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3 **To Brand or Not to Brand a Product Placement? Evidence from a**
4 **Field Study of Two Influence Mechanisms of Positive Portrayals of**
5 **Alcohol in Film**
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11 *Running title: Influence of alcohol portrayals in film*
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To Brand or Not to Brand a Product Placement? Evidence from a Field Study of Two Influence Mechanisms of Positive Portrayals of Alcohol in Film

ABSTRACT

Introduction and Aims. We propose that branded and non-branded product placements in movies are interpreted differently and that a movie with unbranded alcohol portrayals influences audiences' alcohol-related beliefs and choices indirectly, through the process of narrative transportation, whereas a movie with branded alcohol placements impacts audiences' alcohol beliefs and choices via a more basic social-cognitive process of influence. **Design and Methods.** Ordinary moviegoers ($N = 758$) attended a showing of *The Snows of Kilimanjaro* (2011) in a popular theatre in Tacna, Peru. Subjects were randomly assigned to watch the original movie, with branded alcohol portrayals, or a brand-free, control version. Reactions to the movie and alcohol-related beliefs were collected in a survey immediately after the film exposure and real beverage choices were measured. **Results.** The findings reveal that exposure to unbranded positive portrayals of alcohol produces story-consistent beliefs and alcohol choices through the process of narrative transportation and that exposure to branded positive alcohol portrayals produces direct effects in terms of alcohol expectancies and brand choice, despite lowering narrative transportation. Although viewers disengage more from the characters, and experience lesser enjoyment and perceived realism when exposed to actual brands in a movie, they still hold positive alcohol expectancies and are more likely to select the placed brand, a process consistent with social cognitive theory. **Discussion and Conclusions.** The findings suggest caution about the recommended policy of removing branding from alcohol placements, such as in the case with plain packaging in tobacco, and instead call for effective policies to constrain alcohol product placement, as was done with tobacco placements..

KEYWORDS

Alcohol marketing, movie influence, product placement, narrative transportation, persuasion.

Introduction

In 2010, the World Health Organization adopted the *Global strategy to reduce the harmful use of alcohol* [1], with two main application areas being the restriction of alcohol availability and the reduction of alcohol marketing. However, a 2017 report [2] revealed little progress in the implementation of restrictive policies in both areas, observing that nearly as many countries had decreased restrictions as had increased them.

The alcohol industry has taken advantage of legal loopholes to promote the consumption of its beverages. In the realm of film, cinemas are increasingly obtaining alcohol licenses, and marketers are popularizing movie-themed cocktails served in exclusive glassware with the aim of prolonging and even increasing the excitement experienced during the movie [3,4]. Despite increasingly careful monitoring of advertising media restrictions, many alcohol companies are negotiating the placement of their brands in movies that reach geographically and demographically broad audiences [5].

Previous research provides evidence of both the ubiquitous prevalence and the persuasive capacity of alcohol portrayals in movies. Firstly, 80-95% of movies depict alcohol consumption, most of them positively portraying alcohol users and infrequently showing the negative consequences of drinking [6]. Secondly, viewers of movies with positive alcohol depictions tend to adopt more positive beliefs about drinking [7,8] and to consume greater amounts of alcohol [9,10]. However, there is a substantial gap in knowledge regarding potential differences in the way branded and non-branded alcohol portrayals persuade viewers [11].

The question of how people respond to branded versus unbranded alcohol product placements is not only theoretically important, it also carries practical

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2
3 implications. Indeed, some policy advocates have proposed removing brand names from
4
5 product placements [12], a practice that some advertisers and television networks
6
7 execute voluntarily in order to bypass strict monitoring for ethically charged products,
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9 such as firearms [13]. This research questions the effectiveness of this proposed policy
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11 by advancing that both branded and unbranded alcohol messages may persuade the
12
13 public, albeit through different mechanisms.
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16 We propose that positive alcohol portrayals produce attitudinal/behavioural
17
18 effects through different mechanisms depending on whether these alcohol appearances
19
20 are branded (the alcohol brand name is visible/audible) or non-branded (alcohol is
21
22 portrayed in a generic way). On one hand, non-branded alcohol appearances are more
23
24 likely to be perceived as natural contextual elements of the story, thus triggering story-
25
26 consistent attitudes/behaviours through the process of narrative transportation. On the
27
28 other hand, branded alcohol appearances may be perceived as commercial intrusions
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30 into the movie, thus hindering narrative transportation into the story, but they may still
31
32 produce attitudinal/behavioural effects via a more basic social-cognitive process of
33
34 influence. The rationale for both influence mechanisms and all hypothesized
35
36 relationships (depicted in Figure 1) is reviewed below.
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41 ***The influence of non-branded alcohol portrayals in film: narrative transportation***

42
43 The transportation-imagery model [14] holds that people who watch, read, or listen to a
44
45 story can mentally transport themselves into the world evoked by the narrative. This
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47 psychological process, generally known as narrative transportation, may reduce
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49 people's motivation and ability to think critically about the story's content, thus making
50
51 them more susceptible to persuasion [15].
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3 Narrative transportation involves a degree of identification with the movie's
4
5 characters, a process that may lead viewers to imaginatively share the characters'
6
7 emotional and cognitive experiences [16] and vicariously adopt their perspectives,
8
9 thoughts, and feelings [17]. Based on both theoretical [18] and empirical [19] research,
10
11 increased identification with characters should lead to an increased likelihood that
12
13 viewers transport themselves into the characters' world (H1). Enjoyment of the movie
14
15 also affects narrative transportation by immersing viewers to such a degree that they do
16
17 not counter-argue the story's content or its claims [14]. Consistent with previous
18
19 evidence [20,21], greater feelings of enjoyment should increase transportation into the
20
21 "joyful" world evoked by the movie (H2). Finally, perception of the movie's realism
22
23 (i.e., that the actions, events, settings, and characters are consistent with each other,
24
25 regardless of whether they are real or fictional [15]) should also increase narrative
26
27 transportation [20,22], as predicted by H3.
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31 In low critical-thinking modes, narratively transported individuals develop story-
32
33 consistent beliefs about many social issues dramatized in the media, from acceptance of
34
35 homosexuality [22] and condemnation of crime [14] to consumption-related values and
36
37 lifestyles [18]. Likewise, transported viewers should be more receptive to pro-alcohol
38
39 attitudes dramatized in movies. Thus, experiencing narrative transportation in a movie
40
41 with positive non-branded alcohol portrayals should lead viewers to hold more positive
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43 alcohol expectancies, that is, to be more confident that drinking leads to positive
44
45 consequences (H4). Given that alcohol expectancies play a key role in current alcohol
46
47 consumption [23], these expectancies should relate to greater preference for an alcohol
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49 option when asked to select between two identical drinks, one with and the other
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51 without alcohol (H5).
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3 In addition, since narrative transportation into a story is known to directly
4 impact the adoption of story-consistent behaviours [24], greater narrative transportation
5 into a movie with non-branded alcohol portrayals should also directly increase the
6 likelihood of choosing an alcoholic drink rather than its non-alcoholic version (H6).
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11 12 ***The influence of branded alcohol portrayals in film: social cognitive theory*** 13

14
15 Consistent with previous research [25–27], the presence of brands in an entertainment
16 story may disengage from narrative transportation by reducing its three antecedents:
17 viewers' levels of identification with characters, feeling of enjoyment, and perception of
18 realism.
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24 Viewers may disengage from the interaction experienced with movie characters
25 if they suspect that these characters are involved in “selling” a branded beverage [25].
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27 As such the presence of branded alcohol placements within a movie would reduce
28 identification with its characters (H7).
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33 Recent evidence shows that commercial intrusion in a movie experience can
34 generate hedonic contamination, a lessening of the movie experience, if viewers
35 perceive the branded portrayal as an instrument of persuasion rather than one of
36 enjoyment [26]. In line with this rationale, the presence of a branded beverage may also
37 lower overall enjoyment of the experience (H8).
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44 Further, suspicion that a filmmaker allows advertisers to promote their brand
45 within a movie would lower the movie's credibility [27]. Hence, the presence of actual
46 alcohol brands should reduce perceptions of realism (H9).
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51 Even though narrative transportation may not drive the influence of branded
52 placements, a brand's appearance in a movie may still affect audience members' beliefs
53 and choices, albeit through a simpler mechanism based on social cognitive theory [28].
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3 Per social cognitive theory, individuals learn the consequences of behaviours by mere
4 observation of models (from personal contacts or media sources) and the expectations
5 about such consequences are a strong force guiding individuals' subsequent actions.
6
7 This type of vicarious learning is known to occur as a result of observing story
8 characters in an entertainment context [29]. At the attitudinal level, exposure to a
9 branded beverage connected to positive consequences in the movie should therefore
10 increase positive alcohol expectancies [7,30] (H10). At the behavioural level, given that
11 exposure to a brand placement increases subsequent brand choice [31,32], viewers
12 should be more likely to select the branded beverage featured in the movie over other
13 alternatives (H11).
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24 25 26 **Method**

27 28 29 *General overview*

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32 The Institutional Review Board of the University of Tarapacá in Arica, Chile, approved
33 all procedures in this field study conducted in the nearby city of Tacna, Peru.
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36 We chose as a stimulus *The Snows of Kilimanjaro* because (a) this feature film
37 had never previously been released in Peru and (b) it contains positive alcohol
38 portrayals of both a branded liquor (*Metaxa*) placed with a commercial purpose as well
39 as some non-branded beverages depicted to provide a culturally relevant context (see
40 the appendix for all details).
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47 Participants were randomly assigned to watch the original movie with branded
48 and non-branded alcohol portrayals or a version of the same movie in which the
49 branded alcohol portrayals had been removed. To create the non-branded version, the
50 movie was professionally edited, and the three segments that portrayed *Metaxa* were
51 removed. The beginning and end of the removed segments were determined in such a
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3 way that no dialogue ended up artificially fragmented and the story's development did
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5 not have any illogical leaps. The removed content, totalling five minutes, consisted of
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7 parts of subplots whose absence did not impede comprehension and appreciation of the
8
9 main plot. Note that, by contrast, removing the non-branded beverage appearances
10
11 would have produced a substantial distortion of the storyline.
12

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14 Partial least squares structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM) was used to
15
16 evaluate the measurement of latent variables and test the hypothesized relationships.
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18 These statistical analyses were performed with *SmartPLS 2.0* [33], using generally
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20 recommended criteria [34] to specify patterns and analyse results.
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23 ***Fieldwork procedures***

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25 The fieldwork took place in the Cineplanet seven-screen theatre in Tacna, Peru. The
26
27 event was announced as a screening of *The Snows of Kilimanjaro* with free access
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29 (provided by the University of Tarapacá) to all those who had booked tickets before
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31 they sold out. For fifteen days prior to the event, the screening was heavily promoted
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33 through (a) flyers distributed to everyone who entered the theatre, (b) copies of the
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35 movie's poster placed in some public bulletin boards in the city centre, (c) invitation
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37 emails sent to the students of three universities of Tacna, and (d) announcements on
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39 several university social networks.
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43 Tickets were booked by phoning/emailing the number/address provided in the
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45 promotional vehicles and were picked up at the box office. In order to randomly assign
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47 the subjects to either the intervention or control group, the person in charge of managing
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49 the reservations alternately assigned the callers/senders to the first, second, third, or
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51 fourth screening room based on the order in which the call/email was received. The first
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53 and third rooms had been assigned to the intervention group (original movie), and the
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55 others to the control group (brand-free movie).
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3 The screenings were held during the morning of Sunday, 21 September 2014. As
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5 soon as each screening ended, the lights were turned on, and a staff member appeared in
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7 front of the audience and introduced himself as a University of Tarapacá researcher
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9 conducting a survey. He asked the audience members to fill out a brief questionnaire
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11 and said that, as a demonstration of his gratitude, the participants would be able to
12
13 choose from among several gifts to be distributed upon exiting.
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16 At the end of the questionnaire, the respondents were asked to select three gifts,
17
18 each one chosen from between two alternatives accompanied by pictures: they could
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20 choose either an alcoholic or non-alcoholic *Erdinger* beer bottle, a *Pringles* or *Lay's*
21
22 potato snack package, and a *Metaxa* or *Bardinet* small liquor bottle. At the room's exit,
23
24 an assistant collected the questionnaires, and then in the hallway outside, other
25
26 assistants distributed the gifts selected by each participant. Underage participants were
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28 not handed out alcoholic drinks but instead other products prepared for this situation;
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30 however their responses were included in our analyses because beliefs and choices were
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32 reported in the same way as the other participants'.
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36 *Sample*

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38 792 available tickets were booked, but 28 ticketholders did not attend the event.
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40 None of the attendees openly refused to complete the questionnaire when administered,
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42 but four questionnaires were left blank and two were incomplete. The final sample thus
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44 consisted of 758 valid questionnaires, of which 388 were from the intervention group
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46 and 370 from the control group. The sample's demographic distribution is shown in
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48 Table 1. Random assignment resulted in balanced conditions in terms of sex ($X^2(1) =$
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50 $0.48, p = 0.49$), age ($X^2(4) = 2.79, p = 0.59$), and education ($X^2(3) = 4.41, p = 0.22$).
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53 Further, consistent with the demographic profile of moviegoers as a whole [35], the
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total sample had a similar gender distribution albeit with higher frequencies in upper education levels and in lower age brackets.

Variables

The abstract/complex/unobservable variables were defined as latent and measured through five items adapted from previous studies: Identification with characters [16,19], Feeling of enjoyment [21], Perception of realism [20,22], Narrative transportation [14,19], and Alcohol expectancies [7]. All the items were rated on a seven-point Likert scale (from $-3 = \textit{completely disagree}$, to $3 = \textit{completely agree}$). The items used in our model appear in Table 2.

The other variables were directly observed. Consistent with previous studies [31,32], behavioural choice was measured through two independent choice responses. Alcohol drink choice was coded 1 if the subject selected the alcoholic *Erdinger* beer and 0 if he/she selected its non-alcoholic alternative. Placed brand choice was coded 1 if the subject selected the *Metaxa* liquor and 0 if the choice was for the *Bardinet* liquor. Brand placement was coded 1 for the intervention group and 0 for the control group.

Results

Latent variable measurement

Convergent validity was assessed on items' outer loadings and each latent variable's average variance extracted (AVE), with values reported in Table 2. Firstly, 18 items with outer loadings above 0.70 were considered appropriate because they represented more than the recommended proportion of variance, while seven items between 0.40 and 0.70 were considered for removal. Three of these seven items were not finally removed because their deletion did not lead to an increase in the composite reliability or the AVE above the suggested threshold value. Secondly, the AVE values of the five

latent variables were above the critical value of 0.50, indicating that these variables explain more than half of the variance of their corresponding items.

Internal consistency reliability was measured through composite reliability, which is interpreted in the same way as Cronbach's alpha. All five latent variables had composite reliability values above the threshold of 0.70.

Discriminant validity was assessed using both the cross loadings of the indicators and the Fornell-Larcker criterion. Each item's outer loading on its associated latent variable was consistently higher than all the items' cross loadings with other latent variables. In all cases the square root of each item's AVE was greater than the latent variable's highest correlation with any of the other latent variables, with the exception that the square root of narrative transportation's AVE (0.757) was slightly lower than this variable's correlation with feeling of enjoyment (0.762).

Preliminary testing

To assess baseline differences between the movie with unbranded alcohol and the version with branded alcohol, we first compared all measured variables between the intervention and control groups (Table 3). As predicted, the branded version was related to (a) lesser identification with characters, feeling of enjoyment, and perception of realism (H7-H9), and (b) slightly less overall levels of narrative transportation (significant at the $p < 0.10$ level). The branded version also led to greater alcohol expectancies and greater choice of the placed brand (H10-H11), but branded and unbranded versions led to the same propensity to choose an alcohol drink over the non-alcoholic alternative. This pattern suggests that, per the model, different influence paths are at play, as discussed next.

Hypothesis testing

Each hypothesis in the structural model was evaluated by testing the significance of its path coefficient and assessing the relevance of its f^2 and q^2 values, which were interpreted as small, medium, and large effect sizes when higher than 0.02, 0.15, and 0.35, respectively.

Structural model results (Table 4) support the existence of two paths by which positive alcohol portrayals affect viewers' alcohol-related beliefs and choices immediately after movie exposure.

On one hand, narrative transportation makes “transported” viewers more susceptible to adopting story-consistent beliefs and behaviours. Indeed, viewers' narrative transportation is linked to greater levels of identification with characters (H1), higher feeling of enjoyment (H2), and perceptions of realism (H3), with effect sizes indicating that feeling of enjoyment is the key antecedent. In line with narrative transportation theory, the more individuals are transported into a movie that depicts alcohol positively, the more positive their alcohol expectancies are right after viewing (H4). In turn, individuals reporting more positive alcohol expectancies are more likely to choose an alcoholic beer brand rather than a non-alcoholic alternative (H5). Increased narrative transportation also leads to an increased probability of choosing the alcoholic beer brand option (H6).

On the other hand, the narrative transportation effect weakens when a movie portrays actual alcohol brand placements, as viewers disengage from the characters (H7), experience lesser feelings of enjoyment (H8), and reduce perceived realism (H9). Despite hindering the narrative transportation pathways, the presence of a brand placement directly influences viewers' beliefs and behaviours: the presence of a liquor brand in the movie leads viewers to adopt more positive alcohol expectancies (H10) and

increases their likelihood of selecting the placed brand (H11), the latter showing a nearly medium-size effect.

Follow-up analyses

To further illustrate the different processes of influence between the branded and unbranded alcohol movie conditions, we compared the pattern of correlations between the two groups. In the control group, narrative transportation was positively related to alcohol expectancies ($r = 0.13, p < 0.05$) and alcohol drink choice ($r = 0.17, p < 0.01$), with both being positively interconnected ($r = 0.19, p < 0.01$), a pattern similar to that of the general model. By contrast, in the intervention group, narrative transportation was unrelated to alcohol expectancies ($r = 0.06, p = 0.26$) and alcohol drink choice ($r = 0.06, p = 0.24$), with both being positively interconnected ($r = 0.11, p < 0.05$).

Combined with the results of the overall structural model, this pattern signals that the influence path through narrative transportation was neutralized when branded alcohol appeared, with an increase in alcohol drink choice being stimulated by the increased alcohol expectancies. When only unbranded alcohol appeared, however, alcohol drink choice was increased by the influence of narrative transportation and baseline alcohol expectancies.

Discussion

Our findings reveal the existence of two different processes of influence whereby alcohol portrayals in a movie affect a demographically diverse audience of ordinary moviegoers. Exposure to non-branded positive portrayals of alcohol that provide natural contextual elements to the story produces story-consistent beliefs and choices through the process of narrative transportation. Exposure to branded positive alcohol portrayals with a promotional purpose also produces effects in terms of alcohol expectancies and

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3 brand choice, but in a more direct manner and despite lowering narrative transportation.

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5 The natural setting, faithfully recreating the real conditions in which moviegoers
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7 are stimulated, enhances the potential generalizability of these results because a natural
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9 environment generates considerably more reliable evidence than one generated by an
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11 artificial environment, which can make viewers pay unusually great attention to the
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13 stimuli, thus leading them to react in an unusual way [36].
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15
16 This field study provides two important comparative strengths. Firstly, the
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18 research adds to the limited but growing number of studies conducted in developing
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20 countries [11,37]. The focus on a country where per capita income is one-ninth that of
21
22 the USA's and 45% of the population is indigenous is novel. Since populations of less-
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24 developed countries may experience disproportionately higher levels of alcohol-
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26 attributable harm [1], the influence of movies from developed countries that present
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28 high proportions of risky behaviours is worth considering [37].
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31 Secondly, unlike previous studies focused on children and youths [11], this
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33 study's sample was not subject to any demographic restrictions. Younger people are
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35 undoubtedly vulnerable because they have not yet developed the skills to fully
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37 understand the negative consequences of alcohol abuse. However, the World Health
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39 Organization makes it clear that other segments of the population are also at higher risk,
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41 such as indigenous peoples and low socioeconomic status groups [1]. Further, we
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43 identified yet another source of vulnerability: individuals' propensity to experience
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45 narrative transportation. Individuals prone to engaging in such experiences are more
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47 receptive to the alcohol-friendly messages presented in movies.
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51 Despite these strengths, our study is limited in the absence of a completely non-
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53 alcohol movie condition. Non-branded beverage appearances were too numerous to
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55 remove entirely from the movie, making a full design (a condition without any alcohol)
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impossible. Unfortunately, it was not possible to identify a movie that had not been previously released in the country of study and that included branded and non-branded positive alcohol portrayals of equivalent total duration and able to be removed without distorting the original film's plot.

Regarding practical implications, the notable impact of branded alcohol portrayals calls for the development of effective policies to more closely monitor and control the practice of alcohol product placement. Today, there is little consistency in the levels of regulation imposed on traditional alcohol advertising, which is subject to many legal restrictions, and those imposed on alcohol product placement, which remains in legal limbo, despite its demonstrated effectiveness [32]. To prevent external regulation, the beverage industry recommended avoiding brand placements in youth-oriented films, but the reportedly increasing presence of branded alcoholic beverages in youth-rated movies reveals the failure of the industry's self-regulation, and the need to consider greater externally-imposed constraints, similar to those imposed on tobacco product placement [38]. Our findings also suggest caution about the recommended policy of removing branding from alcohol placements because unbranded alcohol placements, despite being unable to affect specific brand choices, can increase generic alcohol choice through non-neutralized narrative transportation and increased alcohol expectancies.

Further, the reported capacity of a movie's alcohol portrayals to encourage immediate alcohol consumption calls for caution in granting licences to serve alcohol in cinemas. Granting alcohol licenses to cinemas leads to the possibility that alcohol marketers promote their drinks in the exciting cinema environment, which attracts a broad audience including children, teenagers, pregnant women, adults with alcohol problems, and other high-risk groups. The combination of in-theatre marketing and

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3 alcohol beverage availability might amplify the impact of movie alcohol portrayals,
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5 although this remains an open empirical question.
6

7 Given the prevalence and persuasiveness of alcohol portrayals in movies, future
8
9 studies should continue to address the dose-response model, the impact of multiple
10
11 exposures, and the longer-term effects of product placement. Extending beyond the
12
13 single-exposure design reported here would allow an assessment of larger effects in
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15 “real life” where audiences are repeatedly exposed to different movies in both theatre
16
17 and home-viewing forms.
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20 On a final note, a different angle for future research lies in assessing the
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22 potential for negative alcohol portrayals (i.e., associating alcohol use with repulsive
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24 characters or negative consequences) to have positive impact on audiences’ beliefs and
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26 behaviours. This type of alcohol portrayal is much less frequent in film and few studies
27
28 have studied it so far [39]. Given that some movies and TV shows have effectively
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30 promoted various healthy behaviours and lifestyles under the umbrella of
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32 “entertainment education” [40], the potential for societally beneficial mechanisms of
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34 influence from negative alcohol portrayals deserves attention.
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41 **Acknowledgments**

42
43 The authors wish to thank the Universidad de Tarapacá (Arica, Chile) for financially
44
45 supporting the field research under Major Project No. 8745–16.
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50 **Conflicts of Interest**

51
52 None to declare.
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Appendix: Description of the movie and its alcohol portrayals

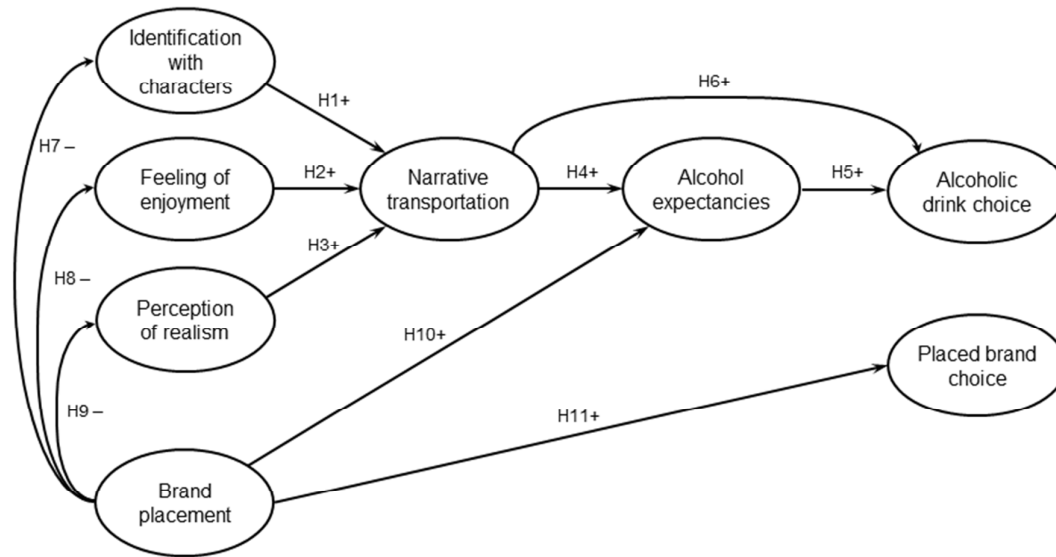
The Snows of Kilimanjaro (2011) is a French drama that vividly brings to life many routines of an ordinary family living today in Marseille. The main characters are a dock worker, Michel, and a caretaker for the elderly, Marie-Claire, who have been happily married for thirty years, have devotedly raised their children, and now generously help care for their grandchildren. Michel and Marie-Claire support syndicalist and social democratic ideals and demonstrate consistency with such values in their professional and social lives, even though some relatives cannot comprehend their behaviour. Michel and Marie-Claire's values are tested when they are brutally attacked and robbed by Christophe, a former colleague of Michel, and as a result some relatives encourage them to take revenge. Nevertheless, the couple strives to understand Christophe's motives and finds out that he has been lovingly caring for his two younger brothers ever since their parents abandoned the three siblings. This makes Michel and Marie-Claire take the initiative to care for Christophe's brothers during the time he is in prison.

Regarding the non-branded alcohol portrayals, some beverages with indistinguishable brands are depicted in ways and settings that are common in Mediterranean Europe; that is, its adult characters drink wine at daily meals, have toasts with champagne at great celebrations, meet friends for a beer, have a drink at family gatherings, etc. As a result, non-branded beverages are shown many times in a variety of formats from short to long and from subtle to prominent appearances. A common feature is that such beverages are never depicted in a negative light. None of the characters drink in an obsessive or immoderate way, and alcoholic drinks never bring these characters negative consequences such as loss of self-control, decrease in cognitive abilities, increase in aggressiveness, and/or a reduction in self-esteem. Instead, alcoholic beverages always have positive consequences such as facilitating sociability

1
2 and conviviality, helping to elevate mood and to overcome difficulties, and contributing
3
4 to relaxation and well-being. These positive consequences are not explicitly mentioned
5
6 but are implicitly represented. Importantly, the real heroes of the story, Michel and
7
8 Marie-Claire, drink like the others, which supports the interpretation that regularly
9
10 drinking alcoholic beverages is fully compatible with being devoted
11
12 parents/grandparents, having strong principles, adopting consistent lifestyles or – in a
13
14 nutshell – behaving as exemplary citizens.
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18 Concerning the branded alcohol placements, the *Metaxa* beverage brand
19
20 appeared prominently within three separate sequences of this movie. In the first, Marie-
21
22 Claire, feeling overwhelmed by life’s difficulties, goes to a bar to drink something to lift
23
24 her spirits. A friendly and charming waiter recommends *Metaxa*, a liquor “from sunny
25
26 Greece,” to overcome her situation. While a *Metaxa* bottle is shown, Marie-Claire tastes
27
28 this beverage for the first time and qualifies it as “good” and “not too strong.” The
29
30 waiter pours her a second glass on the house, commenting that “life needs two.” The
31
32 second sequence depicts the entire family having a meal at the home of Marie-Claire’s
33
34 son. At the end of the meal the host asks if anyone wants a drink and Marie-Claire
35
36 orders a *Metaxa*. The third sequence is a conversation in a bar between Marie-Claire
37
38 and her daughter, who feels overwhelmed by the difficulties she faces in dealing with
39
40 her boyfriend. A relaxed Marie-Claire gives experienced advice to her daughter, while
41
42 having her second glass of *Metaxa* and jokingly saying “it’s good for me,” “I always
43
44 have two,” and “that’s my prescribed dose.” Throughout these sequences, Marie-Claire
45
46 moves from not knowing *Metaxa* to appreciating it and to recommending it to her loved
47
48 ones, which supports the interpretation that the mood-elevating effect of *Metaxa* can be
49
50 recognized and endorsed by a person accustomed to dealing with life’s difficulties.
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Figure 1
Hypothesized structural model



Note. A plus sign indicates a hypothesized positive relationship; a minus sign indicates a hypothesized negative relationship.

Table 1
Sample distribution by demographics and treatment groups

Demographics	Intervention group	Control group	Total	% of total
Sex				
Males	188	170	358	47.2
Females	200	200	400	52.8
Age (years)				
18 or less	68	60	128	16.9
19–30	180	160	340	44.9
31–40	76	90	166	21.9
41–50	40	40	80	10.5
51 or more	24	20	44	5.8
Education				
No school degree	16	15	31	4.1
Primary	84	70	154	20.3
Secondary	124	145	269	35.5
Tertiary	164	140	304	40.1
Total sum	388	370	758	

Table 2

Estimates of the latent variable scores

Latent variables and their items	Outer loadings
Identification with characters (AVE = 0.65; CR = 0.90)	
While watching the movie, I could feel the emotions <i>Character X</i> portrayed	0.84
I could understand the reasons why <i>Character X</i> did what he or she did	0.88
I felt I identified with <i>Character X</i>	0.79
I could understand what <i>Character X</i> was going through at key moments	0.83
I wanted <i>Character X</i> to succeed in achieving his or her goals	0.71
Feeling of enjoyment (AVE = 0.72; CR = 0.93)	
Overall, I enjoyed this movie	0.94
It was an interesting experience for me to watch this movie	0.86
I was really moved by this movie	0.86
This movie will stick with me for a long time	0.88
I would recommend this movie to my friends and relatives	0.68
Perception of realism (AVE = 0.54; CR = 0.82)	
The way people live their everyday lives is portrayed very accurately in this movie	0.65
This film deals with the kind of difficult choices people in real life have to make	0.79
The setting for the movie seems very realistic	0.73
The actions and reactions of the characters are plausible	0.76
Narrative transportation (AVE = 0.57; CR = 0.84)	
I was mentally involved in the story while watching the movie	0.76
While watching it, the activity going on in the room around me was not on my mind	0.74
While watching it, I became mentally transported into the world shown in the movie	0.73
While watching it, I found myself feeling what the characters might feel	0.81
Alcohol expectancies (AVE = 0.62; CR = 0.83)	
After a few drinks of alcohol, I would be more likely to act sociably	0.82
After a few drinks of alcohol, I would be more likely to feel courageous	0.89
After a few drinks of alcohol, my body would be more likely to feel relaxed	0.63

Note. AVE = Average variance extracted; CR = Composite reliability.

Table 3

T tests for mean differences between intervention and control groups

Variables	Intervention group		Control group		<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	Sig. (2-tailed)
	Mean	Std. dev.	Mean	Std. dev.			
Identification with characters ^a	1.59	0.85	1.88	0.62	5.26	705	0.000
Feeling of enjoyment ^a	1.53	1.25	1.86	0.89	4.22	701	0.000
Perception of realism ^a	1.99	0.75	2.16	0.49	3.57	672	0.000
Narrative transportation ^a	1.41	1.07	1.53	0.84	1.70	728	0.089
Alcohol expectancies ^a	0.78	0.88	0.28	1.25	-6.40	661	0.000
Alcohol drink choice ^b	0.54	0.50	0.57	0.50	0.87	756	0.384
Placed brand choice ^a	0.63	0.48	0.28	0.45	-10.16	756	0.000

Note. ^aEqual variances were not assumed based on the Levene test. ^bEqual variances were assumed based on the Levene test.

Table 4
Estimates of path coefficients in the structural model

Hypothesized relationships	Path coefficients	f^2	q^2
H1: Identification with characters → Narrative transportation	0.20***	0.04	0.02
H2: Feeling of enjoyment → Narrative transportation	0.61***	0.46	0.16
H3: Perception of realism → Narrative transportation	0.05*	0.01	0.00
H4: Narrative transportation → Alcohol expectancies	0.09**	0.01	0.01
H5: Alcohol expectancies → Alcohol drink choice	0.14***	0.02	0.02
H6: Narrative transportation → Alcohol drink choice	0.09**	0.01	0.01
H7: Brand placement → Identification with characters	−0.18***	0.04	0.02
H8: Brand placement → Feeling of enjoyment	−0.15***	0.02	0.02
H9: Brand placement → Perception of realism	−0.14***	0.02	0.01
H10: Brand placement → Alcohol expectancies	0.24***	0.06	0.03
H11: Brand placement → Brand choice	0.34***	0.13	0.13

* $p < 0.10$; ** $p < 0.05$; *** $p < 0.01$.