



## Bibliometric Analysis of Studies on Product Placement as a Marketing Communication Tool with Visual Mapping Technique<sup>1</sup>

*Görsel Haritalama Tekniği ile Pazarlama İletişim Aracı Olarak Ürün Yerleştirme Üzerine Yapılan Çalışmaların Bibliyometrik Analizi*

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**ABSTRACT:** In this study, it is aimed to examine the studies published internationally between 1994 and 2024 on product placement as one of the marketing communication tools with bibliometric analysis according to certain restrictions. In this regard, bibliometric analysis of the data obtained from Web of Science and Scopus databases was carried out with the Vosviewer program. Analyzes were made according to author, country, publication citation, journal, keywords and methodological characteristics. SPAR-4-SLR protocol was used in the study. As a result of the study it was concluded that the author who contributed the most to the studies was Jörg Matthes. It was determined that the majority of the studies included authors from the USA and the 'International Journal of Advertising' was the journal in which the most studies were published. The most cited study is Russell (2002). It was observed that the number of publications was highest in 2018 and decreased thereafter. In the keyword analysis, it was revealed that concepts such as product placement, advertising, brand placement, marketing, persuasion knowledge, brand recall, brand attitude, movies and television are the most used concepts. In terms of methodological characteristics, it has been observed that quantitative methods are used more predominantly, there are more studies with two and three authors, and techniques such as experimental design, surveys and eye tracking are used. Based on these findings, the study results were evaluated and discussed. Implications and future research directions were included.

**Key Words:** Product Placement, Marketing Communication, Bibliometric Analysis, VOSviewer, Visual Mapping.

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**Öz:** Bu çalışmada, pazarlama iletişim araçlarından biri olan ürün yerleştirme konusunda 1994-2024 yılları arasında uluslararası alanda yayınlanmış çalışmaların belirli kısıtlara göre bibliyometrik analizle incelenmesi amaçlanmıştır. Bu bağlamda Web of Science ve Scopus veri tabanlarından elde edilen verilerin bibliyometrik analizi Vosviewer programı ile gerçekleştirilmiştir. Analizler yazar, ülke, yayın atfı, dergi, anahtar kelimeler ve metodolojik özelliklere göre yapılmıştır. Çalışmada SPAR-4-SLR protokolü kullanılmıştır. Çalışma sonucunda çalışmalara en fazla katkı sağlayan yazarın Jörg Matthes olduğu sonucuna varılmıştır. Çalışmaların çoğunluğunun ABD'li yazarlardan oluştuğu ve en fazla çalışmanın yayınlandığı derginin 'International Journal of Advertising' olduğu belirlenmiştir. En fazla atfı alan çalışma Russell (2002)'dir. Yayın sayısının 2018 yılından en yüksek olduğu ve bundan sonra azaldığı görülmüştür. Anahtar kelime analizinde ürün yerleştirme, reklamcılık, marka yerleştirme, pazarlama, ikna bilgisi, marka hatırlama, marka tutumu, film ve televizyon gibi kavramların en çok kullanılan kavramlar olduğu ortaya çıkmıştır. Metodolojik özellikler açısından ise nicel yöntemlerin daha baskın kullanıldığı, iki ve üç yazarlı daha fazla çalışma olduğu, deneysel tasarım, anket ve göz izleme gibi tekniklerin kullanıldığı görülmüştür. Bu bulgulardan hareketle çalışma sonuçları değerlendirilmiş ve tartışılmış, çıkarımlara ve gelecek çalışma önerilerine yer verilmiştir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Ürün Yerleştirme, Pazarlama İletişimi, Bibliyometrik Analiz, VOSviewer, Görsel Haritalama.

## INTRODUCTION

Brands use various communication tools to engage effectively with consumers, raise awareness of their products and services, maintain brand recall, and drive sales. With the emergence of integrated marketing communication, the development of technology, and the increase in digitalization, new concepts are arising as alternatives to traditional marketing communication tools such as advertising, public relations, sponsorship, direct marketing, and sales promotion.

With the increasing number of communication tools, delivering marketing messages to existing and potential customers while leaving a lasting impact has become more challenging. As a result, brands have begun exploring new methods to engage with consumers effectively. One such method is product placement, which is thought to have a lower budget and greater audience impact compared to traditional advertising strategies.

Given the evolving landscape of marketing communication, understanding the effectiveness of product placement in different media formats is crucial for both academics and practitioners. Recent trends suggest that product placement is no longer confined to films and television but is increasingly being integrated into digital content, social media, and even virtual and augmented reality environments. This shift necessitates a more comprehensive approach to analyzing its impact, considering factors such as audience engagement, brand perception, and purchase intention. By leveraging bibliometric analysis, this study contributes to a deeper understanding of how product placement research has evolved and where future studies should focus. It provides an opportunity to examine the product placement strategy from a single perspective using the bibliometric analysis method. Researchers who want to

understand all stages of the scientific outputs on any given subject can benefit from this approach.

The study investigates the academic studies on product placement in the literature, identifies the prominent authors, determines the countries where these authors are based, highlights the most cited studies, and identifies the journals that contribute the most to the field. It also analyzes the topics studied through keywords and summarizes the methodological characteristics used in these studies.

In the literature, two key studies were identified: Chan's (2012) article, which provides a systematic review of product placement and its effectiveness, and Sharma and Bumb's (2022) study of product placement in the entertainment industry. However, Chan's study focuses on research conducted over a decade ago, and Sharma and Bumb's study does not cover the most recent 1.5 years, focusing solely on the entertainment industry. This gap highlights the need for the current study.

The study aimed to answer the following questions:

- What is the distribution of authors who have conducted studies on product placement?
- What is the geographical distribution of these authors by country?
- How are citations of studies on product placement distributed?
- How are studies on product placement distributed across different journals?
- What are the most prominent keywords in studies on product placement?
- What are the methodological characteristics of studies on product placement?

Two different databases were used in the study: Web of Science and Scopus. The findings from this study are expected to guide future researchers interested in the topic of 'Product Placement' in marketing communication.

The remainder of the study is structured as follows: In the first chapter, the concepts of marketing communication and product placement are introduced, followed by an examination of the history and development of product placement. The advantages, disadvantages, and importance of product placement are also discussed. The second chapter explains the bibliometric analysis method used in this study, detailing the study's purpose, importance, scope, and methodology. In the final chapter, a bibliometric analysis of the data obtained from the Web of Science and Scopus databases is conducted, with visual mapping performed using the VOSviewer program. This analysis and visual mapping are based on the methodological characteristics derived from content analysis, focusing on the distribution of authors, countries, journals, citations, keywords. The study concludes by discussing the findings and providing future research directions.

### **1. Product Placement as a Marketing Communication Tool**

Product placement is a marketing communication technique favored by many brands today due to its more affordable cost compared to other marketing communication tools and its ability to easily convey messages to the target market (Doğan & Özdemir, 2017). Davtyan and Cunningham (2017) noted that there are at least 20 definitions of product placement in the literature. The concept was first defined by Balasubramanian (1994) as the paid inclusion of product messages in a film or television program to influence the audience without drawing attention. Karrh (1998) offered a similar definition, describing it as the paid inclusion of branded products or brand elements in mass communication programs through audio and/or visual means, with an emphasis on the branded product. The literature also reveals that the terms "product placement" and "brand placement" are often confused and used interchangeably. However, brand placement, unlike product placement, refers specifically to instances where the brand's logo, name, symbol, etc., are shown without the product itself being displayed (Thomas & Kohli, 2011).

Unlike traditional advertising types, product placement influences the audience by being seamlessly integrated into the storyline of a television program, series, or movie without disrupting the flow (Öztürk & Okumuş, 2014). Recently, the impact of product placement has expanded to include games, music videos, advertorials, and social media (Balasubramanian et al., 2014). Product placement practices are now found not only on television and in cinemas but also in radio programs, computer games, theater shows, songs and music videos, web series, and social media (Baş, 2013). It is also an alternative marketing communication tool used on commercial TV platforms with digital subscriptions, such as Netflix, where viewers tend to avoid traditional advertising (Hudson & Hudson, 2006; Redondo & Bernal, 2016). Other popular areas for product placement include sports competitions, songs, music videos, news programs, novels, stories, cartoons, and animations (Yolcu, 2020).

Despite its various applications, there is ongoing debate about how best to execute product placement. The key question is whether products should be subtly integrated in a natural manner or more prominently featured. If placed too subtly, the product might go unnoticed by the audience; if too conspicuous, it risks disrupting the narrative of the film or entertainment program (Chan, 2012). As a result, different strategies have been developed for implementation, including visual, verbal, background display, natural integration, usage-oriented placement, event sequence, sponsorship, virtual placement, and futuristic product placement (Öztürk & Okumuş, 2014; Yolcu, 2020).

### **1.1. History and Development**

Before the 1930s, after cinema box office revenues declined, producers began seeking alternative methods, leading to the use of product placement, which gradually gained prominence in the film industry. It became a common practice in promotional activities and was integrated into movie scripts (Akkan, 2006). The practice became widespread in the 1930s when movie producers started sharing their scripts with brand owners, incorporating branded products and services into appropriate storylines. In 1939, MGM (Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer) Studios became the first film studio to establish a dedicated product placement office (Çil, 2020).

Up until the 1960s, film producers were still experimenting with how to effectively use product placement. The turning point came with the inclusion of Hershey's Reese's Pieces candies in Steven Spielberg's 1982 film *E.T. the Extra-Terrestrial*. After the film's release, sales of the candy increased by 65%, marking a significant moment in the history of product placement and drawing the attention of both filmmakers and business owners (Tsai, Liang, & Liu, 2007; Baş, 2013). While product placement had already been used in TV programs in the 1950s, it expanded to the internet in the 1990s (Villafranco & Zeltzer, 2006) and had even been applied in silent films as early as the early 20th century (Gunning, 1986).

### **1.2. The Importance, Advantages, and Disadvantages of Product Placement**

The primary goal of product placement is to increase consumer awareness and positively influence their purchasing decisions. Research indicates that viewers are twice as likely to remember brands placed within television programs compared to those seen in commercials. This heightened brand recall has drawn the attention of advertisers to product placement (Akkan, 2006). Another reason for the growing interest in product placement is that it is seen as a cost-effective approach and a source of financing for program producers (Hackley & Hackley Nee Tiwsakul, 2012).

The advantages of product placement include its lower cost compared to other types of advertising, its higher potential to reach the audience, and its ability to boost sales by creating brand awareness. However, product placement also has some disadvantages: it can only convey limited information about the product and brand to the audience, and companies have limited control over which scenes the product placement will appear in (Öztürk, 2007). Another drawback is that if too many product placements are included in TV series and movies, their value may diminish for the audience, leading them to perceive these placements as purely profit-driven (Koç, 2022). Consequently, frequent or prolonged use of product placement within a storyline can become off-putting to viewers. The timing of the placement within the scenario is also crucial; it should not be applied in a way that disrupts the flow of the story or detracts from the overall experience of the TV series or movie.

## **2. Bibliometric Analysis**

Bibliometric analysis is a widely used tool in many scientific fields to examine the development of a particular subject (Tang & Musa, 2011; Gurzki & Woisetschl ager, 2016) and is often considered a valuable complement to qualitative research. While literature reviews on a specific topic are generally qualitative, bibliometric methods enable the quantitative examination of various aspects such as authors, journals, citations, and keywords. This approach allows researchers to assess the current state of a research field, connect different pieces of information through mapping, and propose new research directions (Guo et al., 2019).

Bibliometric analysis involves the examination of various features of publications, including topics, publication years, authors, number of authors, and the subject matter of the journals in which the study is published (Yilmaz, 2017). It is a quantitative method used to evaluate the impact of researchers, their institutions, countries, and journals within a specific field. Additionally, this method simplifies the process of mapping scientific articles, making it easier for researchers to observe developments related to previously studied topics (Eren, 2023).

Bibliometric analysis is generally understood to be grounded in content analysis, which means it also includes qualitative elements. The goal of content analysis is to systematically review studies in a structured way. The term bibliometrics first emerged in 1969 when Alan Pritchard introduced it. Pritchard (1969) defined bibliometrics as the application of mathematical and statistical methods to scientific books and other forms of communication. This practice quickly gained acceptance over time (Polat, 2020). The term bibliometrics refers to the statistical and mathematical analysis of previously published works, such as articles, books, and journals, in order to extract meaningful insights from these sources (Eren, 2023).

Before conducting a bibliometric analysis, certain protocols are used during the data compilation and evaluation process. These protocols act as a checklist, guiding the process and serving as a roadmap for researchers. Among the most commonly used protocols in the literature are PRISMA and SPAR-4-SLR. The SPAR-4-SLR (Scientific Procedures and Rationales for Systematic Literature Reviews) protocol is particularly noted for its comprehensive approach, covering research integrity, the steps involved, and an extensive checklist (Paul et al., 2021; Das et al., 2022). For this reason, the SPAR-4-SLR protocol was utilized in this study.

## **3. Research Methodology**

### **3.1. Purpose and Importance of the Study**

The primary purpose of this study is to analyze the topic of 'Product Placement' across six key areas using bibliometric analysis. These areas include the number of studies on product placement by country, the number of authors and publications, the number

of journals in which these studies are published, the keywords used in these studies, and the methodological approaches employed. This study aims to assist those interested in advancing research on product placement and addressing gaps in the current knowledge base. It is expected that the findings will raise significant awareness among researchers and those interested in the subject, while also serving as a guide for future research.

### **3.2. Method**

Only articles and papers published in English were evaluated in this study. Data obtained from the Web of Science and Scopus databases (covering the years 1994-2024) were analyzed using bibliometric analysis. The results were then visualized with VOSviewer, a tool that uses mapping methods. In VOSviewer, clustering is represented by different color classifications for each subject, where the size of the circles indicates the frequency of occurrences and the colors differentiate between various clusters. The distance between circles reflects the relationship between the subjects.

In the search conducted in the Web of Science and Scopus databases using the keywords 'product placement,' 'marketing,' 'brand,' 'communication,' and 'marketing communication,' 349 records were found in Web of Science, and 306 records were found in Scopus. After removing 41 duplicate studies present in both databases, the remaining records were analyzed. Specific restrictions were applied during this search: only foreign sources published between 1994-2024, classified as 'Article-Review' and 'Proceeding Paper,' were included. Additionally, words related to 'medical,' 'arts,' 'economy,' 'engineering,' 'nursing,' 'math,' 'environment,' 'health,' and 'earth' were excluded.

In the analysis phase, searches were performed to include concepts found in the title, abstract, and keywords. The subject of 'Product Placement' was then evaluated based on criteria such as author, country, citations, journals, keywords, and methodological characteristics. The results were interpreted using Excel tables and visualizations. The steps of the SPAR-4-SLR protocol were used for systematic literature reviews in the study and these steps are shown in Table 1.

**Table 1: SPAR-4-SLR protocol steps**

	<b>Identification</b>
<b>Assembling</b>	<b>Domain:</b> Product placement and marketing communication <b>Research Questions:</b> Question 1. What is the distribution of the authors of studies on product placement? Question 2. What is the country distribution of the authors of studies on product placement? Question 3. What is the citation distribution of studies on product placement? Question 4. What is the distribution of studies on product placement according to journals? Question 5. What are the prominent keywords in studies on product placement? Question 6. What are the methodological characteristics of studies on product placement? <b>Source Type:</b> Journal articles and Proceeding papers <b>Source Quality:</b> Web of Science (WOS) and Scopus
	<b>Acquisition</b>
	<b>Database:</b> Web of Science (WOS) and Scopus <b>Search Period:</b> 1994-2024 <b>Search Keywords:</b> “product placement” or “marketing” or “communication” or “brand communication” and “marketing communication” <b>Total Number of Articles Returned from the research:</b> 722
<b>Arranging</b>	<b>Organization</b>
	<b>Organizing Codes:</b> Authors, countries, citation, journals, keywords, methodological characteristics
	<b>Purification</b>
	<b>Article Type Excluded:</b> early access, book chapter, and irrelevant articles =67 duplicate = 41 <b>Article Type Included:</b> 614 <b>Research Areas Excluded:</b> medical, arts, economy, engineering, nursing, math, environment, health, earth
<b>Assessing</b>	<b>Evaluation</b>
	<b>Analysis Method:</b> Bibliometric analysis <b>Agenda Proposal Method:</b> Current research areas, keyword analysis, methodological characteristics and future research direction
	<b>Reporting</b>
	<b>Reporting Conventions:</b> Tables, figures, visual mapping <b>Findings and Conclusion:</b> Theoretical and managerial implications <b>Limitation:</b> Database (WOS and Scopus), VOSviewer software, bibliometric analysis method

### 3.3. Findings

#### 3.3.1. Distribution of Authors

Figure 1 illustrates the relationships between authors who have published on the topic of product placement. It highlights 170 authors who have appeared in at least two



works, out of a total of 1,179 authors working in this field. The size of the nodes represents the number of publications associated with each author.

According to the number of studies, Matthes J. ranks first with 18 publications. Naderer B. follows closely with 16 studies, while Balasubramanian, Van Reijmersdal, and Chan share the third spot with 14 studies each. Russell ranks fourth with 11 studies, and Spielvogel comes in fifth with 9 studies.

**Figure 1: Distribution of authors**

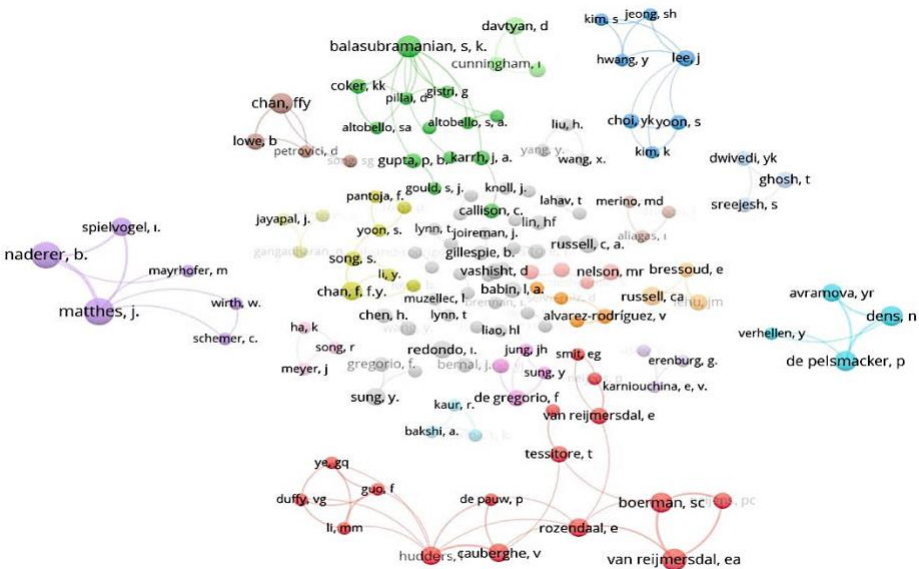


Figure 1 also shows that the authors are grouped into clusters, each represented by a different color. It can be concluded that authors within the same color group tend to collaborate frequently in various studies. Conversely, authors whose nodes have little or no connection with others tend to publish studies with fewer collaborators.

3.3.2. Distribution of Countries

Figure 2: Distribution of countries

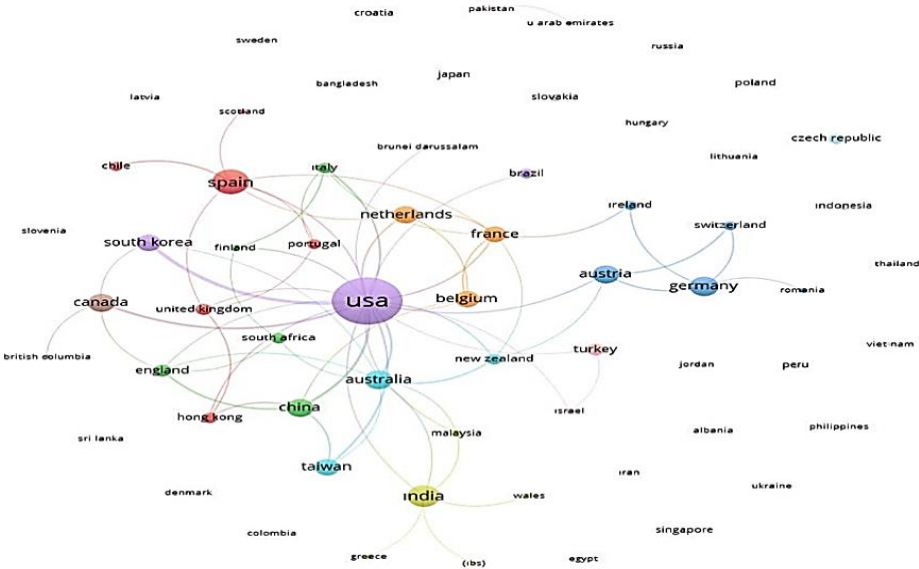


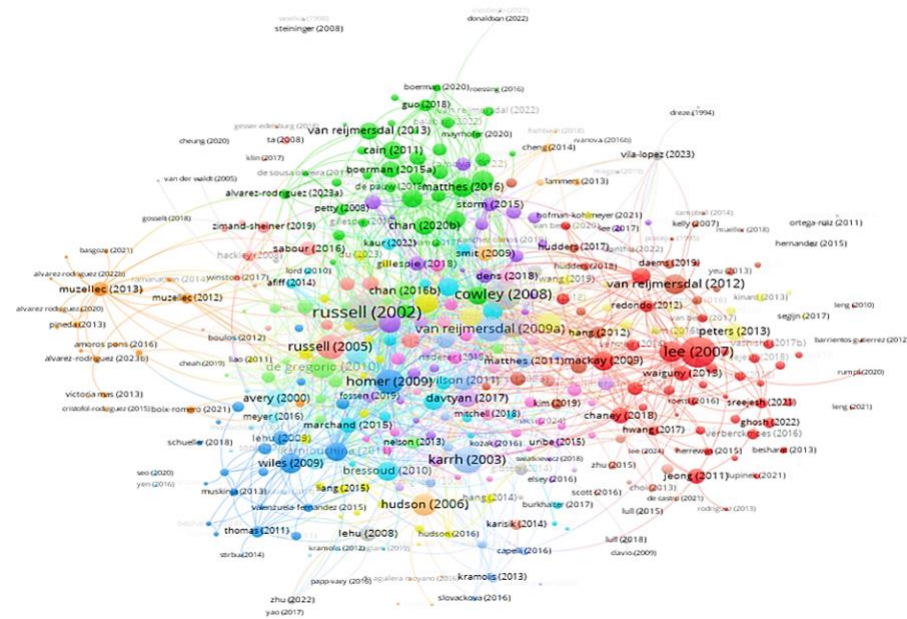
Figure 2 shows the distribution of authors by country who are working on product placement. In total, 70 countries have contributed to studies on this topic. The United States leads with the most publications. Following the U.S., Spain has 46 publications, India 37, Germany 29, Australia 27, Austria 25, Canada 24, South Korea and the Netherlands 22, Belgium and Taiwan 21, France 19, England 12, and Turkey 11. Additionally, Italy, New Zealand, Hong Kong, and South Korea each have 21 publications. Africa has 9, while Portugal, Brazil, and the Czech Republic each have 8, Switzerland 7, Ireland and Chile 6, and Slovakia and Indonesia each have 5 studies.

It also illustrates the connections between authors from different countries. Authors from countries with larger nodes, particularly those within the same color group, tend to collaborate more frequently. For instance, while authors from the United States collaborate with authors from many different countries, the strongest connection is with South Korea. This indicates that U.S. authors often publish together with authors from South Korea.

It also reveals that countries located on the edges, with little to no connections to other countries, are somewhat isolated in terms of collaboration. This suggests that authors from these countries may have the potential to develop new collaborations with researchers from other countries, leading to future studies.

**3.3.3. Publication Citation Distribution**

**Figure 3: Distribution of Citations**



When examining figure 3 of product placement studies based on citation distribution, the following citation counts are observed: Russell (2002) with 395 citations, Lee and Faber (2007) with 260 citations, Van Reijmersdal, Rozendaal, and Buijzen (2012) with 187 citations, Cowley and Barron (2008) with 182 citations, van Karrh, McKee, and Pardun (2003) with 129 citations, Wiles and Danielova (2009) with 112 citations, Homer (2009) with 106 citations, Russell and Belch (2005) with 102 citations, and Hudson and Hudson (2006) with 96 citations.

To examine the distribution of journals based on the number of publications, it was noted that journal distribution mapping was not performed due to the VOSviewer program's focus on citation-based mapping. However, when ranking the top ten journals by number of publications, the following were identified as leading contributors to studies on product placement: International Journal of Advertising (n=39), Journal of Promotion Management (n=35), Journal of Advertising (n=26), Journal of Business Research (n=22), Journal of Current Issues and Research in Advertising (n=14), Journal of Marketing Communications (n=12), Journal of Advertising Research (n=9), Journal of Consumer Behavior (n=8), Journal of Product and Brand Management (n=7), European Journal of Marketing (n=6).

These journals are recognized as key sources of research on product placement.

### 3.3.4. Distribution of Keywords

Figure 4: Keywords mapping

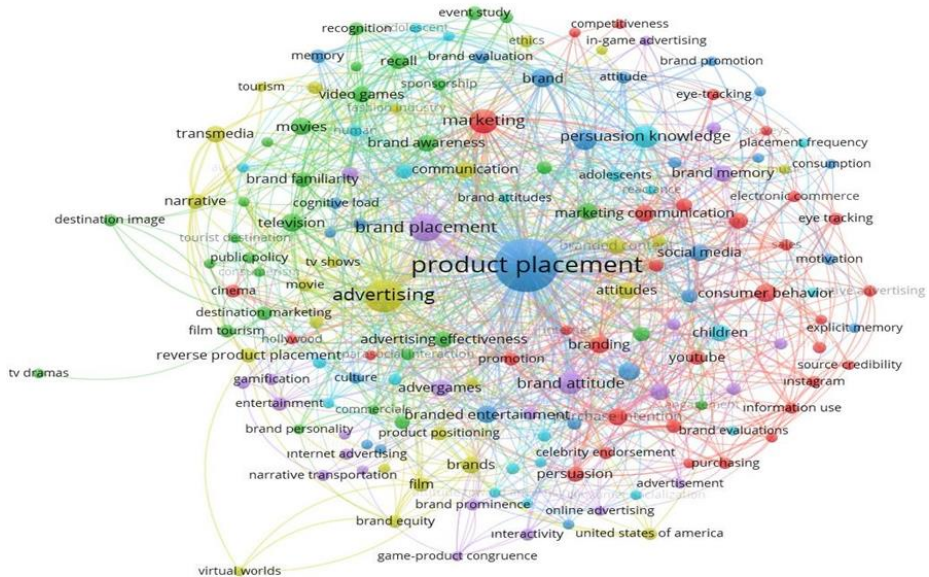


Figure 4 illustrates the mapping results based on keywords used in at least three studies. The keywords that appeared at least ten times are as follows: Product Placement (n=257), Advertising (n=72), Brand Placement (n=45), Marketing (n=30), Persuasion Knowledge (n=27), Brand Attitude (n=24), Brand Recall, Movies (n=19), Marketing Communication (n=17), Attitudes (n=16), Television, Content Analysis (n=15), Consumer Behavior, In-game Advertising (n=14), Branded Entertainment (n=13), Purchase Intention, Transmedia, Social Media, Children, Music Videos (n=12), Communication, Disclosure, Branding, Advergaming, Brand Memory, Brand Awareness (n=11), Recall, Commerce, Video Games, Branded Content, Advertising Effectiveness (n=10).

Keywords grouped by color indicate concepts that are often studied together. For instance, in the yellow group, keywords like advertising, tourism, transmedia, shows, movie, film, brand equity, and attitudes are frequently used together in product placement studies. The purple group includes concepts such as brand placement, brand memory, brand attitude, advergaming, gamification, entertainment, internet advertising, narrative transformation, brand prominence, interactivity, and game-product congruence.

Different colors represent other groups of concepts. The proximity of keywords within the same color indicates a high level of study in those areas. Conversely, keywords such as TV Dramas and Virtual Worlds are more distant, suggesting that these areas are less explored. This presents potential opportunities for future research to establish new relationships between these concepts.

The distribution of the most frequently used keywords in at least three studies is shown in Table 2.

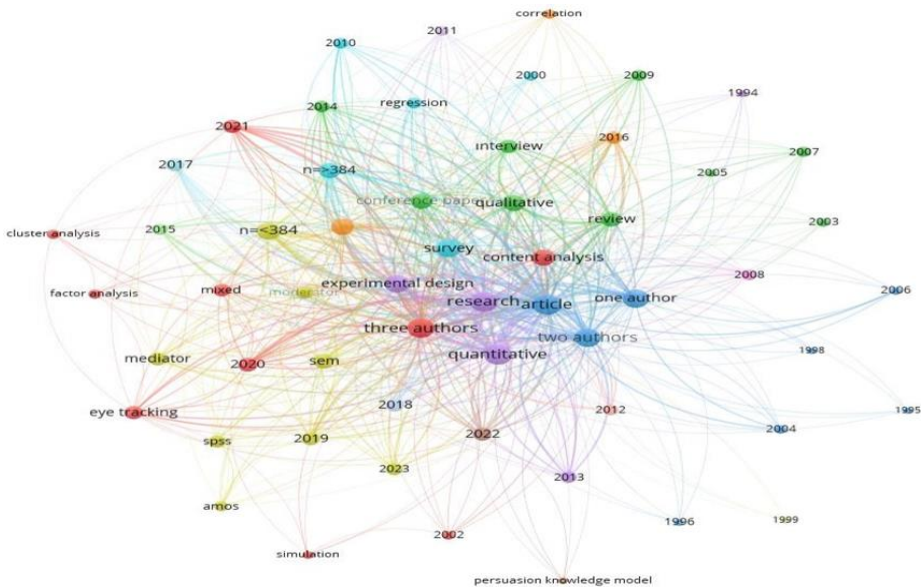
**Table 2: Distribution of keywords**

<b>Keywords</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Keywords</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
Product Placement	257	Consumer Behavior, In-game Advertising	14
Advertising	72	Branded Entertainment	13
Brand Placement	45	Purchase Intention, Transmedia, Social Media, Children, Music Videos	12
Marketing	30	Communication, Disclosure, Branding, Advergaming, Brand Memory, Brand Awareness	11
Persuasion Knowledge	27	Recall, Commerce, Video Games, Branded Content, Advertising Effectiveness	10
Brand Attitude	24	Promotion, Narrative, Brand Familiarity, Persuasion,	9
Brand Recall, Movies	19	Youtube, Film, Reverse Product Placement, Prominence	8
Marketing Communication	17	Influencer Marketing, Marketing Strategy, Entertainment, Product Positioning, Destination Marketing, Memory, Brand Evaluation, Event Study	7
Attitudes	16	Credibility, Recognition, Advertising Effects, Brand Equity, Cinema, Media, Film Tourism	6
Television, Content Analysis	15	Adolescents, Sponsorship, Embedded Advertising, United States of America, Brand Recognition, Eye Tracking, Brand Strategy, Celebrity Endorsement, Storytelling, Ethics, Interactivity, Destination Image	5
Human, Information Use, Sales, Purchasing, Instagram, Perception,	4	Information Systems, Adolescents, Awareness, Consumer, Brand Promotion, Online Advertising, Commercials, Tourist Destination, Tourism, Internet, Advertisement,	3

Electronic Commerce, Culture, Need for Cognition, TV Shows, Brand Integration, Eye- Tracking, Media Effects, Parasocial Interaction, Public Relations, Video Games, Cognitive Load, Native Advertising, Brand Prominence, Motivation, Qualitative Research, Visual Attention, Narrative Transportation, Public Policy, Sponsorship, Gamification, Internet Advertising,		Brand Personality, Game-Product Congruence, Advertising Literacy, Parental Mediation, Attitude Toward Advertising, Engagement, Hollywood, Placement Frequency, Brand Attitudes, Music, Source Credibility, Young Consumers, Consumer Psychology, Consumer Socialization, Consumption, Explicit Memory, Fashion Industry, Placement Effectiveness, Psychological Trait Reactance, Brand Evaluations, Consumer Socialization Framework, Covert Marketing, Journalism, Parasocial Relationship, Transportation Theory, Consumerism, Embedded Marketing, Competitiveness, Film- Induced Tourism, Movie-Induced Tourism, TV Dramas, Virtual Worlds	
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3.3.5. Mapping According to Methodological Characteristics

Figure 5: Keywords mapping



Examining methodological characteristics is important in terms of showing the methodological development and direction of studies on the subject. For this purpose, the abstracts of the publications used in the study were further evaluated by content analysis in terms of some characteristics determined by the researchers and analyzed by coding.

As a result of the analysis made according to methodological characteristics, it was determined that out of 655 studies, 549 articles were published at most, and the other studies were conference proceedings and early access studies. 282 studies are in research type and 60 studies are in review type. 281 studies were designed as quantitative and 62 studies were designed as qualitative. While there are mostly studies with two authors, the number of studies with three authors is in second place at a close rate. It is also seen that the number of studies with single authors is quite high. Afterwards, it is seen that there are fewer studies, but there are more than three authors. It is seen that studies with three authors are mostly mixed research types, that is, studies that include quantitative and qualitative research together, such studies were mostly published in 2020 and 2021, and techniques such as eye tracking are used more in these studies. Techniques such as Experimental Design, Survey, Eye Tracking and Simulation were mostly used, respectively. Although much less numerous, it has been revealed that analyzes such as cluster, factor, correlation, regression, process, EEG, Delphi technique, Manova and content are used and variables such as mediator and moderator are also investigated in these analyses. In the qualitative analyzes that were used less frequently, interview and focus group came to the fore. Analyzes of quantitative studies conclude that the number of participants was  $n < 384$  in 78 studies and  $n > 384$  in 34 studies. The fact that the connections between the years studied are so far apart and the colors are different shows that studies have been carried out in different areas on Product Placement in different years. The most studies were conducted in 2018 and the least in 1997.

Study details according to some characteristics determined by the researchers according to methodological approaches are shown in Table 3 below.

**Table 3: Methodological characteristics**

Keywords	Frequency	Keywords	Frequency
Article	549	Mediator	14
Research	282	Mixed	12
Quantitative	281	2004	12
Two Authors	208	2006	12
Three Authors	189	Regression	7
Experimental Design	157	2007	7

One Author	107	SPSS	6
More than three Authors	79	2002	5
n=<384	78	Amos	4
Survey	69	Correlation	3
Qualitative	62	2000	3
Review	60	1994	3
2018	53	2005	3
2016	51	Factor Analysis	2
2019	45	Cluster Analysis	2
2020	41	Simulation	2
2022	40	2003	2
2021	40	Persuasion Knowledge Model	2
Content Analysis	38	1996	2
Conference Paper	37	1998	2
2015	36	1999	2
2014	35	1995	2
n=>384	34	Process	1
2017	34	PLS	1
2013	29	2024	1
2011	26	Artificial Neural Network	1
Sem	24	Delphi Technique	1
Interview	24	Manova	1
2023	20	EEG	1
2012	20	Focus Group	1
Eye Tracking	17	1997	1
2008	16	Market Basket Analysis	1
Moderator	15		
2009	15		
2010	15		

## DISCUSSION

The main purpose of the study is to examine the studies on product placement by making a systematic literature review, bibliometric analysis and presenting visual maps. For this purpose, it is aimed to determine the status of current studies, to shed light on future studies and to make suggestions. Within this scope, studies on product placement were downloaded from Web of Science and Scopus databases, limited by certain filtering processes. The obtained data were analyzed bibliometrically with the VOSviewer visual mapping tool. Data were analyzed according to author, country,



citation, journal, keywords and methodological characteristics. According to the analysis results, the findings were evaluated, inferences were presented, limitations were included and suggestions for future studies were made.

## **IMPLICATIONS**

The study offers some implications both theoretically and practically.

The first contribution of this study is to reveal the current development of the field by examining the authors, countries, journals, citations, keywords and methodological characteristics that contribute to studies on product placement as a whole, and what stands out. These findings provide a clear picture of new research topics, directions, and emerging trends in product placement and will help researchers determine which resources to consult.

Another important contribution of this study is that 1179 authors have studies in the field and the number of authors with at least two studies is 179. This shows that many authors contributed to the development of the field. It is an interesting finding that authors with more publications mostly published with each other. Another contribution of the study is that the perspectives of different authors from many countries provided rich information about the depth of the research. The fact that authors from the USA publish more, primarily with from South Korea, and generally collaborate with from many countries, shows that authors from the USA are leading the development of the field. The fact that authors from some countries work alone may encourage collaborative development and comparative studies between countries in future research. As a practical conclusion, it can be said that application studies on product placement are more common in these countries. This result can be explained by Hollywood in the USA, Bollywood in India, and the recent development of the cinema industry in Spain and South Korea. These developments may have contributed to the use and research of product placement practices. Additionally, it is interesting that authors from countries such as the Netherlands, Belgium and France have done a lot of study in these areas and that the studies have been done together.

Another contribution of the study is the presentation of the most cited publications. This result indicates publications that will be useful for authors to read in future studies. Whether the number of citations of the study is low or high by year provides important information about the importance and development of the subject of the study. Another important contribution is the sources in which the studies are published. It has been revealed that the top ten journals featured in the study are mostly advertising journals, but communication journals also stand out, and brand, marketing management and promotion journals, as well as journals publishing in the field of consumer behavior, contribute to the field. This result may be an answer to authors who are looking for an answer to the question of which journals to submit their new works on product placement in the future.

Another important contribution of the study is the discovery of keywords. Researching the most used keywords and evaluating the links contributes to the process of designing new research models and developing hypotheses for future research. Identifying less frequently used and recently used keywords helps authors both in the development of the field and in generating new research topics. The introduction of concepts in the same color group shows that these concepts are frequently used together. In the study, it is seen that product placement is mostly studied together with the concepts of advertising, marketing, brand placement, persuasion information, brand attitude, association, cinema, television, marketing-brand communication, and also in the field of consumer behavior, consumer psychology and in-game advertising, video games, It has been revealed that concepts such as advergame, TV dramas, virtual worlds and eye tracking have also been examined to a small extent. The effect of product placement applications on consumer behavior and their association with concepts such as brand awareness, brand memory, recall and persuasion also show the benefits and purpose of product placement applications. These results provide important contributions to both researchers and practitioners in terms of showing the direction of studies on product placement and its relationship with new concepts. Determining the use of product placement together with other marketing communication tools and in areas such as virtual worlds and the gaming industry also offers new application areas for practitioners.

The other contribution of the study is the distribution of the number of publications. An increase or decrease in the number indicates interest in the field. According to the bibliometric analysis of publication outputs, the fact that the number of publications continues at similar rates from 2018 to 2023 indicates that the productivity of researchers in this field is increasing rapidly. In 2023, there was a decrease in the number of studies on the subject. This may be due to the slow development of research areas as product placement application areas change along with the changing communication environment on the subject and new concepts develop. An important finding of the study is that analytical methods in studies on product placement are primarily quantitative. It can be said that research models such as mediator and moderator variable, which have been frequently used recently, are also encountered in studies on product placement. Considering that the number of samples is important for some research techniques, the findings obtained from the study show that studies with a sample size of more than 384 are few in total 655 studies. The number of studies less than 384 is also small. This finding can be interpreted as indicating that the number of samples should be evaluated according to the type of research and assumption to be used, and that there is no need to reach the number 384 in particular. It has been observed that there are few qualitative studies and there are also mixed methods. This result also emphasizes the need to increase the application of the mixed method approach in research in the field, with the influence of the changing communication environment and neuromarketing. The

extensive use of techniques such as experimental design and eye tracking can be a guide for new researchers and practitioners in measuring product placement applications. It is likely that neuromarketing and digital marketing methods will be used in more studies in the future. The fact that the number of authors in the studies is less than three may give ideas to researchers in future studies as it shows the number of researchers who will be sufficient in terms of the density and depth of the studies.

### **FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS**

This study provides an important review of the current state of marketing communications, branding and marketing studies on product placement and points to its continuing evolution. The findings of the study form the basis for future trends and providing new research suggestions for researchers. Revealing the relationships between different keywords has significant potential in the research design, model presentation and hypothesis development process for future research. Less commonly used keywords in product placement studies lead to the direction in which the increasing interest of marketing communication researchers is evolving. New research can be designed based on these less commonly used words. The fact that product placement application areas are used together, albeit slightly, with words such as advergame, in-game advertising, video games, virtual worlds, can be interpreted as the recent changing communication environment and the tendency for studies on product placement in these areas to increase. Using techniques such as Experimental design and eye tracking along with quantitative research and digital marketing and neuromarketing research will be beneficial for new researchers. Grouping the studies in terms of keywords by clustering and expanding the scope of the research by including studies from other databases such as EBSCO, ProQuest, etc. other than Web of science and Scopus databases will be useful in terms of providing more generalizable results. Additionally, studies can be grouped by 5 or 10-year periods and comparative bibliometric analyzes can be carried out in each period.

### **LIMITATIONS**

The study was carried out within certain limitations. First of all, the data used is only data taken from Wos and Scopus databases. As for the year, studies published in Wos and Scopus databases until January 2024 were included. In future studies, data from more studies can be obtained from these databases and other databases. During the data download process, data was collected within the filters determined by the researcher. Studies on product placement in fields such as health, engineering, computers, etc. were not included for data analysis. Data analysis results are limited to the data provided by Wos and Scopus databases. In the analysis made in terms of the methodological features discussed in the study, it should be noted that these features are limited to the information presented in the researchers' summaries of the

studies, and are created and analyzed only within the information obtained from there.

## **CONCLUSION**

The following results were obtained in this study, which aims to examine the leading authors, countries, most cited studies, journals, keywords and methodological features in product placement.

The authors who have done the most work are; Matthes, Naderer and Balasubramanian. When evaluated in terms of country, USA, Spain and India were in the top 3 places. The three most cited studies are, respectively, Russel (2002) (n=395), Lee and Faber (2007) (n=260), Van Reijmersdal, Rozendaal and Buijzen (2012) (n=187). When the top three contributing journals were listed, the journals 'International Journal of Advertising (n=39), Journal of Promotion Management (n=35), and Journal of Advertising (n=26) came to the fore. Some of the most used keywords in product placement are Product Placement, Advertising, Brand Placement, Marketing, Persuasion Knowledge, Brand Attitude, Brand Recall, Movies. When evaluated in terms of methodological features, the year in which the most studies were conducted was 2018. Most studies were conducted as research articles. The first year in which the issue of product placement was addressed was 1994. The most commonly used analysis methods are Experimental Design, Survey, Eye Tracking and Simulation. Although much less numerous, it has been revealed that analyzes such as cluster, factor, correlation, regression, process, EEG, Delphi technique, Manova and content are used and variables such as mediator and moderator are also investigated in these analyses. In the qualitative analyzes that were used less frequently, interview and focus group came to the fore. Analyzes of quantitative studies conclude that the number of participants was  $n \leq 384$  in 78 studies and  $n \geq 384$  in 34 studies. In conclusion, the information presented in this study offers a projection for the advancement of research in the field of product placement. Researching author, country, journal, citation, keyword and methodological features will guide future studies.

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