attitudes toward the brands. 6 respondents were women and 13 were men. This difference was not statistically significant ($\chi^2 = 2.58$, sig = *n.s.*). Electrolux was equally liked, disliked or not known ($\chi^2 = 2.8$, sig = *n.s.*). This pretest allowed the choice of an equally liked and disliked artist-brand incoherent dyad.

Study

Two booklets presented as unrelated and being part of two separate studies were handed out to respondents. The first booklet was presented as a study about general attitudes on celebrities and brands. On one hand students were inquired about their attitudes toward several artists among which Robbie Williams was included. On the other hand, students were inquired on their attitudes towards several brands among which Electrolux was mentioned. The scale was dichotomous (like / dislike). These measures will serve as covariates as previous attitude was shown to have a significant impact on attitudes (Russell and Stern 2006). In addition, respondents were also asked about their attitude toward advertising. Gaski and Etzel (1986) five item Likert scale was used to measure this variable.

The second booklet was presented as a study about new trends in music industry, where four scenarios (one per subject) were presented. Each scenario asked respondents to imagine a situation in which they were invited by a music company to listening to new songs of a given artist, in order to assess his/her new album. In each scenario, amongst some general information, it was explained that the artist mentioned (either positively or negatively) a brand in his song lyrics (once or for several times).

Therefore, the four scenarios were as follows:

1. Robbie Williams will mention the brand Electrolux in his song in a *negative* manner once.
2. Robbie Williams will mention the brand Electrolux in his song in a *positive* manner once.
3. Robbie Williams will mention the brand Electrolux in his song in a *negative* manner *repeatedly*
4. Robbie Williams will mention the brand Electrolux in his song in a *positive* manner *repeatedly*

After reading fully their scenario, respondents were asked about their attitude toward the artist and the brand. A five item 7 point Likert scale (Aggarwal 2004) was used. Attitudes scales for the artist and the brand reported strong Cronbach Alpha's ($\alpha = .932$ and $\alpha = .942$, respectively).

Results and Discussion

Several manipulation checks were executed to ascertain that the scenarios were correctly understood by respondents. At the very end of the questionnaire they were asked to answer a short series of questions without going back to check their previous answers or elements in their scenario. Results showed that the majority of the respondents recognized the correct type

of communication valence ($\chi^2 = 66.92, p = .000$) and the difference between the repeated/non repeated mode ($\chi^2 = 4.366, p = .039$). Additionally, respondents considered the association Robbie Williams-Electrolux as incoherent (43 respondents perceived Electrolux as coherent vs. 84 perceived it as non coherent, $\chi^2 = 13.24, p = .000$).

Two 2 X 2 (valence: positive vs. negative; strength: none repeated vs. repeated) between - participant ANCOVA's were performed to measure the effect of treatments over attitudes toward the artist and toward the brand.

Concerning attitudes toward the artist, the effect of valence (positive vs. negative communication) was significant, whereby participants reported more favorable attitudes after the artist mentioned the brand negatively ($M = 3.267, SD = 1.514$) than positively ($M = 2.636, SD = 1.3105, F(1, 118) = 7.919, p = .006$).

The two-way interaction between valence and strength was significant by Hotelling's criterion ($F(1, 118) = 4.37, p < .05$). A planned contrast revealed that if a brand is communicated negatively and for repeated times, the average attitude toward the artist is more positive ($M = 3.4196, SD = 1.7507$) compared to the attitude toward the artist when the brand was communicated positively and for repeated times ($M = 2.1176, SD = 1.2142, F(1, 137) = 14.90, p < .001$). In contrast, when a brand is communicated negatively but not repeatedly ($M = 3.1290, SD = 1.2778$), no significant difference was reported compared to a brand communicated positively and not repeatedly ($M = 2.7056, SD = 1.606, F(1, 137) = 0.02, p = n.s$). Elements taken as covariates, i.e.: attitude toward advertising, previous attitude toward Robbie Williams and the previous attitude toward Electrolux, reported significant results ($F(1, 118) = 5.359, p = .022$; $F(1, 118) = 7.148, p = .009$ and $F(1, 118) = 5.527, p = .02$, respectively).

As predicted by H1, when brands are communicated negatively, individuals have more positive attitudes toward artists compared to less positive attitudes toward artists when brands are communicated positively. The rationale behind is that individuals associate the positive communication to partnering between artists and brands, thus becoming more reluctant and having less favorable attitudes. In addition it could be observed that repetition had an interaction effect with communication valence, thus confirming hypothesis H3. The rationale is the effect of repetition on the perception elicited by individuals whereby the artist and the brand have a deal. If the artist repeats several time positive comments about a brand (even when in an artist-brand incongruent dyad), individuals may suspect they may certainly be partnering. The opposite reasoning is valid when the communication is negative, i.e.: if the artist criticizes a brand repeatedly, it may certainly not have a deal with it, thus, it is perceived better.

In connection to attitudes toward brand, the between-participant effect of valence (positive vs. negative communication) was significant, whereby participants reported more favorable attitudes after the artist mentioned the brand negatively ($M = 3.814$, $SD = 1.449$) than positively ($M = 3.121$, $SD = 1.449$, $F(1, 125) = 9.009$, $p = .003$). However, the two-way interaction between valence and strength was none significant by Hotelling's criterion ($F(1, 125) = 0.246$, $p = n.s.$). Finally, the only element taken as covariate which reported significance was attitude toward advertising ($F(1, 125) = 10.493$, $p = .002$).

Results support hypothesis H2, whereby more positive attitudes toward brands are expected when a brand is communicated negatively, compared to attitudes toward brands when these are communicated positively. The rationale for this is similar to the previous reasoning, this is, when individuals perceive that a brand is presented to them in a persuasive manner, they tend to react and counter-argue. If a product is presented in a positive way, individuals will

perceive it as persuasive and they will have a less favorable attitude as opposed to having a more favorable attitude toward a brand when this is not perceived to be persuasive (when it is communicated in a negative manner).

Results did not support H4, thus suggesting that individuals make no difference concerning the repetition or not of a brand message irrespective of how this is communicated. The latter can be interpreted as if individuals – once taking position about the purpose of the brand communication, i.e.: whether it was intended to persuade them or not – will make no difference about the number of repetitions of such brand communication message.

This first study was carried out with an incongruent match between artist and brand. In order to assess the extent to which our results could be generalized to a coherent match we performed study 2

Study 2

The pretest yielded also a coherent artist-brand dyad. Respondents considered the association Robbie Williams-Guinness as coherent (75 respondents perceived Guinness as coherent vs. 51 perceived it as non coherent, $\chi^2 = 4.57, p < 0.05$).

This study used exactly the same method and materials as in study one, excepted for the congruence of the artist-brand dyad.

As hypothesised previously, we believe that individuals will have more positive attitudes toward artist and brand when the latter is communicated in a negative manner. However, building on the celebrity endorsement theory (Shimp, 2003), we expect the coherence between the artist and the brand will bear different results than those reported in study 1. Indeed, celebrity-brand fit has been recognized to be determinant in the effective

communication of brand image and attributes. If individuals perceive congruence between the brand and the artist, they might interpret that the brand is acting in the best of its interest by getting associated to a celebrity that conveys its image and values. In addition, one could assume that individuals' commonly accepted belief is that an artist main purpose is to produce artistic outputs (e.g. songs). Therefore, as opposed to the brand, when individuals will perceive a congruent artist-brand dyad, they will consider the artist as having an opportunistic behaviour as it is merchandising with his music, irrespective of the number or times he will repeat the name of the brand in his lyrics. Therefore, we hypothesized:

H5: *Individuals will have more positive attitudes toward artists that communicate negatively brands, and less positive attitudes toward artists that communicate positively brands.*

H6: *Individuals will have more positive attitudes toward brands that are negatively communicated, and less positive attitudes toward brands that are positively communicated.*

H7: *Individuals will have more positive attitudes toward artists when these communicate brands negatively and less positive attitudes toward artists that communicate brands positively irrespectively of the strength*

H8: *Individuals will have more positive attitudes toward brands that are negatively communicated for repeated times, and less positive attitudes toward brands that are positively communicated for repeated times.*

Results and Discussion

A total of 125 students (59 men and 66 women) answered the questionnaire combining Robbie Williams with Guinness.

Several manipulation checks were executed to ascertain that the scenarios were correctly understood by respondents. Results showed that the majority of the respondents recognized the correct type of communication valence ($\chi^2 = 61.460, p < .000$) and the difference between the repeated / non repeated mode ($\chi^2 = 11.460, p = .001$). Additionally, respondents considered the association Robbie Williams-Guinness as coherent (79 respondents perceived Guinness as coherent vs. 38 perceived it as non coherent, $\chi^2 = 14.368, p = .000$).

Two 2 X 2 (positive vs. negative communication valence; none repeated vs. repeated) ANCOVA were performed to measure the effect of treatments over attitude toward the artist and toward the brand.

Concerning attitudes toward artist, the between-participant effect of valence (positive vs. negative communication) was significant, whereby participants reported more favorable attitudes after the artist mentioned the brand negatively ($M = 3.828, SD = 1.253$) than positively ($M = 3.2, SD = 1.386, F(1, 115) = 8.561, p = .004$). However, the two-way interaction between valence and strength was none significant by Hotelling's criterion ($F(1, 115) = 2.223, p = n.s.$). The covariates "prior attitude toward Robbie Williams" was significant ($F(1, 115) = 22.81, p = .00$).

As predicted in H5, when coherent brands are communicated negatively, individuals have more positive attitudes toward artists compared to less positive attitudes toward artists when brands are communicated positively. The rationale behind is the same as for the incoherent brands discussed previously, i.e.: individuals associate a positive communication modality to a partnership between the artist and the firm, thus becoming more reluctant and eliciting less

favorable attitudes. Our findings do support H7 suggesting that individuals make no difference concerning the repetition or not of a brand message irrespective of how this is communicated.

In connection to attitude toward brand, the between-participant effect of valence (positive vs. negative communication) was significant, whereby participants reported more favorable attitudes after the artist mentioned the brand negatively ($M = 4.14$, $SD = 1.223$) than positively ($M = 3.643$, $SD = 1.534$, $F(1, 114) = 5.003$, $p = .027$). The two-way interaction between valence and strength was significant by Hotelling's criterion ($F(1, 114) = 5.95$, $p = .016$). A planned contrast revealed that if a brand is communicated negatively and for repeated times, respondents have more positive attitudes toward the brand ($M = 4.2581$, $SD = 1.5242$) compared to attitudes toward the brand when it is communicated positively and for repeated times ($M = 3.1867$, $SD = 1.398$, $F(1, 115) = 9.62$, $p = .002$). No significant difference was observed over the attitude toward the brand ($F(1, 115) = 0.09$, $p = n.s$) when this was not repeated, irrespective of the positive ($M = 4.192$, $SD = 1.537$) or negative communication modality ($M = 4.03$, $SD = 0.862$). The covariates "prior attitude toward Guinness" was significant ($F(1, 114) = 17.196$, $p = .000$).

Concerning the attitude toward the brand, results support hypothesis H6 whereby more positive attitudes toward brands are elicited when brands are communicated negatively, compared to the less positive attitude toward brands when these are communicated positively. In accordance to these results, it could be observed that repetition had an interaction effect with the communication modality, thus confirming hypothesis H8.

General Discussion

This research delivered relevant result concerning the attitudes of individuals toward brands and artists in the context of product placement in song lyrics. It unveiled significant differences in attitudes over artists and brands according to the congruence or not between them. Whereas an interaction term could be found in respondents' attitude toward the artist when the dyad artist-brand was incongruent, the interaction term was established on the attitude toward the brand when the dyad artist-brand was congruent. The latter reinforced our beliefs as follows: First, when artists get associated to incongruent brands, individuals will discard the possibility of a merchant association artist-brand unless the artist conveys positive comments about the brand, in which case he/she will be penalized. Second, when a brand-artist match is congruent, individuals will state more positive attitudes toward the brand if they are persuaded that no commercial purpose is sought, but will penalize the brand if listening to positive commentaries about it.

Implications for marketers and brand managers in particular are considerable, since misused valence can discount individuals' attitude over brands. The same for artists, since individuals' attitude toward them can be affected in a positive or negative manner depending on valence.

Finally, the research proposed several findings which could be worth considering in better law framing. It is crucial to acknowledge the ethical issues with hybrid messages and particularly brand placement in song lyrics. Research should clearly determine the influence of product placement in songs in order to take the appropriate legal preventing actions. The latter is particularly important, as a vast number of placed brands in lyrics concern alcohol, tobacco or sometimes even weapons (Hennessy, Cristal and the AK 47 being respectively 6th, 8th and 10th in the 2005 Brandstand top 10 (Agenda Inc, 2006)).

Conclusion

This research is novel as it focuses in a specific domain barely attended to date; i.e.: product placement in songs and particularly in songs' lyrics. As opposed to previous researches discussed in the literature review, this dissertation concerns the audio stimulus only and not the visual and audio stimuli. Because of its pioneering character, in this first trial it was judged appropriate to address respondent's reactions concerning product placement in songs over general attitude only. Since results confirm the existence of an effect over general attitude, this research is expected to be a foundation for future investigations that may address the effect of product placement on recall and affect, enriching the manipulations with more complex execution parameters.

Limitations and future research

An important point to consider in this research concerns the absence of the parasocial dimension as developed by Russell and Stern (2006). The authors argue that an important component of the attitude toward the brand is determined by the parasocial attachment to the character. In this research the aspect was not elaborated, as we judged that the character of the relationship between the artist and the audience is of different nature than that described in the author's research. Several avenues worth exploring could be sought in the future, for example: The effects of product placement based on the level of involvement in music, or the effect of individuals' mother tongue on memory and affect, could be explored.

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