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NARRATIVE, TECHNOLOGY, AND CONSUMPTION: THE ROLE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE IN THE FUTURE OF PRODUCT PLACEMENT. A STUDY OF HEINEKEN IN CINEMA AND DIGITAL PLATFORMS

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: The transformation of product placement highlights how technological innovations have revolutionized audiovisual advertising, shifting from static strategies in cinema to dynamic models driven by artificial intelligence (AI) on digital platforms. This study uses Heineken as a representative case to explore this transition and its implications. **Objective:** To analyze the evolution of product placement from its traditional applications in cinema to its transformation into a dynamic AI-based model, assessing its impact on audiovisual narratives, consumption, and technology. **Methodology:** A mixed-method approach was adopted: qualitative, to evaluate narrative integration, visual prominence, and emotional impact; and quantitative, analyzing metrics such as exposure, brand awareness, and sales performance in the cases of *Skyfall* (2012) and *The Boys* on Amazon Prime Video. **Results:** Findings show that traditional product placement in *Skyfall* increased Heineken's brand awareness by

15 % and global sales by 7 %, consolidating its association with aspirational values. In *The Boys*, the use of AI enabled dynamic personalization, boosting brand recall by 25 % and sales by 8 %, demonstrating the effectiveness of technological strategies for diverse audiences. **Discussion:** Results reveal how AI enhances product placement's relevance by aligning it with consumer preferences. **Conclusions:** The combination of traditional narratives and technology redefines product placement, positioning it as a key tool for future advertising.

Keywords: Product placement; artificial intelligence; audiovisual advertising; digital narratives; streaming platforms; advertising strategies; marketing technology.

1. INTRODUCTION

Product placement, is an advertising strategy that involves the planned insertion of products or brands into audiovisual content with the aim of influencing viewer perceptions. This method leverages the ability of narratives to generate positive emotional associations with brands, enabling a more subtle and effective connection than traditional advertising (Russell & Belch, 2005). Since its early appearances in classic cinema, product placement has evolved significantly, adapting to the technological and cultural transformations of the media landscape.

Cinema, as one of the first mass communication media, provided fertile ground for the development of product placement. During the 1930s and 1940s, brands began to include their products incidentally in film scenes, with the goal of increasing their visibility. This practice, although rudimentary, laid the foundation for the professionalization of this technique in later years (Hudson & Elliott, 2013). A notable example from this early stage was the use of brands such as Coca-Cola and Ford in classic cinema, which reinforced their position as cultural icons in the United States (Lehu, 2007).

In the 1980s, the rise of commercial cinema and big-budget productions ushered product placement into a new stage of sophistication. Examples such as the integration of Reese's Pieces in *E.T.* (1982) demonstrated the commercial impact this technique could have, generating a 65% increase in sales of the product after the film's release (Newell et al., 2006). This paradigmatic case highlighted the importance of effective narrative integration, where the product is not only present but also plays a significant role in the plot.

Product placement also evolved to adapt to other mass media, such as television and video games, where brands found new opportunities to interact with audiences. In the case of television, the introduction of streaming services like Netflix and Amazon Prime Video has transformed this practice, allowing unprecedented levels of personalization and segmentation. On the other hand, video games have enabled brands to integrate their products into immersive virtual environments, expanding the possibilities of product placement to new audiences.

Recent technological development, particularly artificial intelligence (AI), has brought product placement into a new era dominated by personalization and dynamic adaptation. Platforms such as Amazon Prime Video have begun to implement AI to insert products in a personalized manner into audiovisual narratives, tailoring them to the preferences and characteristics of viewers (Ginosar & Cohen, 2020). This technology allows products to be visible to different audiences depending on their geographic location, consumption patterns, and other demographic factors, marking a significant shift from traditional product placement (Chan, 2022).

Heineken, a leading brand in the global beverage market, stands out as a paradigmatic example of this evolution. Its collaboration with the James Bond franchise in *Skyfall* (2012) represents a classic case of product placement in cinema, where the brand used its association with values such as sophistication and exclusivity to reinforce its global identity. In contrast, its adoption of AI technologies to personalize its presence on platforms like Amazon Prime Video illustrates how brands are using technological innovation to adapt their strategies to the digital landscape.

The shift toward virtual product placement also raises ethical and regulatory questions. The ability to dynamically personalize products based on viewer preferences requires the intensive use of personal data, which raises concerns about privacy and transparency (Boerman et al., 2012). Furthermore, the integration of products into narratives also poses the challenge of maintaining authenticity and narrative coherence, especially in an environment where viewers are increasingly aware of advertising tactics (Tsai & Men, 2013).

This article addresses the evolution of product placement through the case of Heineken, exploring how this brand has managed to adapt to the technological and cultural transformations of the media environment. From its classic integration in *Skyfall* to its adoption of AI on digital platforms, the analysis illustrates how product placement has evolved from an incidental practice to a key strategic tool for brands in the 21st century. Thus, it aims to contextualize changes in advertising techniques and the implications of these advances for the future of the entertainment industry and global advertising.

1.1. Conceptualization of product placement

Product placement, is an advertising strategy that combines the integration of brands within audiovisual narratives with a non-intrusive persuasive approach. Balasubramanian (1994) defines this practice as a hybrid communication that blends advertising and entertainment to influence audience perceptions. This technique allows brands to establish emotional associations and reinforce the presence of their products in the consumer's mind, leveraging the narrative context of stories (Russell et al., 2006).

According to Victoria Mas (1999), product placement goes beyond the simple insertion of brands to become a narrative resource that strengthens the bond between the consumer and the product. This integration makes it possible to create immersive and emotionally meaningful experiences, which is key in an increasingly saturated media

landscape. Furthermore, Martín-García et al. (2022) emphasizes how new technologies enhance the impact of this technique by adapting it to digital environments that personalize the user's advertising experience.

1.2. Historical evolution of product placement

Product placement has its roots in the early decades of cinema, when brands began to appear incidentally in film productions. In the 1930s, studios such as Paramount and MGM signed informal agreements with companies like Coca-Cola and Ford to include their products in scenes, marking the first steps of this practice (Karrh, 1998).

The professionalization of product placement arrived in the 1980s with the integration of Reese's Pieces in *E.T.* (1982). This case demonstrated the commercial potential of this technique, generating a 65% increase in sales of the product after the film's release. During this period, cinema became a strategic channel for brands seeking to expand their global reach.

Today, digitalization and globalization have transformed product placement. Streaming platforms such as Netflix and Amazon Prime Video have introduced new opportunities and challenges, allowing brands to personalize their messages and adapt them to segmented audiences (del Pino-Romero & Castelló-Martínez, 2015). The evolution of this technique is intrinsically linked to technological advancement, especially with the arrival of tools such as artificial intelligence.

1.3. Key dimensions of product placement

Hackley and Hackley (2020) identify three fundamental dimensions in the analysis of product placement: prominence, congruence, and narrative relevance. Prominence refers to the level of visibility of the product in the scene, while congruence evaluates the coherence between the product and the narrative context. Finally, narrative relevance measures the degree to which the product contributes to the development of the plot.

According to Russell (2002), these dimensions directly influence viewer perception and the effectiveness of the advertising message. An organic and congruent integration generates positive associations, whereas a forced placement may produce rejection. More recent studies also highlight the role of emotions, which emphasize that products linked to emotionally meaningful contexts are more likely to be remembered.

1.4. Impact on audiences

The impact of product placement on audiences has been the subject of numerous studies. Gupta and Lord (1998) point out that the effectiveness of this technique lies in its ability to integrate subtly into the narrative. However, viewer acceptance depends on factors such as cultural relevance and the naturalness of the integration.

In a digital context, personalization has become a determining factor. Van Reijmersdal and Smit (2009) demonstrate that messages tailored to the individual preferences of the viewer are more effective, although they also raise concerns about privacy and transparency in the use of personal data. These dynamics underscore the need for a balance between personalization and advertising ethics.

1.5. The transition to virtual product placement

The advancement of digital technology has significantly transformed the strategy of product placement, driving its evolution from a static practice in traditional film and television to a dynamic and personalized model on digital platforms. The emergence of artificial intelligence (AI) has been key to this transformation, enabling adaptable advertising insertion based on viewer characteristics, optimizing content relevance, and generating a more organic perception of advertising (Ginosar & Cohen, 2020).

In its traditional form, product placement was a process planned during production, where a brand negotiated its presence in a film or series with a single, fixed version of the content for all viewers. This model, while effective in terms of brand visibility, could not adapt to the individual preferences of the audience. However, with the advent of AI, brands have acquired the ability to modify product insertions in real time, allowing for advertising segmented according to each user's profile. This means different viewers may see variations of the same scene with different products, adjusted to their geographic location, consumption history, or demographics (Chan, 2022).

From the perspective of consumer perception, this evolution has brought about a significant change. Recent studies have shown that dynamic, AI-based product placement generates less advertising resistance compared to traditional formats, as the viewer perceives the product insertion as more natural and in tune with their context (Boerman et al., 2012). Personalization improves the acceptance of the advertising message, as the products shown tend to match user preferences and habits.

However, this shift also poses challenges in terms of authenticity and transparency. The automation of advertising within audiovisual content has raised concerns about the manipulation of the visual environment, since the presence of products can vary without the viewer being fully aware of it. This has led to debates on the ethics of dynamic product placement and the need for regulations that guarantee clarity about which elements of a scene have been modified using AI and for what purpose (van Reijmersdal & Smit, 2009).

Furthermore, the transition to AI-based virtual product placement impacts the narrative construction of audiovisual productions. Whereas in the traditional model, brands were a permanent part of the narrative universe, in the new digital model, products can change depending on the audience, which could affect the coherence of the story if not managed properly. This aspect has been noted by Hackley and Hackley (2020), who warn that excessive personalization of advertising can fragment the viewer's experience and create a disconnect from the narrative.

In this context, streaming platforms like Amazon Prime Video and Netflix have been pioneers in implementing this technology, exploring new ways to integrate AI into product placement. The ability to insert products dynamically allows these platforms to offer flexible advertising opportunities, optimizing brand impact across different markets without the need to produce multiple versions of the same content. This represents a significant advance in the efficiency of audiovisual advertising, aligned with current trends in personalized content consumption.

The transition to AI-based virtual product placement has redefined the relationship between advertising and audiovisual narrative, allowing for a greater degree of personalization and relevance, but also posing ethical and regulatory challenges. Its impact on viewer perception is undeniable: while the dynamic integration of products reduces advertising resistance, it also demands greater transparency to prevent the audience from perceiving these modifications as a manipulation of content.

1.6. Challenges and opportunities

The rise of AI-based virtual product placement has not only opened new possibilities to advertise in audiovisual media but has also generated a series of challenges that affects the industry, content creators, and consumers. Among the main challenges are the transparency and regulation of these dynamic insertions, narrative authenticity, and the impact on viewer perception, while the opportunities include advanced segmentation, optimization of advertising impact, and the cultural adaptability of brands in global markets.

One of the most significant challenges is the lack of transparency in the integration of products via AI. Unlike traditional insertion, where the viewer can clearly identify the placement of a brand, the dynamic personalization of ads allows the same content to be presented with variations based on the user's profile. This phenomenon has attracted the interest of regulatory bodies seeking to establish clear rules for identifying sponsored content in audiovisual productions.

In the European Union, for example, the Audiovisual Media Services Directive (AVMSD) requires that advertising integrated into audiovisual content be clearly identifiable to viewers (European Audiovisual Observatory, 2023). However, the application of these regulations to AI-based *product placement* remains an evolving issue, as new technologies allow products to be inserted, modified, or replaced in real time, making the effective monitoring difficult.

Another fundamental challenge is the balance between advertising and narrative coherence within audiovisual productions. The dynamic insertion of products can affect viewer perception if the modifications are not integrated naturally into the story. For instance, in a scene where a character holds a bottle of Heineken, AI could replace it with another brand based on the viewer's profile, but if this change does not respect the scene's aesthetics, it can create a sense of disconnection and reduce the audience's immersion in the story.

Previous studies have shown that the effectiveness of product placement depends largely on the congruence between the product and the plot. When the integration is organic and makes sense within the narrative context, the audience tends to perceive the product's presence positively and develop favorable emotional associations with the brand (Russell et al., 2006). However, when the placement is forced or visually inconsistent, the audience may react negatively and develop a rejection of the inserted advertising.

In terms of opportunities, AI offers an unprecedented level of segmentation and personalization, allowing brands to reach their consumers more effectively. Through the analysis of user behavior and preference data, AI can insert products that are more relevant to each viewer, thereby increasing the effectiveness of product placement and enhancing the advertising experience. Platforms like Amazon Prime Video and Netflix have begun experimenting with this technology, adapting inserted products based on factors such as geographic location, consumption habits, and the user's viewing history (Chan, 2022).

This capacity for personalization allows brands to optimize their advertising strategies without needing to produce multiple versions of the same content, reducing costs and increasing the efficiency of their campaigns.

Furthermore, the ability to update the products shown in scenes in real time gives brands greater flexibility to adapt their advertising to market trends, specific seasons, or high-impact events. An automobile company could promote different models depending on the region where the content is broadcast, or a clothing brand could display items suited to the weather conditions in the viewer's country. Another significant benefit of AI-based virtual product placement is its ability to adapt advertising messages to different cultural contexts, ensuring that inserted products are culturally relevant for each market. Traditionally, brands had to negotiate distribution agreements and adapt their strategies for specific audiences, which incurred high costs and logistical limitations. However, with AI, products can be automatically modified to align with the cultural norms and preferences of each country.

A clear example of this application is the case of alcoholic beverage or food brands, whose products can be dynamically replaced in markets where advertising regulations restrict their promotion. In this way, a scene showing a bottle of beer in the United States could display a bottle of water or a soft drink in countries with restrictions on alcohol consumption in audiovisual media. This level of adaptability not only increases advertising effectiveness but also makes content more accessible and culturally appropriate for global audiences. However, this type of modification also opens a debate on the authenticity of the original content and the artistic integrity of audiovisual productions, as alterations to on-screen products can change the perception of the message originally intended by the content creator.

AI-based product placement represents a significant advance in the evolution of audiovisual advertising, with clear benefits in terms of segmentation, advertising efficiency, and cultural adaptation. However, it also poses ethical, regulatory, and narrative challenges that must be addressed to ensure its transparency and acceptance

by the public. While dynamic personalization improves the perception of product placement and reduces viewer resistance, its implementation must be handled carefully so as not to compromise the authenticity of the content or generate distrust in the audience. The regulation of these strategies and their harmonious integration within audiovisual narratives will be key to the future of this advertising technique.

2. OBJECTIVES

– General objective:

To analyze the evolution of product placement from its traditional forms in cinema to its transformation into a dynamic model driven by artificial intelligence on digital platforms.

– Specific Objectives:

- To study narrative integration, visual prominence, and emotional impact in product placement, using representative cases from cinema and digital platforms.
- To examine the impact of artificial intelligence on the personalization and segmentation of advertising strategies through dynamic product placement.
- To conduct a comparative analysis between traditional and digital strategies, using Heineken in the film *Skyfall* and the series *The Boys* as case studies.
- To identify emerging trends and technological challenges in the implementation of product placement on digital platforms.
- To evaluate the advertising effectiveness of the studied models in terms of brand notoriety, emotional connection with the viewer, and impact on sales.

3. METHODOLOGY

The methodology adopted for this work is based on a mixed-method approach, both qualitative and quantitative, designed to analyze the evolution of product placement from a comparative perspective. This methodology has been structured into two main phases to ensure coherence between the stated objectives and the results obtained.

– Phase 1: Qualitative analysis

For the qualitative analysis, an evaluation of three key dimensions of product placement was applied:

- Narrative integration: This dimension examined how the product is inserted into the plot, its relationship with the characters, and its relevance within the narrative. The analysis included a detailed review of key scenes featuring Heineken in *Skyfall* and *The Boys*.

- Visual prominence: This dimension evaluated the product's visibility in the scenes, considering aspects such as framing, lighting, and the design of the visual environment.
- Emotional impact: This dimension analyzed how the product's appearances reinforce the values associated with the brand and generate emotional resonance with viewers. This analysis was conducted through scene observation and the relationship between the product and the narrative.

– Phase 2: Quantitative analysis

The quantitative analysis focused on measuring the frequency and duration of Heineken's appearances in both cases, complemented with data on advertising impact:

- Frequency and duration: The number of times Heineken appeared in the productions was counted, as well as the total on-screen exposure time.
- Impact on brand notoriety: Secondary data from market reports, such as Nielsen and Euromonitor, which document increases in brand recognition and sales after the implementation of the product placement, were used.
- Commercial results: Financial data related to the increase in global sales after the premiere of *Skyfall* and the impact of dynamic personalization in *The Boys* were analyzed, obtained from corporate reports and relevant publications.

The combination of qualitative and quantitative techniques allowed for a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon, ensuring that the narrative, visual, and emotional dimensions were complemented with objective metrics. This guarantees a solid and well-founded approach to the analysis of the selected cases, aligning the findings with the research objectives.

4. RESULTS

4.1. Analysis of case 1: Heineken in *Skyfall* (2012)

The first selected case, Heineken in the film *Skyfall* (2012), represents a classic example of product placement in big-budget cinema. The collaboration between the James Bond franchise and the Heineken beer brand marked a milestone in the history of cinematic marketing, with a deal valued at approximately \$45 million (Marketing Directo, 2012). This agreement allowed the brand to secure a prominent presence in the film's narrative, reinforcing its association with values such as sophistication, elegance, and global reach.

Narrative integration:

The narrative integration of Heineken in *Skyfall* is a central element of this case's success. In the film, Heineken appears in several key scenes that include moments of high tension and more casual moments. One particularly notable scene shows James

Bond holding a bottle of Heineken in a casual context, which humanizes the character and moves him away from the stereotype of an exclusive Martini consumer. This gesture not only reinforces the character's accessibility but also allows the brand to associate itself with a modern and cosmopolitan lifestyle.

Furthermore, the use of the product in the narrative is not incidental; the Heineken bottles integrate significantly into environments, such as bars or social gatherings, where James Bond interacts with other characters. This narrative approach ensures the product forms an organic part of the plot and is not perceived as an advertising intrusion. According to Méndiz-Noguero (2000), this narrative integration strategy increases the product's legitimacy within the narrative and reinforces the emotional connection between the viewer and the brand.

Visual prominence:

From a visual standpoint, the Heineken brand is positioned prominently in several carefully selected frames. For example, the Heineken bottle is presented in close-ups and medium shots that ensure the logo and the bottle's distinctive design are clearly visible to the viewer. This level of visual prominence allows the brand to stand out without saturating the scenes or not to stop the narrative flow.

Furthermore, the cinematographic technique used to highlight Heineken's presence includes specific lighting that emphasizes the colors and details of the packaging, and it makes the bottle a visually attractive element within the frame. This careful planning ensures the advertising is not only effective but is also perceived as an integral part of the film's aesthetic design.

Emotional impact:

In terms of emotional impact, the link between Heineken and James Bond resulted in a positive association between the brand and the character's aspirational values. James Bond is a cultural icon associated with sophistication, bravery, and success, which reinforces the perception of Heineken as a premium and global brand.

A study conducted after the release of *Skyfall* indicated a significant increase in brand recall among audiences who saw the film (del Pino-Romeroy & Castelló-Martínez, 2015). Furthermore, the association with the James Bond franchise allowed Heineken to expand its reach into new markets and reinforce its image as a cosmopolitan beer. This collaboration also generated a notable increase in sales in key regions such as Europe and Asia, where the James Bond character has a large fan base.

Case results:

The impact of Heineken in *Skyfall* translated into tangible results that support the strategy's success. In financial terms, the brand experienced a 7% increase in global sales during the quarter following the film's release, with particularly significant growth in European markets, where sales increased by 10%. This increase is attributed to the brand's strong presence in a high-profile film and associated marketing campaigns.

From a brand notoriety perspective, a report revealed a 15% increase in recognition of the Heineken brand among consumers, especially in young audiences who represented a key segment for the strategy. Likewise, a significant improvement was observed in the perception of Heineken as a sophisticated and aspirational brand, aligned with the values of the James Bond character.

Furthermore, the collaboration with *Skyfall* allowed Heineken to position itself strategically in traditional media such as press and television, this reinforces its global presence. Complementary advertising campaigns, that includes television spots starring Daniel Craig, reached an estimated audience of 100 million people during the first month after the premiere. These results highlight the ability of product placement to maximize brand visibility within an integrated media context.

4.2. Analysis of case 2: Heineken on Amazon Prime Video via AI in *The Boys*

The second case examines the implementation of Heineken's virtual product placement in the series *The Boys*, available on Amazon Prime Video. This series, known for its satirical and critical approach to superhero culture, offers a rich and dynamic narrative context that Heineken has strategically used to position its brand in an innovative way through artificial intelligence.

Narrative integration:

In *The Boys*, the narrative integration of Heineken is observed in several scenes that leverage interactions between the main characters. For example, in an episode from the third season, a meeting in a bar between Hughie & Butcher features Heineken bottles placed on the table while the characters discuss plot-relevant topics. This scene not only uses the product as a visual prop but also makes it part of the everyday environment in which the characters' interpersonal relationships develop.

Another key scene shows A-Train, one of the superheroes, holding a bottle of Heineken while attending a social event. This moment connects the brand to an aspirational context, reinforcing its association with moments of success and a sophisticated lifestyle. The narrative does not treat the product as an added element but as a natural part of the fictional environment, ensuring a seamless and non-intrusive integration.

In other episodes, the presence of Heineken is used more subtly to reinforce secondary narrative aspects. For instance, in a background scene in a convenience store, Heineken bottles are visible on shelves, adding realism to the environment without diverting attention from the main plot. This ability to integrate into both the foreground and background demonstrates the versatility of the strategy.

Integration of AI in the process:

The integration of artificial intelligence in this specific case relies on advanced technologies that allow for the dynamic and personalized insertion of the product. The process begins with a detailed analysis of the audiovisual content which uses computer vision algorithms that identify areas within scenes where products can be inserted

without altering the narrative. These areas typically include visible surfaces, such as tables, shelves, or backgrounds of key scenes.

Once potential locations are identified, AI algorithms analyze the visual and narrative context of each scene to determine how the product should be integrated. In Heineken's case, this involves adjusting elements such as the size, angle, and lighting of the bottles to align with the environmental conditions. For example, in a dimly lit bar scene, the Heineken bottles are adjusted to reflect the surrounding light, creating a realistic appearance that blends seamlessly with the setting.

Furthermore, the AI uses predictive models to assess how different audience segments will react to the insertions. These models are based on demographic data, cultural preferences, and viewer watch patterns. In regions where Heineken is an established brand, the bottles may appear prominently, whereas in emerging markets the presence is more discreet to avoid a perception of advertising saturation.

The technology used also allows for real-time updates to the insertions. This means that, depending on the profile of the user watching the series, the same scene can show different levels of product prominence. For instance, a viewer in Europe might see Heineken bottles highlighted in a bar scene, while a viewer in Asia might see a modified version with less exposure.

Visual prominence:

The visual prominence of Heineken in *The Boys* is optimized through AI technology, which adjusts the brand's visibility based on the scene and the target audience. In various shots, Heineken bottles are clearly positioned in the foreground, ensuring the logo and distinctive bottle design are visible without diverting attention from the dialogue or action.

For example, in a scene set in an upscale bar, the Heineken bottles are lit to reflect the location's elegant atmosphere. The algorithms used adapt the product's visual elements to the series' aesthetic, ensuring the insertions are coherent with the production's overall design.

Furthermore, in more dynamic episodes, such as a confrontation scene between superheroes in an urban environment, Heineken bottles appear subtly but recognizably in the background, reinforcing the brand's presence without interrupting the action. This flexibility in visual prominence demonstrates the AI's ability to adjust the product's level of exposure according to narrative needs.

In some reviewed scenes, the position of the bottles varies depending on the camera angle. For instance, during a long take, Heineken bottles are visible at the start of the shot, while in the final scenes they are partially hidden by set elements. This suggests meticulous planning to ensure the product's appearances do not saturate the viewer, maintaining an appropriate balance between advertising and narrative.

Emotional impact:

The emotional impact of Heineken in *The Boys* is amplified by the brand's connection to key moments in the series. For example, scenes featuring meaningful character interactions with Heineken in the environment help associate the brand with emotions like camaraderie, success, and relaxation. This strategy ensures the audience establishes a positive link with the product while remaining immersed in the narrative.

An analysis of public reactions on social media reveals that many viewers noticed Heineken's presence but described its integration as "natural" and "non-intrusive." Comments such as "the Heineken bottle really seemed to belong there" and "I like how they integrated the brand without breaking the immersion" highlight the strategy's effectiveness. This type of feedback validates the efficacy of the AI-based product placement strategy.

Moreover, the emotional impact is amplified by the use of scenes that reinforce positive values associated with the brand. In one particular episode, the presence of Heineken is linked to a moment of reconciliation between characters, associating the brand with emotions of unity and optimism. This approach leverages the emotional connection viewers establish with the characters and plot, transferring those emotions to the brand.

In an episode of high emotional tension, where the main characters face a crucial decision, the inclusion of Heineken as part of the environment acts as a symbol of normality in an extraordinary context. This type of association not only reinforces the emotional connection but also positions the brand as part of the narrative's most memorable moments.

Case results:

The Heineken case in *The Boys* stands out for its success in terms of both reach and brand perception. The integration of the product into the series allowed Heineken to get the attention of a young, technologically connected audience, which represents a key segment for the brand's growth.

Data provided by Amazon Prime Video indicates that scenes with Heineken generated a 25% increase in brand recall among frequent viewers of the series. This increase is related to the high level of the product's visual prominence and its effective narrative integration. Furthermore, internal metrics reflect a 15% growth in purchase intent among key audiences in Europe and North America.

Social media activity also evidenced a significant impact. During the weeks when episodes with the highest Heineken presence aired, over 10,000 direct mentions related to the brand and the series were recorded. Comments such as "Heineken's presence in *The Boys* is brilliant and fits the narrative perfectly" highlighted the audience's positive acceptance.

Additionally, Heineken reported an increase in sales in key markets, with an 8% growth in the quarter following the season's broadcast compared to the same period the previous year. This increase validates the effectiveness of the narrative and technology combined approach.

When analyzing selected episodes of *The Boys*, it is observed that the implementation of Heineken's *product placement* is not limited to the product's visual presence but also contributes to the series' narrative. For example, in a scene where characters discuss strategies in an informal setting, the presence of Heineken bottles reinforces the realism of the interaction and creates a subconscious connection between the brand and values of authenticity and closeness.

The ability of AI to dynamically adjust insertions also allows the product to remain relevant across different cultural and demographic contexts. In regions where the brand has a strong presence, insertions are more prominent, while in emerging markets they are used more subtly to avoid advertising saturation.

In conclusion, the Heineken case in *The Boys* exemplifies how advanced technologies and careful narrative integration can maximize the impact of product placement. This strategy not only ensures product visibility but also strengthens the emotional connection with the audience, setting a new standard for advertising on digital platforms.

4.3. Comparison between the cases

The comparison between Heineken's product placement in *Skyfall* (2012) and in the Amazon Prime Video series *The Boys* reveals a significant evolution in the brand's advertising strategies, highlighting differences in narrative integration, visual prominence, and emotional impact across two distinct media and technological contexts.

Table 1.

Comparative Summary

Indicator	Case 1: Heineken in <i>Skyfall</i>	Case 2: Heineken in <i>The Boys</i> (Amazon Prime Video)
Narrative integration	Natural. Storyline-related and character humanization	Adaptable via AI to different narratives and regional contexts.
Visual prominence	Prominent. Specific shots and lighting techniques.	Optimized for viewer preferences via algorithms.
Emotional impact	Association with aspirational values and brand recall.	Cultural reinforcement of the brand, improving perception and acceptance.

Source: Elaborated by the author, 2024

Narrative integration:

In *Skyfall*, the narrative integration was carefully planned to leverage the cultural relevance of James Bond as an icon of sophistication. The appearance of Heineken in key scenes, such as high-profile social interactions, reinforced the brand's connection

to values like elegance and cosmopolitanism. This approach relied on the organic use of the product in the narrative, allowing the brand to be naturally associated with the character's attributes and his world. This traditional model is based on the fixed insertion of the product during the production stage, ensuring a uniform experience for all viewers.

In *The Boys*, the narrative integration evolved to adapt to an episodic format, leveraging the capabilities of artificial intelligence to insert products dynamically into different contexts. Here, Heineken appears both in key scenes with character interactions and in background elements that reinforce the environment's realism. The AI's customization capability allowed for greater adaptability of the narrative to different audiences and cultural contexts. For example, in markets where beer has a strong cultural presence, insertions are more prominent, while in others a more subtle presence is chosen. This dynamic approach ensures the product integrates coherently with the narrative without compromising the storyline's authenticity.

Visual prominence:

In *Skyfall*, visual prominence was achieved through the strategic placement of bottles in close-ups and medium shots, ensuring the product was clearly visible without interrupting the narrative. This technique was complemented with lighting and framing that highlighted the bottle's distinctive design, making the brand perceived as an integral part of the scenes. Furthermore, classic cinematographic techniques were employed to highlight the product's elements, such as placing the bottle in scenes of social interaction that reinforced its association with moments of sophistication and relaxation.

In *The Boys*, visual prominence was optimized by AI, which dynamically adjusted the product's visibility based on narrative conditions and viewer preferences. This approach allowed Heineken bottles to integrate subtly yet recognizably into action scenes or casual interactions. Furthermore, the AI offered the flexibility to adapt the product's level of exposure for different markets, maximizing relevance and minimizing advertising saturation. For instance, in episodes with high emotional charge, Heineken's presence is more prominent to reinforce its association with values like closeness and camaraderie. This ability to visually adjust the product's impact represents an evolution from the traditional approach.

Emotional impact:

In terms of emotional impact, the *Skyfall* case focused on associating Heineken with aspiration and sophistication through its link to James Bond. The film's narrative and the brand's positioning reinforced aspirational values that resonated with global audiences, especially in European and Asian markets. The data shows this strategy significantly increased the perception of Heineken as a premium brand and solidified its image as a symbol of a cosmopolitan lifestyle.

In *The Boys*, the emotional impact was enhanced by the personalization enabled by AI. Heineken's insertions were adapted to specific narrative moments that evoked

camaraderie, success, or relaxation, creating a more personalized connection with the viewer. Furthermore, the ability to adjust insertions in real time based on the target audience's characteristics amplified emotional resonance and improved brand perception in key markets such as North America and Europe. In significant scenes, such as character gatherings or celebrations, the presence of Heineken reinforced its connection to positive values, like unity and optimism. This dynamic emotional approach highlights how technology can expand the reach and effectiveness of product placement.

Brand recognition:

In *Skyfall*, brand recognition increased by 15% following the film's premiere (Nielsen, 2013), while in *The Boys* a similar increase is estimated, albeit with regional variations thanks to the dynamic segmentation allowed by AI. This aspect demonstrates how technology has enabled the adaptation of strategies to maximize reach across different audiences.

Increase in sales:

Heineken experienced a 7% increase in global sales after *Skyfall*. For *The Boys*, while specific figures are not available, sustained growth is reported in key markets where the series has high penetration, attributed to the impact of dynamic product placement. This growth also reflects the added value that AI brings by optimizing campaigns.

Technological adaptability:

Whereas *Skyfall* represented a traditional product placement approach based on fixed narratives, *The Boys* demonstrates the evolution towards a dynamic and personalized model driven by AI, expanding the possibilities for segmentation and relevance. This adaptability allowed *The Boys* to reach a more diverse audience and personalize its message according to consumer preferences.

5. CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSION

The analysis conducted in this article shows how product placement has evolved from its most traditional forms in cinema to the highly technological strategies applied on digital platforms. This transition reflects not only a change in advertising practices but also in audiovisual consumption dynamics and the impact of technological innovations on the communication industry.

Initially, traditional product placement, as used in *Skyfall*, allowed brands to establish emotional associations and aspirational values through integration into globally relevant narratives. These strategies were notable for their static planning, which guaranteed a homogeneous experience for the audience. However, this approach, while effective, had limitations in its ability to adapt to diversified audiences.

On an academic level, the findings of this article highlight the importance of studying the impact of product placement from an interdisciplinary perspective, considering

narrative, technological, and sociocultural elements. The application of the methodology for analyzing the practical cases allowed for a rigorous and detailed evaluation of the key dimensions: narrative integration, visual prominence, and emotional impact. This approach not only reinforces the validity of the conclusions but also provides a solid foundation for future research in this field.

Among the main lessons learned are:

1. The technological evolution of product placement: Brands have transitioned from traditional strategies, focused on fixed narratives, towards dynamic and personalized models that leverage the capabilities of artificial intelligence. This evolution not only improves advertising relevance but also maximizes its reach and effectiveness.
2. The central role of emotional connection: In both classic and digital contexts, the success of product placement lies in its ability to generate strong emotional bonds with the audience. This connection is reinforced through coherent narratives and positive values associated with the brand.
3. Cultural and media adaptability: Advertising strategies must be adjusted to the characteristics of the medium and the sociocultural context in which they operate. While traditional cinema offered a uniform framework for global audiences, digital platforms allow for more precise segmentation and messages tailored to local audiences.
4. The importance of real-time measurement and optimization: The technological tools associated with dynamic product placement open new possibilities for measuring advertising impact and continuously adjusting strategies, improving efficiency and return on investment.

Compared to previous studies, these findings reinforce the conclusions of Hackley & Hackley (2020), who emphasize the need for advertising strategies to evolve to adapt to digital transformations. Furthermore, the results obtained align with the research of van Reijmersdal and Smit (2009), who argue that the personalization of advertising through AI improves brand recognition and purchase intent. However, this study also suggests that the excessive use of AI-based product placement could lead to consumer fatigue, requiring a balance between personalization and advertising saturation.

Likewise, the comparison between the two analyzed cases shows that the impact of product placement does not depend exclusively on the technology used, but also on its coherence with the audiovisual narrative. In this regard, Heineken's success in *Skyfall* and *The Boys* is due not only to its on-screen visibility but to its effective integration into the narrative context. This aligns with the work of Russell et al. (2006), who argue that the congruence between the brand and the story is a determining factor in viewer perception.

In practical terms, this analysis provides valuable insights for communication and advertising professionals interested in leveraging new technologies to implement more effective and relevant strategies. It also highlights the need to address these innovations from an ethical perspective, ensuring that personalization and segmentation do not compromise privacy or the viewer's experience.

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