

The Influence Of Product Placement Characteristics And Audience Attitudinal Factors On Purchase Intention Toward Indonesian Local Brands In Korean Dramas

Nathifa Nuha Ksatu Hisom,* Gita Gayatri

Faculty of Economics and Business, Universitas Indonesia, Indonesia

**Corresponding author. Email: nnkhisom01@gmail.com*

ABSTRACT

The growing popularity of Korean dramas has encouraged marketers to use product placement as a less intrusive communication strategy that integrates brands into entertainment content. This study examines how product placement characteristics and audience attitudinal factors influence purchase intention toward Indonesian local brands featured in Korean dramas. Drawing on Customer-Based Brand Equity (CBBE) Theory and Meaning Transfer Model, the research integrates cognitive and affective pathways into a single framework. Primary data were collected through an online survey of 338 Indonesian viewers who recognized Indonesian local brands appearing in Korean dramas across food, beverage, and cosmetic categories. Data were analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling with Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS). The results show that placement prominence, plot connection, favorable leading characters, and brand familiarity significantly strengthen brand awareness. Brand awareness further increases brand image and purchase intention. On the attitudinal pathway, attitudes toward actors, characters, dramas, and product placement significantly contribute to positive attitudes toward brands. Interestingly, brand awareness and brand image do not significantly influence attitude toward the brand. Overall, the findings indicate that both technical placement execution and audience emotional responses jointly explain purchase intention toward Indonesian local brands in Korean dramas. The study extends product placement literature by combining cognitive and affective mechanisms within one model and offers managerial implications for local brands seeking international exposure through entertainment media.

Keywords: *Product Placement, Korean Drama, Brand Awareness, Brand Image, Attitude Toward the Brand, Purchase Intention.*

1. INTRODUCTION

The Korean Wave (Hallyu) has become a global cultural phenomenon that strongly shapes entertainment consumption, including in Indonesia. As streaming platforms expand access to Korean dramas, K-dramas have become one of the most consumed entertainment formats among Indonesian audiences. At the same time, traditional advertising is becoming less effective because viewers increasingly avoid intrusive ads, creating opportunities for alternative communication formats such as product placement. Product placement integrates brands into entertainment narratives in a way that appears natural and non-disruptive, allowing marketers to communicate without interrupting the viewing experience. In the Indonesian context, several local brands have used Korean dramas as international promotional platforms. Beyond the widely discussed Kopiko case, brands such as Scarlett and Tropicana Slim have also appeared in Korean dramas, showing the strategic value of this medium for brand visibility.

Previous research has tended to examine product placement effectiveness from separate perspectives. (Leo et al., 2024) focused on technical placement characteristics such as placement prominence, plot connection, favorable leading characters, and brand familiarity, whereas (Ülker-demirel & Yıldız, 2021) emphasized audience attitudinal factors involving actors, characters, dramas, and product placement evaluations. However, limited research has integrated both perspectives into a single model to explain purchase intention toward Indonesian local brands featured in Korean dramas. This study addresses that gap by examining how product placement characteristics and audience attitudinal factors jointly shape brand awareness, brand image, attitude toward the brand, and purchase intention.

1.1. Literature Review and Hypothesis Development

Product placement effectiveness is influenced by how a brand is integrated into entertainment content. According to (Russell, 1998), placement prominence and plot connection represent important dimensions of product placement execution. Placement prominence refers to the visual visibility of a brand within a scene, while plot connection reflects the degree to which a brand is integrated into the storyline. Previous studies suggest that prominent placements and strong storyline integration facilitate brand recall and recognition because audiences are more likely to notice and process the embedded brand information (Russell, 2002; Leo et al., 2024).

In addition, favorable leading characters may enhance consumers' evaluations of brands appearing in dramas because audiences tend to transfer positive perceptions of admired characters to associated products. Brand familiarity also plays an important role in strengthening consumers' ability to recognize and evaluate brands. Familiar brands require less cognitive effort to process and are therefore more likely to be remembered and evaluated positively (Babin et al., 2021). Consequently, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H1: Placement Prominence positively affects Brand Awareness.

H2: Plot Connection positively affects Brand Awareness.

H3: Favorable Leading Characters positively affect Brand Awareness.

H4: Brand Familiarity positively affects Brand Awareness.

Customer-Based Brand Equity (CBBE) theory suggests that brand awareness represents a fundamental prerequisite for developing favorable brand associations and brand image (Keller, 2001). Previous studies have consistently shown that consumers who are familiar with a brand are more likely to form stronger brand images (Leo et al., 2024). Therefore, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H5: Brand Awareness positively affects Brand Image.

H6: Brand Familiarity positively affects Brand Image.

Brand awareness and brand image are also expected to influence consumers' overall evaluations of a brand. When consumers recognize a brand and associate it with favorable meanings, they may develop more positive attitudes toward the brand (Leo et al., 2024). Accordingly:

H7: Brand Image positively affects Attitude Toward the Brand.

H8: Brand Awareness positively affects Attitude Toward the Brand.

Positive evaluations of leading characters may also influence audience attitudes toward brands associated with those characters through a meaning transfer process. Therefore:

H9: Favorable Leading Characters positively affect Attitude Toward the Brand.

Meaning Transfer Model explains that symbolic meanings associated with celebrities and fictional characters can be transferred to products and brands endorsed or used by them (McCracken, 1989). Within Korean dramas, audiences often develop favorable evaluations toward actors and characters, which may subsequently influence their evaluations of the drama and embedded product placements. Previous studies indicate that positive attitudes toward actors and characters enhance audiences' enjoyment of dramas and increase acceptance of product placement activities (Ülker-Demirel & Yıldız, 2021). Consequently, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H10: Attitude Toward Actor/Actress positively affects Attitude Toward Drama.

H11: Attitude Toward Characters positively affects Attitude Toward Drama.

H12: Attitude Toward Actor/Actress positively affects Attitude Toward Product Placement.

H13: Attitude Toward Characters positively affects Attitude Toward Product Placement.

Consumers who enjoy a drama are also more likely to perceive embedded placements positively because the placement is viewed as a natural part of the viewing experience (Ülker-demirel & Yıldız, 2021). Therefore:

H14: Attitude Toward Drama positively affects Attitude Toward Product Placement.

Positive evaluations of product placement may subsequently strengthen consumers' attitudes toward the featured brand (Ülker-demirel & Yıldız, 2021). Furthermore, positive attitudes toward actors and characters may directly influence brand attitudes through meaning transfer mechanisms. Accordingly:

H15: Attitude Toward Product Placement positively affects Attitude Toward the Brand.

H16: Attitude Toward Actor/Actress positively affects Attitude Toward the Brand.

H17: Attitude Toward Characters positively affects Attitude Toward the Brand.

Purchase intention reflects consumers' willingness to purchase a product in the future. According to CBBE theory, consumers are more likely to purchase brands that they recognize, evaluate positively, and hold favorable attitudes toward. Previous studies have consistently demonstrated positive relationships among brand awareness, brand image, brand attitude, and purchase intention (Leo et al., 2024; Hamada Fawzy et al., 2026). Therefore, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H18: Attitude Toward the Brand positively affects Purchase Intention.

H19: Brand Awareness positively affects Purchase Intention.

H20: Brand Image positively affects Purchase Intention.

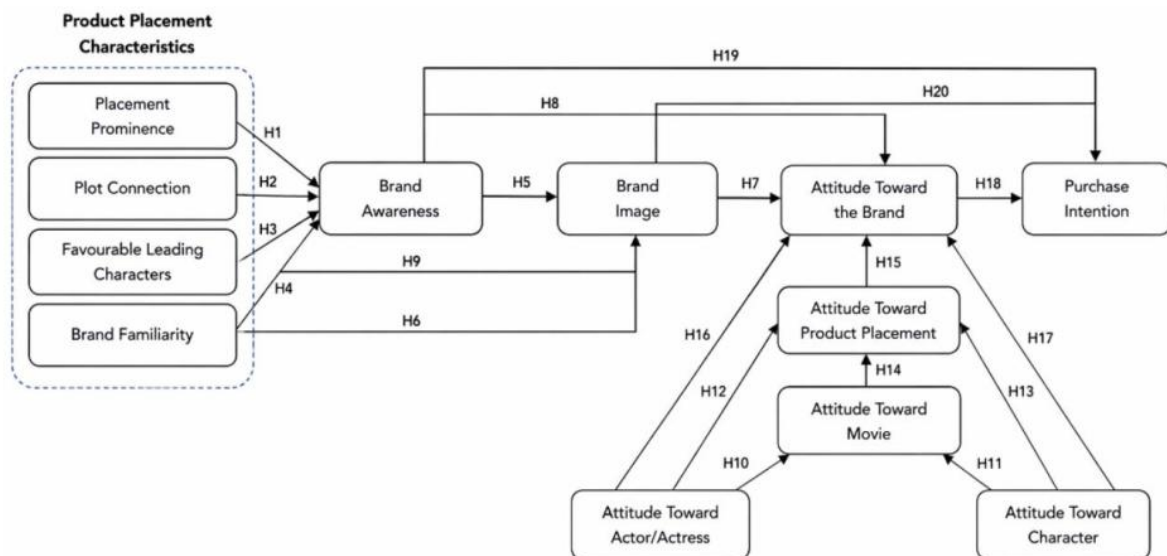


Figure 1. Research Model

2. RESEARCH METHODS

This study used a quantitative, descriptive, single cross-sectional survey design. Primary data were collected through an online questionnaire distributed to respondents who met purposive sampling criteria. The target respondents were Indonesian consumers aged 18 years and above who had watched Korean dramas between 2021 and 2025 and were aware of product placement of Indonesian local brands in those dramas.

A total of 353 responses were collected. The sample was dominated by women (71.9%), respondents aged 25–34 years (64.2%), respondents with undergraduate education (62.7%), and employees in the private sector (52.7%). In terms of viewing intensity, 41.7% reported watching Korean dramas 3–4 times per week, while 35.5% watched 1–2 times per week. In the screening section, Kopiko was the most frequently recalled brand (82.25%), and Vincenzo was the most frequently recalled drama (40.83%).

The final model included twelve constructs: Placement Prominence (PP), Plot Connection (PC), Favorable Leading Characters (FLC), Brand Familiarity (BF), Brand Awareness (BA), Brand Image (BI), Attitude Toward Actor/Actress (ATA), Attitude Toward Characters (ATC), Attitude Toward Drama (ATD), Attitude Toward Product Placement (ATP), Attitude Toward the Brand (ATB), and Purchase Intention (PI). PP, PC, FLC, BF, BA, BI, and PI were measured using fivepoint Likert scales, while all attitude constructs were measured using five-point semantic differential scales. Data were analyzed using PLS-SEM in SmartPLS 4 following the thesis measurement and structural model procedures.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The retained measurement model meets the recommended thresholds for internal consistency and convergent validity. Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability values are above 0.70, while AVE values are above 0.50 for all constructs, indicating reliability and convergent validity. Regarding the measurement model assessment, all retained indicators demonstrated satisfactory indicator reliability, with outer loading values exceeding the recommended threshold of 0.70. Internal consistency reliability was also established, as Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability values exceeded 0.70 for all constructs.

Furthermore, convergent validity was confirmed because all Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values were above 0.50. Discriminant validity was assessed using the Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT) criterion. The highest HTMT value was observed between Brand Image and Attitude Toward Characters (0.861), followed by Brand Awareness and Attitude Toward Drama (0.838), as well as Plot Connection and Brand Awareness (0.838). All HTMT values remained below the recommended threshold of 0.90, confirming adequate discriminant validity among the constructs.

Table 1. Reliability and convergent validity of retained constructs

Construct	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability	AVE
Placement Prominence	0.851	0.890	0.620
Plot Connection	0.830	0.876	0.639
Favorable Leading Characters	0.777	0.871	0.573
Brand Familiarity	0.804	0.871	0.629
Brand Awareness	0.839	0.886	0.608
Brand Image	0.764	0.864	0.614
Attitude Toward Actor/Actress	0.937	0.945	0.541
Attitude Toward Characters	0.801	0.863	0.557
Attitude Toward Drama	0.754	0.844	0.576
Attitude Toward Product Placement	0.764	0.850	0.586
Attitude Toward the Brand	0.807	0.874	0.633
Purchase Intention	0.800	0.870	0.625

The effect-size results indicate that the most influential paths are Attitude Toward Actor/Actress → Attitude Toward Drama ($f^2 = 0.215$), Placement Prominence → Brand Awareness ($f^2 = 0.150$), Brand Awareness → Brand Image ($f^2 = 0.147$), and Favorable Leading Characters → Brand Awareness ($f^2 = 0.142$).

The structural model results supported 18 of the 20 proposed hypotheses shows at Table 2. The strongest relationship was observed between Attitude Toward Actor/Actress and Attitude Toward Drama ($\beta = 0.424$, $p < 0.001$), followed by Brand Awareness and Brand Image ($\beta = 0.399$, $p < 0.001$), and Attitude Toward Character and Attitude Toward Drama ($\beta = 0.359$, $p\text{-value} < 0.001$). However, H7 and H8 were not supported, indicating that Brand Image and Brand Awareness did not significantly influence Attitude Toward the Brand. These findings suggest that emotional responses toward actors, characters, dramas, and product placement play a more important role in shaping brand attitudes than cognitive brand evaluations alone.

The hypothesis testing results show that eighteen hypotheses are supported and two hypotheses are not supported. Placement Prominence, Plot Connection, Favorable Leading Characters, and Brand Familiarity significantly enhance Brand Awareness. Brand Awareness significantly increases Brand Image, while Brand Familiarity also positively influences Brand Image. However, Brand Image does not significantly influence Attitude Toward the Brand, and Brand Awareness also does not significantly influence Attitude Toward the Brand. This suggests that cognitive brand knowledge alone is insufficient to create favorable brand attitudes in this entertainment context.

Table 2. Hypothesis testing results

Hypothesis	Path	β	t- value	p-value	Decision
H1	Placement Prominence → Brand Awareness	0.281	4.401	0.000	Supported
H2	Plot Connection → Brand Awareness	0.301	4.156	0.000	Supported
H3	Favorable Leading Characters → Brand Awareness	0.281	4.007	0.000	Supported
H4	Brand Familiarity → Brand Awareness	0.138	2.086	0.037	Supported
H5	Brand Awareness → Brand Image	0.399	4.060	0.000	Supported
H6	Brand Familiarity → Brand Image	0.206	2.965	0.003	Supported
H7	Brand Image → Attitude Toward the Brand	- 0.090	1.324	0.185	Not supported
H8	Brand Awareness → Attitude Toward the Brand	0.112	1.536	0.124	Not supported
H9	Favorable Leading Characters → Attitude Toward the Brand	0.169	2.215	0.027	Supported
H10	Attitude Toward Actor/Actress → Attitude Toward Drama	0.424	4.128	0.000	Supported
H11	Attitude Toward Character → Attitude Toward Drama	0.359	3.513	0.000	Supported
H12	Attitude Toward Actor/Actress → Attitude Toward Product Placement	0.320	2.746	0.006	Supported
H13	Attitude Toward Character → Attitude Toward Product Placement	0.235	2.795	0.005	Supported
H14	Attitude Toward Drama → Attitude Toward Product Placement	0.273	3.449	0.001	Supported
H15	Attitude Toward Product Placement → Attitude Toward the Brand	0.281	3.531	0.000	Supported
H16	Attitude Toward Actor/Actress → Attitude Toward the Brand	0.207	2.038	0.042	Supported
H17	Attitude Toward Character → Attitude Toward the Brand	0.169	2.215	0.027	Supported
H18	Attitude Toward the Brand → Purchase Intention	0.149	2.241	0.025	Supported
H19	Brand Awareness → Purchase Intention	0.350	4.589	0.000	Supported
H20	Brand Image → Purchase Intention	0.257	3.807	0.000	Supported

The findings demonstrate that product placement effectiveness is driven by both technical execution and audience emotional responses. On the cognitive side, placement prominence, plot connection, favorable leading characters, and brand familiarity significantly strengthen brand awareness. These results support the CBBE perspective because effective brand exposure in Korean dramas helps create brand knowledge and, in turn, influences purchase intention. Among the technical placement factors, plot connection and placement prominence are especially important because viewers respond not only to visibility but also to how naturally the brand fits the storyline.

The affective pathway is equally important. Attitudes toward actors and characters significantly influence attitudes toward drama and product placement, and these relationships strengthen attitude toward the brand same as previous research result (Ülker-demirel & Yıldız, 2021). This pattern supports Meaning Transfer Model by showing that positive meanings associated with actors and characters can be transferred to the brand through the viewing experience (McCracken, 1989). Attitude toward product placement also significantly influences attitude toward the brand, indicating that viewers are more receptive when the placement is perceived as natural and congruent with the drama.

A notable theoretical contribution comes from the non-significant paths from brand awareness and brand image to attitude toward the brand. This finding suggests that, in Korean drama product placement contexts, recognizing a brand and holding a positive brand image are not sufficient to guarantee a favorable brand attitude. Emotional engagement with actors, characters, and the drama itself appears to be more decisive in shaping brand attitudes. By contrast, brand awareness and brand image remain important for purchase intention, which means that cognitive and affective routes operate differently within the same model.

4. CONCLUSION

This study examines how product placement characteristics and audience attitudinal factors influence purchase intention toward Indonesian local brands featured in Korean dramas. The findings show that both pathways matter. On the cognitive side, placement prominence, plot connection, favorable leading characters, and brand familiarity strengthen brand awareness, which in turn improves brand image and purchase intention. On the affective side, attitudes toward actors, characters, dramas, and product placement significantly shape attitude toward the brand. The model also reveals that brand awareness and brand image do not significantly influence attitude toward the brand, highlighting the stronger role of emotional engagement in this entertainment context.

For practitioners, the findings imply that Indonesian local brands should prioritize natural storyline integration, appropriate character selection, and strong visual clarity when entering Korean dramas. Future research may refine the measurement model and further explore cross-category differences among food, beverage, and cosmetic brands.

REFERENCES

- Babin, B. J., Herrmann, J. L., Kacha, M., & Babin, L. A. (2021). The effectiveness of brand placements: A meta-analytic synthesis. *International Journal of Research in Marketing*, 38(4), 1017–1033. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijresmar.2021.01.003>
- Hamada Fawzy, A., Asser Abdelaziz Fahmy Mahmoud, A., Soliman, D. A., & Adly Hanna El Sheikh, S. (2026). Product placement, is it worthwhile? Measuring the Impact of Product Placement on Customer Purchase Intention through the Mediating Role of Brand Awareness: Applied on the Media and Entertainment Industry in Egypt. *MSA-Management Sciences Journal*, 5(2), 177–193.
- Keller, K. L. (2001). *Building Customer-Based Brand Equity: A Blueprint for Creating Strong Brands*.
- Leo, J. I. E., Aprilianty, F., & Kusumawati, N. (2024). The Influences of Kopiko's Product Placement in Korean Drama Towards Indonesian Korean Drama Viewers Purchase Intention (pp. 529–541). https://doi.org/10.2991/978-94-6463-234-7_54
- McCracken, G. (1989). Who Is the Celebrity Endorser? Cultural Foundations of the Endorsement Process. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 16(3), 310–321. <https://doi.org/10.1086/209217>
- Russell, C. A. (1998). Toward a Framework of Product Placement: Theoretical Propositions. In *Advances in Consumer Research* (Vol. 25). Association for Consumer Research. <http://www.acrwebsite.org/search/view-conference-proceedings.aspx?Id=8178http://acrwebsite.org/volumes/8178/volumes/v25/NA-25>
- Russell, C. A. (2002). Investigating the Effectiveness of Product Placement in Television Shows: The Role of Modality and Plot Connection Congruence on Brand Memory and Attitude. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 29, 306–318.
- Ülker-demirel, E., & Yıldız, E. (2021). The Effects of Audience's Attitudes on Actor, Character, Movie and Product Placement on the Brand Attitude. *Istanbul Business Research*. <https://doi.org/10.26650/ibr.2020.49.0013>