Chapter 73
Product Placement in Video Games:
Image Transference among Emotions

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ABSTRACT

Organizations look for new ways of communication as traditional media is being saturated with advertising messages. One of the alternatives is product placement in video games. This chapter analyses this new communication alternative. Moreover, through an investigation the chapter shows the consequences of placing a brand in this form of electronic entertainment – in the sense of image transfer from the video game to the brand. Specifically, this chapter focuses on the emotions evoked by the video game. Therefore, the present study develops a scale of emotions adapted to the theme of this research. Additionally, this study analyses the differences between types of product placement and their effects in the image transfer. All conclusions are extracted from the concept map technique.

1. INTRODUCTION

The advertising saturation leads the advertisers seeking alternatives to mainstream media. Moreover, in a time when traditional advertising is suffering from the effects of the economic crisis, brands and advertisers are looking for new formats and models that serve to effectively convey your message without having to go to consumers with aggressive actions. One of these alternatives is to use in-game advertising, which by its nature, is presented as an advertising tool with great potential. Furthermore,

as shown in Figure 1, consumption data show that video games are no longer a niche market, but it is an industry worth millions of Euros.

This relationship between fiction and commercial brands is not a new. The origin of the product placement can be traced to the end of the XIX century when, in a Lumière brothers' movie, two women washed clothes with soap *Lever brothers* (Newell, Salmon & Chang, 2006). However, most researchers put the successful start of this technical communication with the movie *"ET the alien"* in 1982, which appeared chocolates whose sales increased 65% (Balasubramanian, Karrh & Patwardhan, 2006). Thus, the inclusion of products or brands in virtual entertainment has undergone a rapid growth in recent decades, becoming a new marketing communication tool (Hudson and Hudson, 2006; Redondo, 2012). In this sense, the figures for investment in product placement have significant growth. However there is no unanimity about this investment option, with an average annual growth of 37% between 2007 and 2010 (Al-Kadi, 2013).

This growing business and social interest is not complemented by a comparable interest in academic field, until the current century. The limited literature has focused on the cognitive effects. In addition, attitudes toward product placement in video games have been incorporated (Glass, 2007; Nelson, Keum & Yaros, 2004) also, how this attitude is influenced by the level of congruence between the game and the brand (Gangadharbatla, Bradlley & Wise, 2013; Wise, Bolls, Kim, Venkataraman & Meyer, 2008). Also some researches are focused on the study of the background of product placement (Hernandez, Chapa, Minor, Maldonado & Barranzuela, 2004). Finally, it should mention those investigations that have focused on the effects belonging to the brand (Choi, Lee & Li, 2013; Chaney, Lin & Chaney, 2004).

Figure 1.
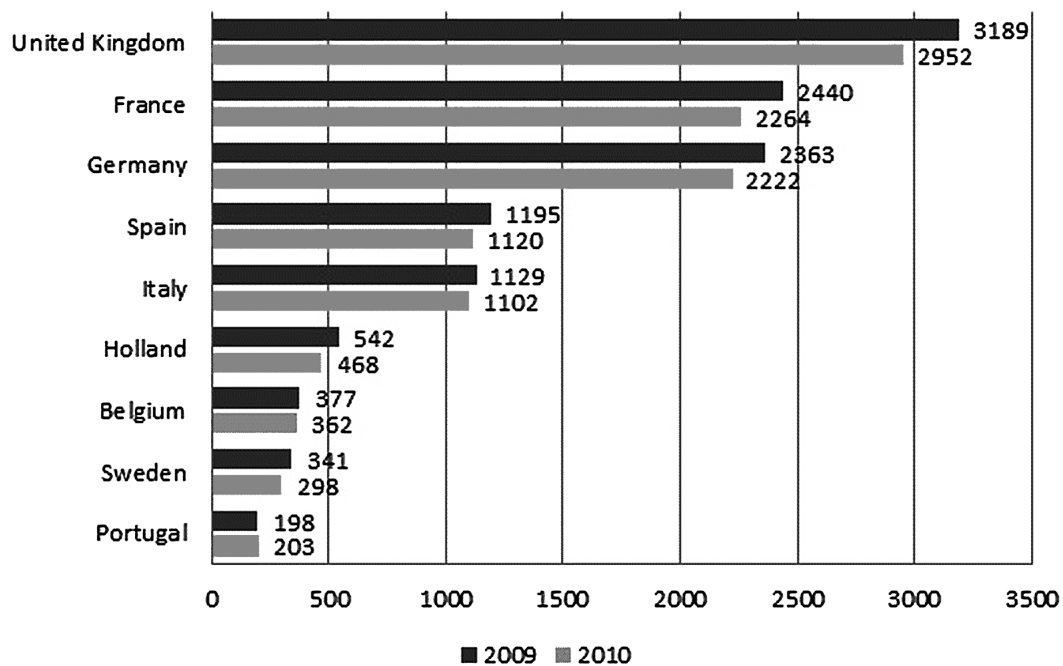
Source: Adese (2011)

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