

# AN EXPLRATRY CNTENT ANALYSIS N BRAND APPEARANCES IN ANIMATION MOVIES

Tuna TETİK  
Bahçeşehir Üniversitesi, Türkiye  
tuna.tetik@bau.edu.tr  
<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5135-957X>

Öykü TÜRKELİ  
Bahçeşehir Üniversitesi, Türkiye  
oyku.turkeli@bau.edu.tr  
<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4674-4676>

<i>Atıf</i>	TETİK, T.; TÜRKELİ, Ö. (2023). AN EXPLORATORY CONTENT ANALYSIS ON BRAND APPEARANCES IN ANIMATION MOVIES. İstanbul Aydın Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi, 15(4), 573-590.
-------------	---

## ÖZ

The brand appearance has evolved as one of the most popular ways to collect budgets for movies, television shows, music videos, games, and animations. This way of brand appearing within these productions is also named product placement. Product placement is briefly defined as placing products and brands within mass media channels and content such as movies, television shows, games, books, songs, music videos, and animations. Animated films and series have become beneficial platforms for brand appearances due to the economic parameters in the global animation industry. Therefore, the field of film studies and the scope of advertising could be intersected in quantitative research. Intending to contribute to the field, the content analysis method was chosen as a research method to investigate the product placement strategies in animated movies. In this quantitative study, purposive sampling was selected as one of the non-probability sampling methods. To prove the widespread usage of product placement in animated movies, 10 United States-originated animated movies were selected with higher than 7.0 points and rated by at least 2.000 thousand people on IMDb. With the study's aim, 121 brand appearances were identified in 10 animated movies, and it was observed that Apple has the most appearances within these 10 movies. The findings demonstrate that brands were visually appeared mostly in the category of products and services about free time activities. Another study finding is that U.S.-originated brands appeared most in animation movies. Brand appearances and product placement practices were at their highest number in the Netflix Original adventure adult animated movies. The primary outcome of this study showcases that animation could be an effective and creative medium for brand appearance and product placement.

**Keywords:** *Brand Appearances, Product Placement, Animation, Film, Media.*

## **ANİMASYON FİMLERİNDEKİ MARKA GÖRÜNÜMÜNE DAİR KEŞFEDİCİ BİR İÇERİK ANALİZİ**

### **ÖZ**

Marka görünürlüğü sinema filmleri, televizyon dizileri, müzik videoları, video oyunları ve animasyonlar için bütçe toplamanın en popüler yollarından biri olarak gelişmiştir. Bu yapımlarda, markaların bu amaçla yer alması ürün yerleştirme olarak adlandırılmaktadır. Ürün yerleştirme kısaca markaların film, televizyon dizisi, oyun, kitap, şarkı, müzik videosu ve animasyon gibi kitle iletişim araçlarına ve içeriğine yerleştirilmesi olarak tanımlanmaktadır. Küresel animasyon endüstrisindeki ekonomik parametreler nedeniyle animasyon filmleri ve dizileri, marka görünürlüğü için faydalı platformlar olarak görülmeye başlanmıştır. Böylelikle film çalışmaları alanıyla reklamcılığın kapsamına giren çalışmalar nicel araştırmalarda bir araya gelebilir. Alana katkı sağlamayı amaçlayan bu çalışma-da, araştırma yöntemlerinden içerik analizi yöntemini kullanarak, animasyon filmlerdeki marka görünürlüğü stratejilerinin incelenmesi hedeflenmektedir. Ürün yerleştirme uygulamalarının animasyon filmlerde yaygın kullanımını kanıtlamak için bu nicel çalışmada, tesadüfi olmayan örnekleme yöntemlerinden amaçsal örnekleme yöntemi kullanılarak 7.0 puanın üzerinde ve IMDb’de en az 2.000 bin kişi tarafından puanlanan Amerika Birleşik Devletleri merkezli 10 animasyon film araştırmanın kapsamına dahil edilmiştir. Elde edilen sonuçlara göre, 10 animasyon filmde toplam 121 ürün yerleştirme uygulaması belirlenmiş ve bu 10 film içerisinde en çok Apple markasının yer aldığı tespit edilmiştir. Markaların daha çok görsel olarak yer aldığı ve en çok boş zaman aktiviteleri kategorisinde buldukları tespit edilmiştir. Araştırmanın bir diğer sonuca göre, yerleştirme yapılan markaların çoğu Amerika menşelidir. Son olarak, en çok yetişkinlere yönelik filmlerde ürün yerleştirme uygulamaları ve marka görünürlüğü tespit edilmiştir ve bu yapımların yüksek bir oranı da Netflix tarafından üretilmiştir. Bu çalışmanın ana çıktısı, animasyonun marka görünürlüğü ve ürün yerleştirme için etkili ve yaratıcı bir medya olabileceğinin ortaya çıkartılmasıdır.

***Anahtar Kelimeler:** Marka Görünümü, Ürün Yerleştirme, Animasyon, Film, Medya.*

## INTRODUCTION

When Guillermo Del Toro's *Pinocchio* (Guillermo Del Toro & Mark Gustafson, 2022) won the Best Animated Film Prize at the EE BAFTAs in 2023, Del Toro underlined that "animation is not a genre for kids. It is a medium for art and film. Animation should stay in the conversation" (URL-1). Significantly, as Del Toro mentioned, animation should be regarded as a medium. Donald Crafton (2011: 93) states that "tracing the etymology of the word 'animation' reveals how it acquired two separate meanings: one to endow with life or to come alive, and the other, to move or be moved." Animation has been a convenient medium for comprehensive research on content from many perspectives in interdisciplinary fields. Moreover, the global animation industry is drastically and rapidly growing daily in many fields, from entertainment to education. According to Statista (2023), the size of the global animation market reached over \$410 billion, and the projections for 2030 foreshadow \$587 billion (URL-2). Micaela Leonard (2023) at Market Splash highlights that "television and streaming platforms account for over 80% of the distribution of animated content, with home media releases accounting for a smaller portion of the market" (URL-3). Thus, Guillermo Del Toro's *Pinocchio* is given as the inception for the study to show the prestigious status and the commercial potential of adult animations for the market and digital streaming platforms.

Furthermore, as argued above, animated movies are valuable cases to become the center of many types of academic research. In this regard, Paul Wells' *Understanding Animation* (1998), Steven T. Brown's *Cinema Anime: Critical Engagements with Japanese Animation* (2006), Thomas Lamarre's *The Anime Machine: A Media Theory of Animation* (2009), and Karen Beckman's *Animating Film Theory* (2014) are contemporary and seminal sources. Wells (1998: 35-68) traces the roots of animated movies from flipbooks to early comic strip cartoon concepts, from narrative works of Disney to deconstructed experimental productions. While Brown's (2006) and Lamarre's studies are based on Japanese animations' aesthetic, cultural, and narrative dimensions, Beckman's (2014) work centers on the theory, politics, and history of animation as a medium.

Animation filmmaking and live-action productions are considered as two related but counter ways of art in the field of cinema. David Bordwell and Kristin Thompson (2008: 370) argue that "animation is the counterpart to live action, any sort of film that can be filmed live can be made using animation," while they clarify that "animated films are distinguished from live-action ones by the unusual kinds of work done at the production stage" (ibid.). Bordwell and Thompson (2008: 370-373) examine types of animation filmmaking within several practices, including "flat puppets with movable joints," "stop motion techniques," "pixilation technologies," "computer imagining software," and "fully-computer-generated graphics." However, from "the first animated feature-

length movie-created entirely via computer” titled *Toy Story* (John Lasseter, 1995), as Bordwell and Thompson stated (2008: 373), to the present, animation filmmaking via computer-based technologies—as well as the global animation industry—has evolved and expanded in many domains of the works, covering production quality, diversified target audience, and reception, commerciality, and status of animation.

This study attempts to bring cinema, regarding animation, and units of advertising together to research the brand appearance and product placement strategies in animated movies. That is why this article intends to contribute to the field by providing a quantitative study with content analysis on the animation and advertising industries’ junction in brand and content relation. Significantly, our progression-oriented age’s technological improvements have caused an augmentation of advertising into people’s everyday life—using every possible platform to reach the target. This condition has led to consumers finding new ways to avoid commercialized content. On the other hand, brands have been forced to find alternative techniques to reach consumers. In this direction, product placement has been specified as an alternative and a captivating way for the “ad-free longing audience” and “innovation-searching brands.” These “hidden but paid-for hybrid messages” have emerged as a new persuasive option to the other traditional marketing communication tools for the brands. This persuasive marketing communication tool’s success is in its “non-aggressive nature” (Balasubramanian, 1994: 31; d’Astous & Chartier, 2000: 31).

There is a tendency to associate product placement concepts with live-action motion pictures in the field. However, Morikawa and Hosoda (2015: 361) argue that animations deserve much more attention due to the changing essence of advertising. Since there is only a group of research and studies on product placement in this regard, thus; this study also aims to contribute to the literature.

For this purpose, this study examined the different product placement strategies in popular animated movies targeted at children or adults. Content analysis was chosen as a research method to investigate the product placement strategies in animated movies. Purposive sampling—one of the non-probability sampling methods—was selected in this quantitative study. In this way, ten U.S-originated animated movies were included in the analysis of the scope with higher than 7.0 points and rated by at least 2.000 thousand people on IMDb (International Movie Database).

## **AN OVERVIEW OF BRAND APPEARANCE AND PRODUCT PLACEMENT IN CINEMA**

Brands put great effort into sharing their products’ or services’ information with consumers through advertising and publicity. Product placement is a favored communication mechanism because it bridges brands and consumers

by combining the best sides of advertising and publicity activities: “Although they are paid for they do not identify the sponsor.” In this sense, they conceal the commercial source while providing a new platform for brands to share their advertising messages. This is why they appear more believable than other marketing communication tools (Balasubramanian, 1994: 29-30).

Balasubramanian (1994: 31) defines product placement as a commercial message—containing a paid product or service information in seeking to influence on the audience, while d’Astous and Chartier (2000: 31) describe the term as an insertion of a product into movies and television series with a promotional intention. Besides, Gupta and Gould (1997: 37) identify product placement with a flourishing promotional area to include brands in creative productions such as movies, television series, songs, music videos, video games, novels, and plays in return for money. However, Chan (2012: 36-37) discerns that these definitions are only compatible with “the paid-for activities.” However, a more significant number of product placement practices are conducted without any payment from the brand. That is why product placement definitions currently embody not only “the paid-for activities” of a brand but also “the non-paid activities” of brands in movies, songs, shows, novels, and animations (Morikawa & Hosoda, 2015: 361- 363).

Product placement has beneficial qualities—accompanied by some disadvantages. The primary effect of the product placement on the audience is less evident, and indirect than the other marketing communication tools. This shortcoming nature of the product placement makes the impact less measurable and unmanageable. Secondly, product placement permits the brand to control the content of the work. Besides, the brand is placed within the content. However, this practice causes some disagreements between the brand and the production company (Balasubramanian, 1994: 30; Delorme & Reid, 1999: 72).

Gupta and Lord (1998: 49) propose a three-dimensional categorization for product placement. These dimensions are identified with visual, audio, and audio-visual appearances. The first type (visual) includes scenes—showing a visual brand identifier, such as a logo, a billboard, or the product itself. In the second type (audio), brands are only mentioned in an audio form in a dialogue or used as sound related to the brand. Finally, the third type of product placement (audio-visual) includes “showing a brand at the same time as mentioning the brand name or conveying a brand-relevant message in an audio form” (Gupta & Lord, 1998: 49).

The history of product placement is often delineated with Hollywood movies. One of the remarkable examples of product placement is the candy brand’s (Reese’s Pieces’) inclusion in the movie titled *E.T. the Extra-Terrestrial* (Steven Spielberg, 1984). However, Newell, Salmon, and Chang (2006: 575) verify that the placing

brands in movies has started with the Lumiere films of the late-1890s. This case also demonstrates that cinema has the oldest past with the product placement concept among other media and mass media channels. The roots of product placement in animation could be seen in the 1980s. Nonetheless, Lehu (2007: 49) states that while scholars tend to concentrate on product placement usages in live-action movies, they should consider animations as an appealing platform and a particular medium for studies on product placement strategies and practices.

According to Ant (2015), The first known product placement in an animated movie is the visual placement of a famous cereal brand called Honey Nut Cheerios in *Chipmunk Adventure* (Janice Karman, 1987). Following that, another brand is placed in an animated movie called *Oliver & Company* (George Scribner, 1988). Many well-known brands, including Kodak, Coca-Cola, USA Today, Castro, Ryder, Sony, Dr. Scholl's, Tab, and McDonald's, have used product placement in animated movies (URL-4).

The necessity of focusing on product placement in animation is stated by Morikawa and Hosoda (2015: 369) by underlying the essence and nature of animation. Morikawa and Hosoda indicate that the majority of animations do not require physical productions (*ibid.*). Nonetheless, companies cannot reduce their production cost even if brands offer their products free of charge; this distinguishes animation as the only medium that cannot use free prop supply arrangements. That is why product placement in the animation industry should be investigated as a paid-for advertising medium. Besides, the animation industry should play a significant role because animation is a drawn medium, there is no way a brand can appear in the content as an accident or a chance (Morikawa & Hosoda, 2015: 369).

Product placements in animated movies and series could be used to add emotion or reality to the production as well as to exploit the image of the movie or brand (Türkel, 2017: 67-69). These placements can be observed both in children and adult animations. Animal Planet, Coca-Cola, and McDonald's brands are placed in *Madagascar* (Tom McGrath & Eric Darnell, 2005); while Burger King and Jack Daniels brands are seen in an adult animated series called *American Dad!* (Mike Barker, Seth MacFarlane, & Matt Weitzman, 2005-). More examples could be given, whether they target children or adults, including "Chanel in *Anastasia* (Don Bluth & Gary Goldman, 1997)," "Foot Locker, Body Shop, GNC, Sbarro, Panda Express, and Victoria's Secret in *Eight Crazy Nights* (Seth Kearsley, 2002)," "Porsche and Volkswagen in *Cars* (John Lasseter & Joe Ranft, 2006)," "Volkswagen in *Curious George* (Matthew O'Callaghan, 2006)," "Cinnabon, Timberland, Variety, and Vogue in *Bee Movie* (Simon J. Smith & Steve Hickner, 2007)," "Apple in *Wall-E* (Andrew Stanton, 2008)," "7-eleven, Slurpee, and Jean-Paul Gaultier in *Megamind* (Tom McGrath, 2010)," "Mustang in *Cars 2* (John Lasseter, 2011)," "P&G, Charlie Tuna, and Twinkie the Kid in *Foodfight!*

(Lawrence Kasanoff, 2012),” “Subway, Nesquik, Laffy Taffy, and Oreo in Wreck-It Ralph (Rich Moore, 2012),” and “State Farm in Inside Out (Pete Docter, 2015),” (URL-4; URL-5; URL-6; URL-7).

## METHODOLOGY

The improvement of product placement, as a marketing communication tool, has been mainly explained in the direction of the film industry’s outbreak during the 1990s. This concept is defined as an entrance of a branded product into mass media content to affect consumers’ attitudes or behaviors (Salmon & Chang, 2006: 576). As Morikawa and Hosoda (2015: 361) summarized, specific studies on product placement have focused on three main streams, including “measurement of product placement effectiveness,” “consumer attitudes towards product placement,” and “the ethical issues of product placement.” However, only a few scientific sources concentrated on product placement in animated movies.

This study aims contribute to the field—particularly film studies and the product placement literature. Since no quantitative study was found to explore the product placement strategies in animated movies with a content analysis method. This study is labeled as exploratory research. Exploratory research are the studies—conducted “to explore a new topic. This approach typically occurs when a researcher examines a new interest or when the subject of study itself is relatively new” (Babbie, 2009: 92).

Content analysis is a systematic quantitative method to examine the content of recorded information. Specifically, the content analysis method was chosen as a research method to investigate the product placement strategies in animated movies. This method is specifically constructive to examine the concepts in media. This research technique establishes “repeatable and meaningful relationships” between “data and content” (Krippendorff, 2018: 1-4; Neuendorf, 2016: 21-24). Therefore, content analysis method was conducted to assess the following features:

1. Placement techniques,
2. Placements in different genres of animated movies,
3. Target audience of an animated movies,
4. The tone of the placements,
5. Product type and the origins of the included brands.

This study’s analysis units are animated movies; therefore, this study focuses on the product placements in the most popular animated movies—targeting children or adults—released in 2022 to identify the product placement strategies. Purposive sampling method was used to determine the sample movies in this study. Particularly, by the non-probability sampling method, ten U.S.-originated animated movies were selected with higher point than 7.0 points and rated by at

least 2.000 thousand people on IMDb until the 2nd of April 2023. The superhero movies were not included in the sample units. Besides, the time limitation was one of the limits of the study. This study included the animation movies' ratings until the 2nd of April 2023 with specific criteria, including the rating points and the number of the people who rated these movies might be changed after this date. The animation movies, which have been analyzed in this study, are listed below:

1. *Entergalactic* (Fletcher Moules, 2022).
2. *Apollo 10 ½: A Space Age Childhood* (Richard Linklater, 2022).
3. *Beavis and Butt-Head* (Mike Judge, 2022).
4. *The House* (Emma De Swaef and others, 2022).
5. *The Bob's Burger* (Loren Bouchard & Bernard Derriman, 2022).
6. *Turning Red* (Domee Shi, 2022).
7. *The Sea Beast* (Chris Williams, 2022).
8. *Puss in Boots: The Last Wish* (Joel Crawford & Januel Mercado, 2022).
9. *Guillermo Del Toro's Pinocchio* (Guillermo Del Toro & Mark Gustafson, 2022).
10. *Chip 'n Dale: Rescue Rangers* (Akiva Schaffer, 2022).

In the light of all this information, this study was structured on the following research questions:

- RQ1: Which brand has the most appearances in animated movies?
- RQ2: Which product placement type is used mostly in animated movies?
- RQ3: Which product category types are most used in animated movies?
- RQ4: What is the most used brand's country of origin in animated movies?
- RQ5: Which movie genre has the most brand appearances?
- RQ6: Which production company's animations have the most product placement?
- RQ7: Which animation type has the most product placement, depending on the target audience?

A coding sheet was developed to capture the incidence and mode of presentation of brand appearances in animated movies. Gupta and Lord's (1998: 49) distinctive categorization was used for defining the brand appearances: "Which grouped as (1) brand being referred as verbally, (2) portrayed visually or (3) both." All branded content was accepted as product placements because it is impossible to recognize whether the placement was done with an exchange of money. While examining the brand names and titles, service brands—restaurants and stores—were included. In the research, non-profit organizations, such as foundations and associations, were excluded because they rarely paid for advertising.



Two undergraduate students in the Advertising Department at Bahçeşehir University were selected as coders and instructed to identify the placements of brands that were mentioned, shown, or both. The length of the visual placements was measured by seconds. The verbal placements of the brands were measured by counting the number of times when they were mentioned. Finally, if the brands were involved in the animated movies both visually and verbally, coders counted the number of times when a brand name was mentioned and measured how many seconds the brand was presented. The genres of the movies were included with their target audience—children or adults—to explore the product placement appearances in animation movies.

Then, the two coders independently analyzed all movies for brand appearances, and the inter-coder reliability level was calculated over Krippendorff's Alpha value for two coders over the data acquired from 16 hours and 15 minutes of movies in total. Krippendorff (2022) states that a reliable value ranges from  $\alpha \geq .800$  to  $0.800 > \alpha \geq 0.667$ . The inter-coder validity level of two coders ( $\alpha=0.87$ ) was accepted within these limits in this study.

## FINDINGS

The data were acquired from 16 hours and 35 minutes of ten animation movies of 2022, which have the highest point (more than 7.0) and the highest vote on the International Movie Database until the 2nd of April 2023, 06:00 pm. The descriptive statistics of the analyzed movies are reported below.

**Table 1.** Genres of the Movies

Genres	f	%
Comedy	2	20
Drama	2	20
Adventure	6	60
Total	<b>10</b>	<b>100</b>

As stated in Table 1, %20 percent of animated movies are in the comedy genre. %20 are dramas, whereas %60 are adventures. Hence, it is evident that adventurous narratives hold a prominent position in the medium, with drama and comedy sharing equal prominence.

**Table 2.** Animation Technique of the Movies

Animation techniques	f	%
Computer-generated and hand-drawing	1	10
Stop-motion	3	30
Computer-generated	6	60
Total	<b>10</b>	<b>100</b>

As indicated in Table 2, %10 are produced via a mixture of computer-generated and hand-drawing techniques, while %30 are stop-motion animated movies. Significantly, %60 are computer-generated ones. Prominently, one can argue that computer-generated technologies are becoming the industry standard, while traditional animation methods become minority in significance.

**Table 3.** Production Companies of the Movies

Production companies	f	%
MTV Entertainment	1	10
20th Century Studios	1	10
Dream Works Animation	1	10
Disney Animation	2	20
Netflix Animation	5	50
Total	<b>10</b>	<b>100</b>

As shown in Table 3, MTV Entertainment is the production company of only %10 percent of the analyzed movies, while 20th Century Studios and Dream Works Animation are the production companies of each %20 of the analyzed movies. Finally, Netflix Animation is the production company of most movies with a %50 percentage. The predominance of Netflix is a key point of discussion, as its influence sheds light on various aspects of the medium, including audience perception, evolving viewing habits, and consumption patterns.

**Table 4.** Target Audience of the Movies

Target audience	f	%
Children	5	50
Adult	5	50
Total	<b>10</b>	<b>100</b>

Animated movies are categorized—depending on their target audience in Table 4. Half of the selected movies target children, and the other %50's target audience is the adult groups. After analyzing the descriptive features of the movies, the research questions' answers were reported using descriptive statistical analysis. One hundred and twenty-one brand appearances are identified in ten analyzed movies. Apple Inc. has the most appearances—accounting for %6,6.

**Table 5.** The Number and the Percentage Distribution of the Brand Appearances Types

Type of the brand appearance	f	%
<b>Visual</b>	77	63,6
<b>Verbal</b>	25	20,7
<b>Both Verbal and Visual</b>	19	15,7
<b>Total</b>	<b>121</b>	<b>100</b>

As indicated in Table 5, brands visually appear at the highest level in analyzed animated movies—accounting for % 63,6. Verbal appearances account for % 20,7, whereas the percentage of both visual and verbal appearances account is % 15,7. Despite the visual dominance of brands, some companies like Apple choose to incorporate their products both visually and verbally within productions, emphasizing the significance of brand representation. In this context, Apple products garner positive attention within these narratives.

**Table 6.** The Number and the Percentage of Brand Appearances by Product Type

Brand appearances by product type	f	%
<b>Products and services about free time activities</b>	26	29,8
<b>Fashion and jewelry products</b>	25	20,7
<b>Service</b>	20	16,5
<b>Technology/ communication tools</b>	15	12,4
<b>Food and beverage</b>	13	10,7
<b>Transportation products</b>	9	7,4
<b>Personal care and makeup products</b>	1	0,8
<b>Cleaning products</b>	1	0,8
<b>Furniture and appliances</b>	1	0,8
<b>Total</b>	<b>121</b>	<b>100</b>

The distribution of each product category is presented in Table 6 in order to answer the third research question that inquires the most product category used in the brand appearance in the animated movies. The most brand appearances in the category of products and services cover free time activities—accounting for % 29,8, while these products include social media, board games, media and radio channels, film studios, and associates. The commonly used categories in the order of their domains are fashion products (%20,7)<sup>1</sup>, services<sup>2</sup> (%16,5), tech-

<sup>1</sup> This category includes the products of clothing, glasses, watches, belts, shoes, wallets, luggage, and jewelry.

<sup>2</sup> This category includes services of banks, financial companies, and other for-profit enterprises, restaurants, cafes, bars, and shopping malls.

nology and communication tools<sup>3</sup> (%12,4), food and beverage<sup>4</sup> (%10,7), transportation products<sup>5</sup>(% 7,4). Personal care and makeup products (%0,8), cleaning products (%0,8), and furniture and appliances (%0,8) constitute % 2,4 of total.

**Table 7.** The Origin of the Brand-product

The product origin	f	%
<b>United States</b>	99	81,8
<b>Italy</b>	7	5,8
<b>Japan</b>	4	3,3
<b>France</b>	3	2,5
<b>United Kingdom</b>	2	1,7
<b>Germany</b>	2	1,7
<b>Australia</b>	2	1,7
<b>India</b>	1	0,8
<b>Denmark</b>	1	0,8
<b>Total</b>	<b>121</b>	<b>100</b>

As observed in Table 7, the most appeared brands are U.S.-originated—accounting for % 81,8. Following the U.S., Italy-originated brands appear with % 5,8. At third, Japan-originated brands are placed. It is worth noting that productions originating from the United States dominate the market, with countries like Japan and Italy, known for their animation traditions, also having noteworthy parts.

**Table 8.** The Number and the Distribution of Brand Appearances by Genres

Type of the product placement					Total
Genre	f / %	Verbal	Visual	Verbal & Visual	
<b>Adventure</b>	f	10	48	12	70
	%	40,00	62,30	63,30	57,90
<b>Comedy</b>	f	15	27	7	49
	%	60,00	35,10	36,80	40,50

<sup>3</sup> This category includes the products of computers, laptops, music players, mobile phones, televisions, websites, online search engines, copiers, scanners, and printers.

<sup>4</sup> This category includes the products of soft drinks, alcoholic beverages, fatty foods, and snacks.

<sup>5</sup> This category includes the products of cars, pickup trucks, motorcycles, bicycles, trucks, buses, airlines, and transportation equipment covering wheel, engine, and fuel oil.

<b>Drama</b>	f	0	2	0	2
	%	0	2,60	0	1,70
Total	<b>f</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>121</b>
	<b>%</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 8 demonstrates the distribution of brand appearances by film genres. The table provides the number/percent of brand appearances by genre to compare the statistics. As shown in Table 8, adventure animated movies account for %57,90, while animated movies in the comedy genre are % 40,5. Then, animated movies in the drama genre account for % 1,7.

**Table 9.** The Number and the Percentage Distribution of Brand Appearances by Movies' Production Company

Production company	f	%
<b>Netflix</b>	73	60,3
<b>Disney</b>	36	29,8
<b>20th Century Fox</b>	5	4,1
<b>MTV Entertainment</b>	7	5,8
Total	<b>121</b>	<b>100</b>

When animation production companies were analyzed, it was observed that Netflix has the most brand appearances in the originals—accounting for % 60,3, as indicated in Table 9. Notably, Netflix and Disney can be considered as primary platforms for brands to place the products.

**Table 10.** The Number and the Percent Distribution of Brand Appearances by Movies' Target Audience

Target audience	f	%
<b>Children</b>	36	29,8
<b>Adult</b>	85	70,2
Total	121	100

As stated in Table 10, animated movies in the adult category have brand appearances at the highest number. Ten animated movies were analyzed to explore the brand appearance strategies in animated movies. Content analysis was conducted to specify the brand appearances in the animated movies. One hundred and twenty-one brands were discovered in these movies via this method. Six research questions were asked to reveal the product placement strategies in animated movies. Notably, Apple has the most brand appearances (with %6,6). When the

product placement type was investigated, the visual placement type was observed as the most used strategy (with %63,6).

Furthermore, the results show that most brand appearances were in the products about free time activities category (with % 29,8). Another study result reveals that adventure was the most preferred genre for brand appearances (with %57,9). Another outcome of this study presents that U.S.-originated brands were most chosen to be involved in these movies (with %81,8). Apart from these, the results demonstrate that Netflix Original productions have the most brand appearances.

The final outcome of this study reveals that both children and adult animated movies are used for brand appearances. Nevertheless, when the percentage of each brand placement is compared, there is an apparent inequity between them. It was found that adult animated movies were selected more than the children-targeted movies (with %70,2) for brand appearance and product placement.

## **DISCUSSION AND CONCLUDING REMARKS**

One hundred and twenty-one brand appearances were identified in ten selected animated movies. It was observed that Apple has the most appearances. Apple's portrayal in these movies mostly has a positive tone. While presenting via verbal placements, the brand choice was applied into movies via the ringtone, keyboard and screen lock voices, not with the brand name. Like iPhone ringtones, the MacBook screen with the brand's famous logo appeared on the backside of the product. The brand was displayed naturally and positively in the movies. It is strongly advised that Apple's product strategies and representation of Apple products could be centers of further studies.

As one of the main focuses of this study, it was found that brands were mostly placed visually in the animated movies. Presumably, one of the reasons for this situation is that brands are willing to be placed with this strategy because of the animation's eccentric, exaggerated, and moving visual nature. Most brand appearances were revealed as products and services about free time activities. This category was especially involved in social media applications, board games, media and radio channels, and film studios. Since there is no doubt that brand appearances were at their highest number in the adventure genre, besides, the U.S.-originated brands were the most placed brands, this is not surprising—considering that all movies in the scope were produced by U.S.-based companies. The final outcome of this study shows that most brand placements were observed in Netflix Original animated movies, which were produced in 2022. In other words, Netflix Original animations include the most product placements—compared with other companies—showing the commercial potential of an original to the brands.

As a unique case, Netflix necessitates a particular interpretation. Netflix has transformed from an American DVD rental service into “the world's leading Internet

entertainment provider with 125 million subscribers in over 190 countries” (Pili-pets, 2019: 1). Moreover, the dominance of Netflix in the global streaming market is increasing annually. Even new terms like Netflix and Chill, Netflixing, Tudum<sup>1</sup>, and binging<sup>2</sup> have become more popular and globally widespread. However, “nothing about Netflix should be accepted as a norm or standard” (Lobato & Lotz, 2020: 133). Shattuc (2020: 146) states that “Netflix is the ‘first network’ of streaming in terms of size, audience, and array of original programs.” Nevertheless, Burroughs (2018) mentions that Netflix is one of the key players in shaping, evolving, and directing the new type of audience’s streaming habits, ways, and reception. Hadida and others (2020) discuss Netflix’s direct and indirect influence on Hollywood studio filmmaking from the mid-2010s to the present. Likewise, the number of transnational operations of Netflix has an influx from the mid-2010s to the early-2020s. Whereas Netflix invested in twenty-three European productions—continuation original, co-production/co-financing original, licensed original—in 2016, the number peaked with forty-seven productions in 2019 (Iordache, Raats, & Afilipoaie, 2022: 242). Lotz, Eklund, and Soroka’s (2022: 515) study showcases that the number of titles in the U.S. Netflix library passed five thousand, while they mention that “Netflix’s commissioned titles account for roughly half of the 60% of titles common across the libraries” (517). However, they also underline that “several of the other services launched since 2019 while Netflix’s first commissioned series debuted in 2013” (ibid.). Thus, streaming completion has grown into a complex and challenging arena with the entry of major companies, such as HBO, Disney, and Amazon, in the global market, even though Netflix still maintains leadership within the number of subscribers, titles in the library, and overseas operations. Therefore, the final outcome of this study becomes more significant for further research on the commercial dimension and potential of Netflix Originals.

This exploratory and descriptive study demonstrated that children and adult-targeted movies are popular brand placement platforms. Animated movies—targeting children are seen as a new stage for brands to appear and communicate to children through their favorite animated characters. Considering some countries have law restrictions against advertising for children below 12 (Fritzell, Olstrope, & Harhoff, 2010: 37), the “animated stage” can benefit brands’ communication. Because these impediments do not limit the product placements children programs, this study suggests brands to focus more on animation targeting children.

Additionally, as the data acquired from this study shows, animated movies in

---

<sup>1</sup> Tudum is the company’s branded viewing event title, organizing online and offline activities of subscribers and creators.

<sup>2</sup> Binge viewing, binge-watching, or binging is not particular for a Netflix experience. However, it becomes associated with Netflix due to the drop strategy. The term’s root comes from physical home video entertainment products like VHS cassettes, VCDs, DVDs, and box sets. For further and seminal info, see Mareike Jenner’s (2021) “Binge-Watching and Contemporary Television Research.”

the adult category have more brand appearances than children animated movies. Since these animations have more freedom depending on their target audience, the brands can evolve into more varied scripts with more flexible roles and messages. Adult targeted-animated movies have less ethical concerns; therefore, alcohol beverages, tobacco, and guns can be applied in the movies. Thus, this study suggests brands to use animated movies in the adult category as a more efficient advertising tool. Another possible reason for the overall brand appearances in the animated movies in the adult category is that when the brands were utilized with irony, the advertisement intent behind these appearances is less visible. Since the main idea of product placement is to hide 'the intention' while sharing an advertising message with the audience. Therefore, this medium becomes more charming for the brands.

The primary outcome of this study displays that animation is an effective and creative medium for product placement. The creation process of the animations ensures that there cannot be any coincidences of a brand appearing in a scene. Even though the brand could be used to provide the content reality or a commercial contribution, there is no possibility that the brands appear in a scene by chance.

## REFERENCES

- Babbie, E. R. (2009). *The Practice of Social Research* (12th Edition). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Cengage Learning.
- Balasubramanian, S. K. (1994). Beyond Advertising and Publicity: Hybrid Messages and Public Policy Issues. *Journal of Advertising*. 23 (4), 29-46.
- Barker, M., MacFarlane, S., & Weitzman., M. (Directors). (2005-). *American Dad!* [Animation Series]. 20th Century Fox.
- Beckman, K. (Ed.). (2014). *Animating Film Theory*. Durham and London: Duke University Press.
- Bluth, D. & Goldman, G. (Directors). (1997). *Anastasia* [Animation Movie]. Fox Animation Studios.
- Bordwell, D. & Thompson, K. (2008). *Film Art: An Introduction* (11th Edition). New York: The McGraw-Hill.
- Brown, T. S. (Ed.). (2006). *Cinema Anime: Critical Engagements with Japanese Animation*. New York: Palgrave MacMillan.
- Burroughs, B. (2018). House of Netflix. *Streaming Media and Digital Lore. Popular Communication: The International Journal of Media and Culture*. 1 (17), 1-7. doi.org/10.1080/15405702.2017.1343948.
- Chan, F. F. Y. (2012). *Product Placement and Its Effectiveness: A Systematic*



Review and Propositions for Future Research. *The Marketing Review*. 12 (1), 39-60.

Crafton, D. (2011). The Veiled Genealogies of Animation and Cinema. *Animation: An Interdisciplinary Journal*. 6 (2), 93-110. doi.org/10.1177/1746847711404979.

d'Astous, A. & Chartier, F. (2000). A Study of Factors Affecting Consumer Evaluations and Memory of Product Placements in Movie. *Journal of Current Issues & Research in Advertising*. 22 (2), 31-40. doi.org/10.1080/10641734.2000.10505106.

Delorme, D. E. & Reid, L. N. (1999). Moviegoers' Experiences and Interpretations of Brands in Films Revisited. *Journal of Advertising*. 28 (2), 71-95.

Docter, P. (Director). (2015). *Inside Out* [Animation Movie]. Walt Disney Pictures.

Ferraro, R. & Avery, R. J. (2000). Brand Appearances on Prime-Time Television. *Journal of Current Issues & Research in Advertising*. 22 (2), 1-15. doi.org/10.1080/10641734.2000.10505104.

Fritzell, E. Olstrope, S. & Harhoff, T. (2010). *Product Placement: A Study of How Swedish Children Are Exposed to Product Placement in Walt Disney movies*. Halmstad University Unpublished Bachelor Thesis, Halmstad.

Gupta, P. B. & Gould, J. (1997). Consumers' Perception of the Ethics and Acceptability of Product Placement in Movies: Product Category and Individual Differences. *Journal of Current Issues & Research in Advertising*. 19 (1), 37-50. doi.org/10.1080/10641734.1997.10505056.

Gupta, P. B. & Lord, R. K. (1998). Product Placement in Movies: The Effect of Prominence and Mode on Audience recall. *Journal of Current Issues & Research in Advertising*. 22 (2), 47-59. doi.org/10.1080/10641734.1998.10505076.

Hadida, A. Lampel, J. Walls, D. W. & Joshi, A. (2020). Hollywood Studio Filmmaking in the Age of Netflix: A Tale of Two Institutional Logics. *Journal of Cultural Economics*. 45, 213-238. doi.org/10.1007/s10824-020-09379-z.

Iordache, C. Raats, T. & Afilipoaie, A. (2022). Transnationalisation Revisited through the Netflix Original: An Analysis of Investment Strategies in Europe. *Convergence: The International Journal of Research into New Media Technologies*. 1 (28), 236-254. doi.org/10.1177/13548565211047344.

Jenner, M. (Ed.). (2021). *Binge-Watching and Contemporary Television Research*. Edinburg: Edinburg University Press.

Karman, J. (Director). (1987). *Chipmunk Adventure* [Animation Movie]. Bagdarian Production.

- Kasanoff, L. (Director). (2012). *Foodfight!* [Animation Movie]. C47 Productions.
- Kearsley, S. (Director). (2002). *Eight Crazy Nights* [Animation Movie]. Columbia Pictures.
- Krippendorff, K. (2018). *Content Analysis: An Introduction to Its Methodology*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Krippendorff, K. (2022). *The Reliability of Generating Data*. Boca Raton, Florida: CRC Press.
- Lamarre, T. (2009). *The Anime Machine: A Media Theory of Animation*. Minneapolis & London: University of Minnesota Press.
- Lasseter, J. (Director). (1995). *Toy Story* [Animation Movie]. Pixar Animation Studio.
- Lasseter, J. (Director). (2011). *Cars 2* [Animation Movie]. Walt Disney Pictures & Pixar Animation Studio.
- Lehu, J. M. (2007). *Branded Entertainment: Product Placement & Brand Strategy in the Entertainment Business* (1st Edition). London: Kogan Page.
- Lobato, R. & Lotz, D. A. (2020). Imagining Global Video: The Challenge of Netflix. *JCMS: Journal of Cinema and Media Studies*. 3 (59), 132-136. doi.org/10.1353/cj.2020.0034.
- Lotz, D. A. Eklund, . & Soroka, S. (2022). Netflix, Library Analysis, and Globalization: Rethinking Mass Media Flows. *Journal of Communication*. 4 (72), 511-521. doi.org/10.1093/joc/jqac020.
- McGrath, T. & Darnell, E. (Directors). (2005). *Madagascar* [Animation Movie]. DreamWorks Pictures.
- McGrath, T. (Director). (2010). *Megamind* [Animation Movie]. DreamWorks Animation.
- Moore, R. (Director). (2012). *Wreck-It Ralph* [Animation Movie]. Walt Disney Pictures.
- Morikawa, M. & Hosoda, T. (2015). Practitioner Research for Unpaid Product Placement Issues: Literature Review and Directions for Future Research. *The Marketing Review*. 15 (3), 361-381.
- Neuendorf, K. A. (2016). *The Content Analysis Guidebook*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Newell, J. Salmon, C. T. & Chang, S. (2006). The Hidden History of Product Placement. *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media*. 50 (4), 575-594. doi.

org/10.1207/s15506878jobem5004\_1.

O'Callaghan, M. (Director). (2006). Curious George [Animation Movie]. Universal Pictures.

Pilipets, E. (2019). From Netflix Streaming to Netflix and Chill: The (Dis)connected Body of Serial Binge-Viewer. *Social Media + Society*. October-December. doi.org/10.1177/2056305119883426.

Scribner, G. (Director). (1988). Oliver and Company [Animation Movie]. Walt Disney Feature Animation.

Shattuc, J. (2020). Netflix, Inc. and Online Television. Wasko, J. & Meehan, R. E. (Eds.). *A Companion to Television* (2nd Edition). (pp.145-164). New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Smith, S., J. & Hickner, S. (Directors). (2007). Bee Movie [Animation Movie]. DreamWorks Animation.

Spielberg, S. (Director). (1982). E. T. the Extra- Terrestrial [Motion Picture]. Universal Pictures.

Stanton, A. (Director). (2008). Wall-E [Animation Movie]. Walt Disney Pictures & Pixar Animation Studio.

Türkeli, Ö. (2017). Product Placement as an Integrated Marketing Communication Tool: Research About Animated Movies and Series. Balkaş Erdoğan, E. & Tan Akbulut, N. (Eds.). *Geleceğin Akademisyenleri Medyaya Bakıyor [Future Academics View Media]*. (pp.67-97). Konya: Eğitim [Edu] Publications.

Wells, P. (1998). *Understanding Animation*. Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge.

## **ELECTRONIC REFERENCES**

URL-1 [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HzMQYyEwcNI&ab\\_channel=BAFTA](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HzMQYyEwcNI&ab_channel=BAFTA) (Accessing Date: 01. 03. 2023)

URL-2

<https://www.statista.com/statistics/817601/worldwide-animation-market-size/> (Accessing Date: 10. 01. 2023)

URL-3 <https://marketsplash.com/animation-statistics/> (Accessing Date: 01. 04. 2023)

URL-4 <http://www.lasertimepodcast.com/2015/08/13/the-top-7-product-placements-in-animated-films/> (Accessing Date: 03. 03. 2023)

URL-5 <https://www.nytimes.com/2004/10/21/business/media/product-placement-moves-to-cartoons.html> (Accessing Date: 16. 02. 2023)

URL-6 <https://www.awn.com/animationworld/mind-your-business-product-placement> (Accessing Date: 17. 01. 2023)

URL-7 <https://adage.com/article/madisonvine-news/products-animated-curious-george-movie/48424> (Accessing Date: 05. 10. 2022)