

The Impacts of Product Placements in a TV Format Adaptation

A comparison study between the Vietnamese and Korean version of
2 Days 1 Night program

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the presence of product placements in the Vietnamese version of the TV format "2 Days 1 Night" and aims to understand the ways in which product placements impact the production of cultural content. The author observes various types of product placements within the show, ranging from subtle branding to explicit displays of branded products. This extensive presence of advertising sparks the author's interest in exploring product placement as a marketing strategy integrated into TV formats. These dimensions from Peterson and Anand's (2004) production of culture shape the creative fields and determine how cultural products are established, distributed, evaluated, taught, and preserved. However, the role of advertising and marketing is overlooked and should be included in cultural production.

Additionally, as scholars define product placement differently from one another, this study needs to understand the concept, and hence apply it to this study. With that being said, the research question of this study is "How does product placement impact the Vietnamese adaptation of the Korean series 2 Days 1 Night?". To answer such a question, a comparative analysis between the original South Korean version of "2 Days 1 Night" without product placement and the Vietnamese adaptation with product placements was conducted using multimodal critical discourse analysis as the main approach. The analysis was completed after the application of a strict procedure of data collection. 24 particular scenes were chosen from 20 episodes for the analysis. The findings showed that product placements play an influential part in the contents of the Vietnamese adaptation of "2 Days 1 Night". Specifically, the presence of product placements leads to alterations in certain selected scenes, yet the program's main contents remain the same, revealing the adapted version as a hard format. In conclusion, the findings also reveal that product placements in the Vietnamese version were subtle, then became more prominent over time. Although the placements did not overshadow the program, they provide additional exposure for brands at the expense of the original version's personal touch. Such a finding shows brands' greediness through the ways in which overconsumption was encouraged using the practice of product placement and raises questions regarding the show's ethics and intentions. Lastly, this study includes limitations that are relating to the identification of product placements, as well as cultural barriers, and suggests that future research should pay more attention to production teams' and audiences' perspectives.

KEYWORDS: *Product placement, TV format industry, production of culture, hard format, brand sponsorships*

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1. Introduction

When watching a reality show, what do you often see? Personally, I noticed so many different types of product placements when watching *2 Days 1 Night* (Vietnam version), and these product placements were embedded so closely to the content that sometimes I missed it – which could be explained based on the prominence and subtleness of a placement (Chan, et al., 2016; Gupta & Lord, 1998). For instance, the colors of a brand named Pond's were used as backdrops for several scenes; or that Lifebuoy's products (such as hand soaps and hand sanitizers) were in the scenes' focus when cast members needed to clean their hands before a meal (*2 Ngày 1 Đêm* Vietnam, 2022a). Additionally, I was also exposed to different brand exposure applications, such as full panel ads of Lifebuoy between scenes, or footer banners from OMO (washing detergent) when enjoying casts completing a challenge. Sometimes, the footer banner and contextual logo rotations were present during a scene with product placements. Altogether, the overwhelming amount of advertising and marketing practices have sparked an interest within me to learn more about product placement. Product placement can be understood as advertisements that are integrated within a media product, with the purpose of exposing audiences to certain brands or products. Interestingly, some types of product placements are easier to detect than others, for example, those that are included in the dialogue and scripts. For instance, Lifebuoy's soaps and sanitizers are easier to spot when used, than when they are mentioned in dialogue. Nevertheless, product placement in TV formats is not new to both audiences and producers – it is a part of the new norm in TV format production, and it is acknowledged to be a highly effective sponsoring and marketing strategy (Soba & Aydin, 2013; Williams, et al., 2011). By being a new norm in the TV format industry, product placements have the power to shift and change the ways in which formats are made (van Reijmerd, et al., 2010; Williams, et al., 2011). Additionally, when product placements as a strategy become parts of the TV format industry, its creations, and distributions also have impacts on the production of culture.

The production context of TV formats is widely researched in the past decades. Increasing globalization accelerated the blooming of the TV-format industries, creating a complex system of media production and consumption worldwide (Keane, 2002; Chalaby, 2011). As with other cultural products, the production of TV formats takes place in fields marked by different dimensions, which were introduced by Peterson and Anand (2004). Peterson and Anand (2004) call these intersecting fields the context in which the production of culture takes place. These intersecting fields are technology, law and regulation, industry structure, occupational careers, and markets – they are used to explain the ways in which

symbolic elements of cultures are established, distributed, evaluated, taught, and preserved (Peterson & Anand, 2004). In other words, these dimensions (can) differ per country or region.

Firstly, technology focuses on the tools that enhance people's abilities to communicate, while making changes that would impact art and culture significantly, and creating opportunities that are both innovative and disruptive (Peterson & Anand, 2004). Nowadays, technology has facilitated digital communication media, where the globalization of cultures has been growing rapidly, and such media have also influenced cultures through online communities (Peterson & Anand, 2004). Secondly, the facet of law and regulation focuses on the ground rules that shape the creative fields, including copyright laws that would influence and support creative products (Peterson & Anand, 2004). Thirdly, the industry structure of the creative industries plays the role of identifying the ways in which companies are constructed (Peterson & Anand, 2004). According to Peterson and Anand (2004), the creative industries follow either of three structures, including (1) small firms that produce diverse groups of products, (2) a few vertically integrated firms that mass produce a few standardized products, and (3) firms that have many small specialty services and market developments that produce innovative products. Fourthly, organizational structure mentioned the forms of organization that exist in cultural industries, including the bureaucratic form, the entrepreneurial form, and the variegated form (Peterson & Anand, 2004). Yet, it is important to mention that a few large corporates have dominated diverse talents through vertical integration and centralized market access (Peterson & Anand, 2004). Fifthly, the occupational careers facet focused on the diversity in the distribution of creative-related occupations – meaning that human resource agents are needed to locate specific talents over others (Peterson & Anand, 2004). Lastly, the markets facet was constructed after creative producers attempt to satisfy consumer taste repeatedly – once a market is formed, the products of the markets would be tailored to fit cultural ideals and appropriations (Peterson & Anand, 2004). However, when viewing the global TV-format industry as a transnational field, where aspects of product placements are altered accordingly to local cultures (Waisbord, 2004), the facet of advertising and marketing of Peterson and Anand's (2004) production of culture has been excluded from the equation. In this thesis, an attempt is made to gain some insight into how marketing and advertising impact the production of culture, namely one original and one adapted version of the program *2 Days 1 Night* – the adapted version is with product placement, and the other is without. When viewing these dimensions from afar, the elements of marketing and advertising are also related to different socio-cultural aspects and are

different between countries. This means that they can be an additional facet to the production of culture by providing more details relating to cultures through practices like product placements.

More important than the production of culture, the ways in which the TV-format program industry operates, should be explained. TV-format program is an industry that is relatively new yet popular as different international broadcasters practice the use of globally licensed TV formats more widely (Esser & Jensen, 2015). The process of adaptation can be split into two directions, which are soft format and hard format. According to van Keulen and colleagues (2021), on one hand, the concept of a 'hard format' explains a clearly structured program idea that can be adapted easily because it is legally protectable and sellable. On the other hand, the concept of a 'soft format' describes a program idea that does not follow any scripts or structured guidelines and is based on real events that can be reconstructed (van Keulen, et al., 2021). Specifically, the narratives of format programs often focus on storytelling, factual entertainment, talent shows, et cetera, which allow commercial broadcasters to license and adapt them more easily (Chalaby, 2011). This means that global TV-format programs have a more advertising-friendly environment, where broadcasters can apply practices like product placements into the adapted version of a program's content while being able to represent the local cultures more clearly (Esser & Jensen, 2015).

Combining the TV industry with the field of advertisements, advertisers have found various ways of how to promote their products/services in different media contents, where product placement is one of the most popular strategies (Tutaj & van Reijmersdal, 2012). Product placement is an advertising strategy that embeds the brand/product in the program, making them 'invisible' to audiences, while still achieving the intended effects. Therefore, product placement is considered a new and better way to practice advertising (Smit, et al., 2009). Yet, we can expect, looking at the context of cultural production that when a TV format is being adapted in another country, aspects and elements of product placement would also be altered. Whether this is the case, is the topic of investigation for this study.

Academic researchers who focus their attention on product placements, such as Chan and colleagues (2016), Soba and Aydin (2013), and D'Astous and Seguin (1999) only focus on (1) the ways in which product placements impact consumers' behaviors, (2) how effective this strategy is, or (3) its monetary benefits for practitioners using quantitative research methods. Yet, arguably, marketing and advertising practices like product placement should also be a part of the production of culture as product placement is the new norm in TV format production (Soba & Aydin, 2013; Williams, et al., 2011). Indeed, product placements have

been involved in the production of global TV formats and other media products heavily (Williams, et al., 2011; Karrh, et al., 2003).

TV formats are often researched in single case studies (van Keulen & Krijnen, 2014). However, to see how product placement impacts a TV format, it is important to focus on a comparative study. Hence, this research aims to perform a comparative study of a TV format named *2 Days 1 Night* by examining the differences in content production between the original version from South Korea – without product placement – and the adapted version from Vietnam, where different product placements elements occurred in the adapted version.

2 Days 1 Night is a reality TV format that was developed by KBS channel – a public service broadcaster in South Korea (KBS World, n.d.a). The main purpose of this program is to travel and mainly to experience different culinary within a country (KBS World, n.d.b). The number of cast members in the program varies between 5 and 6 male celebrities (KBS World, n.d.b; Vo, 2022), and this difference occurs due to a cast member's scandal in the Korean version has costed the program to remove him (Kbzoom, 2023). According to Kbzoom (2023) and Koreaboo (2019), *2 Days 1 Night* Korea has begun to remove any controversial members to avoid direct impacts on the show's ratings. In addition, the entertaining aspects of the program were included in different gaming elements throughout the episodes, which then make *2 Days 1 Night* extremely famous and successful (Le & Bao, 2022; IMDb, n.d.). Such episodes consist of a series of elements, including (1) introducing the trip and theme, (2) cast members enjoying local delicacies, and (3) nighttime activities.

Originally, this program was a part of the Happy Sunday project of KBS to recommend new travel destinations to audiences (KBS World, n.d.b). After 15 years of production and broadcasting, this format has been purchased, adapted, and broadcasted in Vietnam and China. As the participants explore different regions in South Korea and the local cuisines there after winning a challenge, audiences were able to learn more about different local cultures, histories, and delicacies by watching this entertaining program (Le, 2022; IMDb, n.d.; KBS World, n.d.b). Although the original format of *2 Days 1 Night* in South Korea did not include any product placements, its adapted version in Vietnam contained numbers of product placements and sponsorships within the programs. Particularly, *2 Days 1 Night* Vietnam was produced in 2022 by Dong Tay Promotion – a Vietnamese production company that is known for adapting global TV formats in Vietnam (Dat Viet VAC, n.d.). This adapted version of the program was then broadcasted by the public service channel called HTV7 and by the local streaming platform/private service broadcaster called VieOne (*2 Ngày 1 Đêm*, 2022b). The format of *2 Days 1 Night* in Vietnam was embedded with

product placements tactics, in which all placements were sponsored by different consumer goods brands that are belonging to Unilever – a multinational consumer goods corporate (Unilever, n.d.) – without any other brand names involved. With that being said, the research question of this thesis consists of: *How does product placement impact the Vietnamese adaptation of the Korean series 2 Days 1 Night?*

Since these countries produced and broadcasted the same program, while remaining different from one another due to elements of product placements, these two versions have been chosen to be parts of this comparative research study due to two reasons. First, by identifying and understanding the ways in which product placements were placed in the adapted and localized version of *2 Days 1 Night*, the impacts of sponsorships in the production of TV will be understood. Second, this comparison will shed light on what product placements mean in TV format production. Thereby, this comparative study focuses on the Korean and Vietnamese versions of *2 Days 1 Night* and aims to understand the ways in which contents are altered in the Vietnamese localized version, especially with the involvement and impact of product placement advertising and how the production of the TV format industry – a transnational field where global and local contents interact and connect to one another (van Keulen & Krijnen, 2014; Dowd & Janssen, 2011) – is impacted by product placement.

Furthermore, this study is executed through the application of the Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis method. According to Jørgensen and Phillips (2002), this analysis method guides researchers toward in-depth understandings of socio-cultural settings by applying both textual and visual data into the equation. Additionally, Machin and Mayr (2012) also highlight this method as an optimal application to study cultural discourses, such as TV programs in this case.

Societal relevance

As aforementioned, global TV-format programs with entertaining narratives are very advertising-friendly and adaptive, while remaining culturally relevant when localized (Esser & Jensen, 2015), which leads many broadcasters to utilize these advantages when purchasing a global TV-format program – this matter also occurred in the case of *2 Days 1 Night* Vietnam. Although both Vietnam and South Korea claimed to produce *2 Days 1 Night* as a show to introduce new travel destinations to local audiences (KBS World, n.d.b; *2 Ngày 1 Đêm* Vietnam, 2022b), the adapted version from Vietnam received tremendous support from sponsors, through product placements. In detail, *2 Days 1 Night* Vietnam is sponsored by

many brands from Unilever, whereas the original version from South Korea kept producing the format without any sponsors involved. This involvement of the conglomerate has sparked interests in this research to discover the influential roles that conglomerates play in guiding and controlling the content of a format-based program. Understanding this authority would in turn allow this research to make sense of how sponsorships alter the contents of TV format programs differently on a local level, which interconnects product placements and other forms of marketing and advertising practices with the globalization of TV-format programs.

Additionally, product placement as a marketing strategy can only succeed using linguistic and visual elements that resonate with consumers, and it is influenced by different socio-cultural aspects across countries, and vice versa (Tutaj & van Reijmersdal, 2012; Smith, et al., 2009). When producing product placement tactics/ads, practitioners have to be mindful of how local audiences would perceive these ads through socio-cultural contexts (van Keulen & Krijnen, 2014), as well as the ways in which product placements would trigger audiences' consumption/buying behaviors (Russell, 1998). In other words, the sponsoring strategy of product placements is culturally embedded, and they are symbolic contents (Chan, et al., 2016; Craig & Bichard, 2014; Lee, et al., 2010), meaning that they can impact the globalization of the TV format industry by altering the contents of global TV programs. However, the conversation regarding sponsoring, specifically product placement, is not included in the transnational TV industry and TV-format programs industry. Thus, this study also aims to expand understanding of the connection between cultures and advertising from two different countries that have produced the same format-based program, which in turn contributes to the media and television industry.

Lastly, many researchers praised the ways in which product placement is a successful advertising and marketing strategy because audiences cannot avoid such practices (Williams, et al., 2011; van Reijmersdal, et al., 2010). Since the beginning of TV recorders' function to record a program for playback, while skipping advertisements, product placement started to become more popular because brands had to find new ways to improve their finances (Lotz, 2019). When brands become sponsors for a program, they were able to intervene in the program's productions and to insert brand placements through the sponsorship model of deficit financing (Lotz, 2019). Deficit financing practices simply changed the ways that brands and the TV industry work together (Lotz, 2019) – from having ads and programs as separate entities to an integrated version of both. However, from an ethical perspective, how moral is it that audiences are now forced to watch such ads? Is it suitable for brands/sponsors

to bombard people with ads in ways that they do not and/or cannot realize? As we do not know whether marketing influences content, the question regarding ethics is urgent.

Academic relevance

On one hand, although product placement is a phenomenon that has been around for a long time, the academic attention it receives is rather recent, only since the late 90s (Smit, et al., 2009). Scholars have been focusing on the effects that product placements have on audiences, yet little is known about the involvement of third parties and sponsoring in global formats, and how these involvements can and may affect the final products of a format in one country compared to another. In fact, only Smit and colleagues (2009) took the approach of unveiling insights from practitioners behind product placement. Besides, scholars have been focusing on the localization of television formats that are deemed to highlight single-nation case studies (Turner, 2005), while globalization is captured through the spread of a particular format across countries (Moran & Malbon, 2006). Hence, it is important to recognize the power of third parties like conglomerates within the process of localizing such formats.

On the other hand, product placement and other marketing and advertising strategies have not been seen as parts of the production of culture in the media and creative industries (see Peterson & Anand, 2004). However, as mentioned previously, product placements are the symbolic contents that have direct impacts on consumer behaviors – these impacts can both be positive and negative for audiences as product placements encourage certain consumption behaviors (Hackley, et al., 2008). Therefore, regardless of the intense focus on studying the cultural facets introduced by Peterson & Anand (2004), advertising and marketing are also important elements of culture as they function based on the proximity of local values and preferences (Straubhaar, 2021). In this study, it is essential to understand this concept as it allows the researcher to investigate different ways in which product placements were used in *2 Days 1 Night Vietnam*, while identifying possible differences in content productions between two versions of the program and answering the research question.

Therefore, when including third parties and marketing and advertising strategies into the equation of the global TV formats industry, this research assumes that sponsorships would be involved in the globalization and localization processes of format-based programs directly, where cultural proximity elements would impact the ways in which audiences perceive adapted global format contents (Straubhaar, 2021). If this assumption is to be true, more insights would be added to the academic realm of global television formats, where

sponsorships and advertising would be a new cultural-related branch for the global-local debate of TV-format programs.

2. Theoretical Framework

Within this section, it is important to discuss the backgrounds and information that are relating to product placement, cultural proximity, as well as the involvement of marketing and advertising in the production of culture, and the details of the TV format in question – *2 Days 1 Night*. As this research sets out to understand the differences in contents of the same format program that was produced by different countries, knowing the background of product placement studies and its functionalities enables the researcher to set up the approach for this study. In addition, it is essential to understand the ways in which the TV (format) industries in both Vietnam and South Korea are operated, by looking at different rules and regulations on copyrights, advertising matters, as well as broadcasting matters.

2.1 Product placement

Product placement is one of the fields that is well known to practitioners, yet it is not as well studied by academics (Tutaj & van Reijmersdal, 2012; Babacan, et al., 2012). When involving advertising and marketing strategies, product placement is the tactic that practitioners use the most to promote their products and/or services, especially with online contents (Babacan, et al., 2012). Many studies focused on (1) understanding the ways in which advertising like banner ads and sponsored contents affect audiences' reactions (Tutaj & van Reijmersdal, 2012), (2) the attitudes that audiences have toward product placement in movies (D'Astous & Berrada, 2011), (3) brand image (van Reijmersdal, et al., 2007), (4) the persuasion knowledge of audiences (Boerman, et al., 2012), and most recently, (5) the priming of product placement (Balasubramanian & Gistri, 2022).

Firstly, according to Tutaj and van Reijmersdal (2012), their study on audiences' reactions toward sponsored content and banner online advertising has shown that the subtle sponsored contents were perceived to be "more informative, more amusing, and less irritating" compared to the prominent ads (p.15). Secondly, in relation to Tutaj and van Reijmersdal's (2012) study, D'Astous and Berrada (2011) also found that product placements in movies would be more effective (in recalls, attitudes, or intentions of audiences) when a comparison between placements occur, and that an objective in favor of the comparative claim should be included in order to improve credibility. Thirdly, with many researchers focusing on the connection between product placements and persuasion knowledge of audience studies, Boerman and colleagues (2012) focused on the ways in which the roles that persuasion knowledge plays in sponsored contents disclosure on TV. The findings showed that the persuasion knowledge of audiences could be increased through ad disclosure, which

could hinder the ads' effectiveness (Boerman, et al., 2012). Yet, the disclosures helped participants to recall the brands more easily. Fourthly, when turning away from audience studies, product placements were often mentioned in brand images, as van Reijmersdal and colleagues (2007) mentioned that brand/product placements do not affect viewer's memory on the brand image. This resulted in brand image being positively improved over time, where viewers would also align such brands with the program more intensely (van Reijmersdal, et al., 2007). Lastly, aside from improving brand image, product placements were also involved in a study about its priming, where audiences are warned beforehand about a program that included product placements (Balasubramanian & Gistri, 2022). Such priming, however, was only found to be enhancing recalls for subtle placements, while decreasing the effects of prominent placements (Balasubramanian & Gistri, 2022).

In short, these studies revealed that there are various ways to apply product placements in the TV (format) industry, and as the boundaries between editorial and commercial contents are blurring and harder to detect, audiences are now being persuaded easier (Tutaj & van Reijmersdal, 2012). Smit and colleagues (2009) found that sponsors and advertisers view product placements, especially brand-integrated placement, as a better way to promote their products than traditional advertisements, while financially supporting production companies to produce a program. Hence, understanding the concept of product placement is crucial for both academic scholars and practitioners, as it is interconnected to the production of media programs and the production of culture.

Product placement can take many forms, where the definition varies between scholars. The variations in definitions of product placements occurred due to different types of research that was conducted, as well as the objectives of the research. For instance, some scholars focused on audience studies, while others studied about product placements from brand managers' perspectives. Therefore, the definitions of product placements are grand. Specifically, Balasubramanian (1994) defined that the aim of product placement is to influence audiences by integrating planned and branded products into media contents. This definition reflected the beginning of the product placement era, where it was used merely as a strategy, rather than a phenomenon that relates to the production of culture. However, this interpretation of product placement is deemed to be legitimate as most academic research have been focusing on studying the impacts that product placement has on consumer behaviors. According to van Reijmersdal and colleagues (2009), product placement is created and controlled by the production team, where advertisers pay the program to have their products featured. This definition was concluded using in-depth interviews method, where

mid- and high-level advertising managers who work with brands and for brands were the interviewees. Van Reijmersdal and colleagues (2009) approached product placement differently compared to other studies by applying a qualitative research method, however, they excluded the voices of the production professionals from the equation, which resulted in unbalance outcomes. The missing voice of the production professionals caused van Reijmersdal and colleague's (2009) findings to be one-sided, and accidentally left behind unanswered questions from the production team's point of view. Since product placement is a complex advertising strategy that requires different parties involved to make decisions, van Reijmersdal and colleagues' (2009) definition occurred to be problematic as it offered one-sided perspectives.

Meanwhile, Russell and Belch (2005) stress that media practitioners purposely incorporate product placement into a media product, in this case, a TV-format program, as a way to reach their target audiences more easily. Russell and Belch (2005) also found that product placement is a strategy where practitioners (such as advertisers but not necessarily be the production house) create strategies that would limit the chances of creating programs that would look like commercials to avoid oversaturation for consumers. This notion of product placement is the key to practicing the strategy. Evidently, various types of product placements were introduced as ways to naturalize commercial placements. According to Smit and colleagues (2009), product/brand placements were found to be prominent, integrated, and scripted in TV programs, meaning that product placement is a purposeful incorporation that was created and controlled both by advertisers and the production team. However, Gupta and Lord (1998) touched upon the fact that product/brand placements can be subtle as well – meaning that less visible placements i.e., in the background also improve brand exposure on a TV program. When product placements are applied correctly within a program – meaning that it is neither too prominent nor too invisible – there is a higher chance to catch audiences' attention without disturbing them from the program (Chan, et al., 2016).

Simply put, product placement does not only serve as a theoretical concept for scholars in the field, but it also is a strategy of marketing communication that practitioners apply in their day-to-day works and projects (Kotler & Armstrong, 2014). Product placement is defined as a planned prominent advertising application (through both audio and visual) where practitioners (i.e., sponsors and advertisers) integrate brands and products into the program with the intention of promoting the brands, its products, or even goals (i.e., economics, environment), while allowing audiences to enjoy the program. This definition

enables the study to create a guideline for the research, data collection, and analysis processes, where elements of product placements can be pinpointed more easily.

2.1.1 Product placement as a practice theory

When viewing the TV industry as a transnational field, product placement can be seen as the ways in which cultural aspects are being combined with economic factors, as conglomerates try to advertise certain products to local audiences (van Keulen & Krijnen, 2014). Product placement is built upon the combination of the TV industry and media practitioners – specifically advertisers (Smit, et al., 2009). From the perspective of cultural production by Peterson and Anand (2004), the marketing and advertising field was created as a product of digital media, where domestic law and regulations would be involved in the production process. The field of marketing and advertising itself produces specialty services that are innovative and are established by centralized organizations that are vertically integrated and are experts in many talents. Therefore, the careers in this field tend to be chosen based on specific requirements and by a human resource personnel. By having specific career paths at a big corporate that produces specialty services, the marketing and advertising market was pinpointed through trials and errors of different services, such as product placements. Furthermore, this means that advertisers themselves as practitioners would have the power to decide and involve in the process of product placements by working together with production teams (Smit, et al., 2009; Russell & Balch, 2005). As an advertising strategy, product placement often is adapted to local markets, similar to adapted TV-format programs, meaning that different countries would practice marketing strategies differently in order to reach unique needs of consumers (Kotler & Armstrong, 2014). The effectiveness of product placement also varied and can be measured from placement memory to liking the product, and sometimes to actual purchase – these outcomes are different from one another due to different types of placements that were implanted within a program (Kamleitner & Jyote, 2013), as well as the repetition of the placements (Homer, 2009).

Russell (1998) introduced a model of three dimensions product placements, where placements are categorized as screen placement (indicates the positions of a product on certain filming sets), script placement (where placements are emphasized in characters' dialogues), and plot placement (meaning that the brand/product placement is built within ones' persona). Additionally, Gupta and Lord (1998) also stressed that these placement types can be prominent (highly visible, central, in the foreground) and/or subtle (background actors, less visible, lower frequency) within a program. Furthermore, Babacan and colleagues

(2012) summarized that there are various types of product placements that can be spotted when one watches a TV-format program, including corporate placement, image placement, implicit product placement, integrated explicit product placement, non-integrated explicit product placement, et cetera.

These product placement types can be found across platforms of media – such as television programs, games, movies, and more (Babacan, et al., 2012). It is important to note these different categorizations when analyzing and comparing research on product placement. This research focuses on three different types of product placement that were mentioned before by Babacan and colleagues (2012), combined with the dimensions introduced by Russell (1998) to further process and analyze the data. In specific, implicit and non-integrated explicit product placements are considered as visual product placements, where placements only occur in the background; while integrated explicit product placement is a part of the plot product placements, meaning that the product name is being presented both through dialogue and on the filming set (Babacan, et al., 2012; D'Astous & Serguin, 1999; Russell, 1998). These product placement types and dimensions were chosen because they are a combination of strategies that can both be subtle and/or prominent, while some have direct impacts on the contents of the program and others do not.

Lastly, if product placement is integrated within a program, the program's content would be established based on the brand and its products (Cooper & Nownes, 2004) – which can be reflected through plots alterations or the ways in which the program was filmed. Regardless of the ways in which product placements are presented within a program, it remains difficult to pinpoint practitioners' true intentions and desires. Therefore, it is reasonable for this research to assume that advertisers would have control over the production's content, to a certain extent directly and indirectly, through integrating the brand and its products within the program's content. With that being said, cultural specificity should be connected in this study because the production team and brands aim for cultural proximity when producing a program with(out) product placements.

2.2 Cultural and aesthetic proximity of TV format programs

Prior to this study, many researchers focused on understanding the relationships between product placements and audience behavior as aforementioned, however, the ways in which the audience was initially involved in this topic were not explicitly mentioned through the lens of culture. For instance, Peterson and Anand (2004) described that the production of culture includes aspects of technology, law and regulation, industry structure, occupational

careers, and markets – yet different definitions of product placement hinted that advertising and marketing should also be an element of the culture production. To further understand and make sense of the connection between advertising and marketing, especially product placement, with the production of culture, this thesis will use the theory of cultural proximity, coined by Straubhaar (1991; 2021), as the main bridge.

Cultural proximity theory explains that audiences tend to prefer programs that are closest to them in terms of cultural relevance (Straubhaar, 2021). This concept is relevant to this research because product placements are made based on the aims that brands and the production team toward local audiences. Since different cultures carry different values, beliefs, and other social-cultural aspects, audiences from different cultures hence prefer and enjoy different types of programs – especially those that are relevant to them (Morley, 2001). Furthermore, cultural proximity also focuses on the feelings of cultural closeness, meaning that one would feel relatable and comfortable when a program includes humor, gender images, values, cultures, dress, lifestyle, et cetera (Straubhaar, 2021). Interestingly, cultural proximity does not only occur on a national level, where domestically based programming is preferred, but it also surfaces on the regional level, where transnational developments are perceived and enjoyed by other cultures within the region (Straubhaar, 1991; Straubhaar, 2021; Turner, 2005). With culture being a complex construct that influences the way individuals think, act, and communicate, while encompassing shared beliefs, values, and practices (Babacan, et al., 2012), practitioners, therefore, must understand a local market and its cultural proximity, in order to comprehend the impact of product placement in TV-format programs, and the ways in which these programs are appealing toward audiences (Chan, et al., 2016). Therefore, based on these explanations of cultural proximity, cultures and the practice of product placement are intertwined, and they can be used to clarify one another.

When considering television format programs as a cultural product, where audiences tend to prefer watching programs with relevant social-cultural elements, aesthetic proximity also plays an important role in delivering aesthetic aspects to viewers in global TV-format programs (van Keulen, 2016). Specifically, aesthetic proximity is understood as technical elements, such as cinemagoer, editing, and sound, that are applied to create a sense of cultural proximity by enhancing local elements (van Keulen, 2016). This also means that such stylistic aspects would be adjusted when a television format is adapted in order to deliver the correct preferences and expectations that audiences have (van Keulen, 2016). By understanding different elements of cultural and aesthetic proximity, especially in different versions of adapted and localized TV-format programs, media practitioners can create

product placement strategies that resonate with their audience on a deeper level (Keinonen, 2016; Chan, et al., 2016). This comparison study will pinpoint cultural and aesthetic proximities using multimodal critical discourse analysis as the main methodological inquiry (see Data Analysis section).

2.3 2 Days 1 Night – the program

Since the *2 Days 1 Night* program is the main format that is studied in this research, it is vital to understand the program itself thoroughly. Previous, this program was introduced briefly in the Introduction chapter, yet the program itself is filled with layers of information that are necessary for readers of this paper to understand. *2 Days 1 Night* is a reality TV format that functions based on different games, challenges, locations, and most importantly, food (KBS World, n.d.a).

In this show, the theme of each trip (often lasting 1-2 episodes) is determined according to the trip's location (Le & Bao, 2022). The trip's theme would then link to different games and challenges that the cast members have to complete. For instance, the Vietnamese casts visited Kon Tum – a mountain town where minorities live – and the trip's theme was “Brotherhood”. More specific, such activities are reflective of the cultures/regions that the cast members visit, where the rewards are focusing on (1) modes of transportations (i.e., bus versus plane), (2) delicacies locations (i.e., wet market versus local restaurant), or (3) money for meals of the day (Le, 2022; IMDb, n.d.; Vo, 2022). For instance, when participants lost in a game of chances, they had to commute by public bus, while the winning members commuted by plane.

This system also applies to mealtimes and local delicacies. Since the program's aim is also to highlight different cuisines, this program showcased different cuisines in various ways. For instance, the ways different cuisines are introduced are either through professional cooks/chefs from the regions, or from a cast member who plays the role of the food "king" (*2 Ngày 1 Đêm* Vietnam, 2022a; KBS World TV, n.d.). Having food experts or characters of such allowed the program to focus more on the elements of local cuisines, from how to enjoy the food to the histories behind these dishes.

As mentioned before, the casts of *2 Days 1 Night* Vietnam includes 6 male celebrities, influencers, or comedians, where the guest participants are both male and female celebrities (VieZ, n.d.). Meanwhile, the current season from Korea has 5 male celebrities instead. The difference between the number of cast members surfaces after the Korean version removed its sixth cast member (Kbzoom, 2023). The removal of cast(s) happened in *2 Days 1 Night*

Korea previously throughout the show's airtime of over a decade, where all cases occurred due to scandals that the removed casts were involved in (Koreaboo, 2019). This action reveals that audiences' opinions and criticisms about the casts can reflect and impact the program directly.

Additionally, this on-the-road reality also uses semi-scripted narratives that are humor driven. In detail, the casts and guest participants often create and/or perform different comedy scenarios to produce a truly entertaining show (KBS World, n.d.b; Vo, 2022). When watching the program, the humor narratives surface spontaneously between members. By having the casts who are celebrities with great senses of humor, *2 Days 1 Night* becomes more fun, light-hearted, and family-friendly for audiences (Le & Bao, 2022).

2.4 The policies of the TV (format) industry in Vietnam and South Korea

The TV format industry is known to be advertising-friendly (Esser & Jensen, 2015), however, the ways in which TV format programs work with advertising are rather country-specific. According to van Keulen and Krijnen (2014), TV format programs are “foreign ideas, produced domestically” (p.279), where local producers would have to follow a show’s manuals to produce a local version that is similar to the original version.

In detail, copyright laws and regulations often act as the beginning steps for one to legalize the process of adaptation (Moran & Keane, 2004). In the cases of Vietnam and South Korea, there are different rules that the broadcasters must follow in order to have the (adapted) program published. In this research, it is important to know and understand the laws and regulations that Vietnam and South Korea have for the TV (format) industry, as well as for the advertising industry because they would help making sense of different details in the *2 Days 1 Night* program in both countries.

2.4.1 In Vietnam

The laws and regulations relating to the TV (format) industry are governed by the TV the Ministry of Information and Communications (MIC) and the Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Tourism (MCST). According to the MIC (2012), under the law of publication, Article 6 mentions that the Vietnamese government supports all international cooperation in all publishing activities. This regulation applies to different forms of publications, from TV programs to movies, books, and so on (Ministry of Information and Communications, 2012). Under this law, Article 24 also stresses that all products of communications must be checked for content before being republished (Ministry of Information and Communications, 2012).

Additionally, Article 26 mentions that the publication of foreign products must be made by a Vietnamese publishing house (Ministry of Information and Communications, 2012).

Regarding advertising regulations, the MIC (2012) only mentioned about the prohibitions of advertising on administrative maps and on national holidays (only applicable to printed calendars) in Article 30. Furthermore, the Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Tourism (2022) published the law of Film, including films, movies, documentaries, and TV programs. In Article 25 about advertising for films, ads are allowed in between films, as well as in between film trailers (Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Tourism, 2022). However, certain types of advertising need to have approvals from the MCST, especially on pharmaceuticals, cosmetics, agrichemical, and toiletries products (Export.gov, 2018). Furthermore, all communication and media products, including advertising, are prohibited from producing/including misleading information on topics such as religions, terrorism, national's histories and secrets – violence, sexism, sex, and violations of children's rights are also banned (Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Tourism, 2022). Since over 90 percent of Vietnam's urban population own televisions, advertising and marketing are often heavily invested – therefore, advertising remains heavily regulated by the government and strict rules must apply (Export.gov, 2018).

More specifically, the government issued the Advertising Law to further regulate the ways in which advertising, both foreign and domestic, can operate on different modes of media in Vietnam (Vietnam Government, 2012). On audio-visual media contents, Article 22 mentions that the advertising duration must not exceed 10 percent of the entire program from a broadcasting organization per day, and paid TV channels must not exceed 5 percent (Vietnam Government, 2012). In terms of product placements within media products, the advertising law indicates that placements are allowed, though subtleness is required to avoid inconvenience for audiences in Article 35 (Vietnam Government, 2012). Furthermore, this article also mentions that the products and logos/names of the brands cannot be a part of the program's logo and name, and that the brand's fonts must always be half the size smaller than the program (Vietnam Government, 2012). Lastly, the advertising law also included many regulations relating to the rights of advertisers, but also of audiences. Under Article 16, it clearly states that those who consume advertisements have the right to reject or refuse to receive any ads (Vietnam Government, 2012).

2.4.2 In South Korea

When comparing the Korean laws and regulations to those in Vietnam, there are similarities and differences between the ways in which the TV (format) industry is operated. According to Eun and colleagues (2022), South Korea applies the Broadcasting Act and the Internet Multimedia Broadcast Services Act to regulate broadcast communications domestically. These Acts revealed several similarities to those in Vietnam. For instance, Article 5 of the Broadcasting Act states similar regulations regarding types of contents that are prohibited – i.e., political and/or religious advocacies, violence, racism, et cetera (Korean Law Translation Center, n.d.). This Act also mentions in Article 7 that the content materials of any programs should be submitted to and reviewed by the Minister of Information. Furthermore, the Broadcasting Act also highlights in Article 5 that broadcasting content should always contribute to "a sound family life and proper guidance of children and youth" while allowing harmonious environments for citizens (Korean Law Translation Center, n.d., p.2). Moreover, Korean broadcasters are also obligated to rank their own program using five elements of violence, theme, sexuality, imitation risk, and language, in which the broadcasters would have to display these rankings before and throughout the programs (Eun, et al., 2022).

In general, the Korean Broadcasting Act is a lot stricter than the regulations in Vietnam, where specific penalties for misuse of conduct are clearly stated in Chapter 7 of the Act (Korean Law Translation Center, n.d.). However, the strictness of this law can be explained through the ways in which Korean broadcasters are operated. For instance, most broadcasters in this country are private organizations, with only one national/public channel, namely the Korean Broadcasting System (also known as KBS) (KBS Global, n.d.). With that being said, the Broadcasting Act includes several chapters of regulations that would apply to private entities (Korean Law Translation Center, n.d.).

In terms of commercials and advertising broadcasts, Korean broadcasters should always indicate and identify such contents to audiences – the duration of the commercials is determined by the Presidential Decree, according to Article 35 (Korean Law Translation Center, n.d.). According to Kang and colleagues (2020), the advertising laws in Korea are quite strict for pharmaceuticals, medical, alcohols, games, cosmetics, et cetera products – similar to Vietnam – and are subject to industry-specific laws and regulations. The Advertising Law in South Korea is extensive, yet it does not include any information regarding the practice of product placements (see Korean Fair Trade Commission, n.d., and Korea Communications Commission, n.d.).

3. Qualitative Visual Critical Discourse Analysis

The research question – *How does product placement impact the Vietnamese adaptation of the Korean series 2 Days 1 Night?* – is approached from a qualitative perspective. As the study sought to understand how product placement, as a part of the production of culture (Peterson & Anand, 2004), impacts the contents, therefore the symbolic values, of cultural products. Qualitative methods are useful to interpret social phenomena, especially in natural settings where meanings are expressed implicitly (Boeije, 2010). Furthermore, qualitative methods focus on non-numerical data, where valuable information and meaning-making elements are often hidden under or embedded within texts and visuals data (Boeije, 2010). By finding patterns and making distinctions between data, qualitative method unpacks meaningful explanations of the topic of research (Sofaer, 1999). This comparative study aims to identify possible differences between the two versions of *2 Days 1 Night*, enabling to shed light on how product placement plays a role in the production of reality TV. Embedded and meaningful patterns are latent within the programs using different types of symbolic contents – these contents could be represented through dialogue, clothing, setting, and other socio-cultural facets. Since symbolic contents are operating and distributed according to socio-cultural elements, following a qualitative approach allows this research to unveil underlying meanings that are hidden in the two versions of *2 Days 1 Night* and to understand how product placements impact the ways in which contents were produced.

As the research question focuses on two versions of one TV-format program, and hence containing textual and visual aspects, a multimodal critical discourse analysis (MCDA) will be conducted. MCDA allows an understanding of both textual and visual data to be understood through different relationships between discourses and socio-cultural settings (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002; Janks, 2006). Additionally, MCDA views power as discursive, meaning that social and cultural power is transferred and practiced through the use of (non)-verbal languages, visuals, audios, and texts (Machin & Mayr, 2012). This means that a specific socio-cultural element could be embedded within different forms of discourses while having similar interpretations. Within TV-format programs, many social and cultural powers are reflected through different symbolic contents that are created by the local systems (Peterson & Anand, 2004). This means that elements of cultures can be improved and/or reproduced independently based on the ways in which local systems, such as technology, law and regulation, and market operated (Peterson & Anand, 2004). With the nature of comparative research between two countries, this method is suitable and applicable to find

similarities and differences in the contents of *2 Days 1 Night* versions, and the ways in which product placements impact the final product of such program.

3.1 Data collection

The relevant sample for this research is the content of the original and adapted formats of *2 Days 1 Night*, focusing on comparing between the scenes with and without product placements. According to Smit and colleagues (2009), advertisers view TV-format programs and product placements as a better way to promote their products while viewing product placement as a purposeful intention that helps both advertisers and production house financially.

Furthermore, this research includes one season from *2 Days 1 Night* Vietnam and a part of one season from *2 Days 1 Night* Korea, where the Vietnamese season 1 included 30 episodes while the Korean version contained 170 episodes in season 4 (last updated on KBS World TV's YouTube channel in April 2023). The chosen seasons are both produced and broadcasted in 2022, with the intention of finding similarities in trends and contents more easily. The sample size of this research includes the first ten episodes from the first season of the Vietnamese version, as well as ten episodes from the fourth season of the Korean version – from episode 129 to episode 139 – due to the equivalence in scheduling; here, the broadcasting schedule was similar to that of the Vietnamese episodes, where each episode is between 80-110 minutes. It is important to have a balanced amount of data in a comparative study like this one because it can help limit the potential biases throughout the collection process, as well as control the possible influences that can occur (Palinkas, et al., 2015). Furthermore, these episodes were first collected using manual searching on YouTube, where different keywords were mentioned in order to reach the expected results, such as “*2 Days 1 Night* Vietnam season 1” and the translated version of “*2 Ngày 1 Đêm* mùa 1”, “*2 Days 1 Night* season 4”, and other similar searches. Then, after the episodes are chosen, different types of scenes (i.e., challenges, meals, and night times) that contained product placements in the Vietnamese version were selected to be legitimate and are used to compare between the two versions of *2 Days 1 Night* (see Appendix A). However, only the scenes that executed integrated placements using both visual and audio aspects would be included in the MCDA process. This type of scene was deemed to be important because it allows the researcher to dive into details from both textual and visual perspectives, hence paving ways to address the topic in question. Additionally, episode 7 from the Vietnamese version and episode 136 from the Korean version were excluded from further analyses because the former did not have any

scenes with integrated placements, while the latter episode was not available on the KBS World TV YouTube channel. This exclusion has brought the total number of episodes down to nine episodes per program. An overview of selected scenes from each country, alongside with episodes' details, and date of publication can be found in Appendix A. As the duration of each episode is between 80-110 minutes, the total amount of screen time is around 28 hours, however, the total length of the selected scenes takes up to 81 minutes for the Vietnamese version and 98 minutes for the Korean version. Lastly, the process of data collection would only be focusing on scenes that include product placements, while disregarding any brand exposure elements, such as footer banners, full-screen panels, and logo rotations because these ads are not verified as embedded and integrated contents. Therefore, such brand exposure elements do not have impacts on the content of the program directly but rather as filters on top of the program itself. The chosen data can be accessed through YouTube for both versions, where Đông Tây Promotion Official channel published the Vietnamese version of the format, while KBS World TV channel (n.d.) published the Korean version with English subtitles.

3.2 Setting up the analysis

The process of analysis was established based on the existing knowledge about product placement, namely implicit product placement, integrated explicit product placement, and non-integrated explicit product placement, as well as the visual and plot dimensions of product placements (Babacan, et al., 2012; D'Astous & Serguin, 1999; Russell, 1998). These types of product placement and dimensions, as mentioned in the theoretical chapter, have been applied to identify and analyze television programs in different studies previously. Hence, they will be the main elements that this research pays attention to during the analysis process (see Table 1). During the analysis process, these product placements help to identify the specific scenes that included product placements, hence contributing to the cross-country analysis process and further explaining found differences in contents between versions of *2 Days 1 Night*. An overview of the product placement analysis can be found in Appendix B, where details about each presented brand can be found, alongside with the estimated durations of each product placement per episode, and how product placements were presented.

Table 1: Types of product placements according to D'Astous & Serguin (1999)

| Types of Product Placement (PPLs) | Definitions | Examples | Example from program |
|-----------------------------------|--|--|---|
| Implicit | Where brand, firm, or product is present in a program in a contextual and passive role | Presence of logos and/or brand names/products without a clear expression | Lifebuoy hand soaps present in the screen |
| Integrated explicit | Where brand or product is expressed explicitly and actively | Presence of brands' products and its benefits for users | Actor demonstrates on how and/or why one should use Lifebuoy hand soaps |
| Non-integrated explicit | Where brand or firm is presented but not integrated into the content | Presence of brands' colors, logos through clothing, stage, etc. | Lifebuoy's color on travel size sanitizer accessory |

3.3 Data analysis

When applying MCDA as the main method of analysis, it has enabled this research to bridge the connection between visual and textual data because this method is designed to bring these two aspects into the same conversation.

Textual analysis contains five different tools that researchers can follow to study the collected data, in which includes connotations, overlexicalization, suppression, structural oppositions, and lexical choices (Hall, et al., 2013; Machin & Mayr, 2012). This textual analysis was conducted to study verbal texts and visual elements in both versions of *2 Days 1 Night*. Firstly, according to Hall and colleagues (2013), *connotations* stressed on the symbolic meanings that visual and textual data carry – the meanings that can be decoded and are linked to culture, knowledge, and history of the intended audiences. When looking at visual elements of data, the tool of *connotation* is also known as *iconography*, where the underlying meanings of something can be depicted through the ways in which literal meanings were used (Machine & Mayr, 2012). Throughout this study, the connotations-denotations are reflected through the scripts, as well as the clothing that is visible within the data. For instance, the connotation of cast wearing high school uniforms is to reflect on the trip's topic of "School

trip", while the denotation is to bring back the nostalgias that the location gives off, as well as the loyalty that classmates have with one another.

Secondly, the tool *overlexicalization* looks into evidence for persuasion: when is something expressed in a persuasive manner? Persuasion could be used to deliver an ideological message by using several synonyms of particular words/terms (Machin & Mayr, 2012). In this study, repetitions of words are examined carefully. For instance, Lifebuoy Vietnam created a tagline phrase of "Lifebuoy chua, Lifebuoy đi!" or "You haven't used Lifebuoy? You should use Lifebuoy!" to (1) associate the brand with hygiene, while (2) persuading audiences to consume this brand more.

Thirdly, *suppression* is completely opposite from the previous tool of analysis, where the expected terms are missing, which leads to an absence of lexical discourse (Machin & Mayr, 2012). Throughout the analysis, *suppression* in product placements can be surfaced when the words that are used to promote a product are not addressed directly. For instance, the brand Pond's promotes for a new product within *2 Days 1 Night* Vietnam without using words that are directly linked to promoting.

Fourthly, in terms of *structural oppositions*, opposing concepts contain their own meanings while implying the elements of their oppositions within the same storyline – meaning that two opposite sides of a story or image can be understood without being overly stated through lexical choices (Machin & Mayr, 2012). In the case of product placements in *2 Days 1 Night* Vietnam, this could refer to the ways in which brands are presented through i.e., clean-dirty dichotomies in laundry detergents advertisement.

Fifthly, the tool of *lexical choices* can be seen as a way in which levels of authority with audiences are presented using language – brands can easily optimize this tool to attempt to claim power over audiences using persuasions (Machin & Mayr, 2012). For instance, *2 Days 1 Night* casted celebrities for the program as a way to create higher credibility for the program, or to promote certain sponsored products (in the Vietnam case) due to their reputations (Brennen, 2021).

To analyze visual aspects of the collected data, this research employed an additional three tools: *attributes*, *settings*, and *salience*. *Attributes* involve in the presentations of objects and the ways in which its ideas/values are delivered (Machin & Mayr, 2012). This step paid extra attention to sponsored objects (in the Vietnam case), as well as the ways in which the program's casts are dressed and behaved. The tool of *settings* allows the researcher to analyze the physical surroundings of the filming set and its connotations, by focusing on the space, lighting, public, and gaze (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006; Machin and Mayr, 2012). Lastly,

salience highlights certain values and elements that would catch audiences' attention, either through colors, size, or cultural symbols (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006; Machin and Mayr, 2012).

The analysis of MCDA was recorded manually using an Excel sheet to overview the data and the analysis process in the most efficient ways. All of the aforementioned tools were executed carefully through an in-depth analysis of *2 Days 1 Night* contents as they helped pinpoint similarities and differences in the content of each version, hence answering the proposed research question.

3.4 Trustworthiness

According to Silverman (2011), trustworthiness in qualitative research can be achieved and increased by having consistency while following a standardized procedure of collecting and analyzing data. Besides, trustworthiness (also known as reliability) in qualitative research concerns the aspects of transparency, reflexivity, and credibility of data (Silverman, 2011; Brennen, 2021). According to Brennen (2021), reflexivity refers to the researcher's position throughout the process of data collection and analysis, where the researcher's interpretations could impact the meanings of certain findings. Within this research, the aspect of reflexivity was limited to manual search on YouTube using a private browser, where personalized contents and history searches are untraceable. As the episodes of *2 Days 1 Night* can be seen as secondary data, the researcher was able to remain subjective when approaching such data because the data is preexisting prior to this study (Clark, 2013).

Moreover, the process of analysis was completed using (1) the official subtitles provided by the KBS World YouTube channel (for the Korean version), as well as (2) the cultural knowledge that the researcher has on the Korean version. When combining these aspects, the transparency of this study is secured through the strict procedure of collecting and analyzing data, which prevents certain biases from happening. Additionally, this research provides further transparency through the ways in which collected data were stored, kept, and analyzed – an overview of data can be found in Appendix A. The way data was stored, kept, and analyzed showed that this study followed a strict procedure that can be repeated and applied to similar studies, regardless of *how 2 Days 1 Night* is a TV show that has been broadcasted to millions of people.

Lastly, the strategy of triangulation was also applied to further ensure this study's credibility. Specifically, triangulation is often used in qualitative studies as a way to measure reliability by addressing and observing the research topic from (at least two) perspectives

(Flick et al., 2004; Silverman, 2011). In this research, triangulation of methodology – meaning the application of multiple methods (Flick et al., 2004) – was used through the ways in which multimodal critical discourse analysis (MCDA) addressed the data from both visual and textual perspectives. By applying different approaches to the analysis process, the validity of qualitative findings is established (Silverman, 2011). Furthermore, the current study is executed using tools of MCDA compiled by different authors, such as Machin and Mayr (2012), Hall and colleagues (2013), and Kress and van Leeuwen (2006). Thereby, triangulation allows the results to be cross-examined while supporting the analysis to be done in thorough manner.

4. Results: Over-plantations of (hidden) placements in a hard format

After applying the textual and visual tools to the analysis of *2 Days 1 Night*'s selected scenes, six main themes were extracted from the case of Vietnam and 4 main themes were found in the case of South Korea. It is obvious that *2 Days 1 Night Vietnam* is a hard adapted format, when adapted from the Korean version. For example, the number of celebrities in the casts was similar (Vietnam has 6 cast members while Korea has 5 cast members), the challenges they completed were also similar, the ways in which humor is included (through banters) were similar, and the ways contents were filmed were also almost identical to one another. Both versions of the program are also deemed to be successful nationwide. In specific, the *2 Days 1 Night* Korea season 4 rating is between 7% and 16%, with the program itself being in the top 1 in the variety program category on Sunday in Korea (AllKpop, 2022; Kbizoom, 2023b). In Vietnam, the adapted version of *2 Days 1 Night* also received a lot of attention from audiences, with over 1 billion views on various streaming platforms (including its YouTube channel) after the launch of the first season (Nguyen, 2022).

With that being said, both versions of *2 Days 1 Night* shared a few of the main themes are overlapped with one another. The main themes that overlapped between the Korean and the Vietnamese versions are: *Highlighting local delicacies*; *Emphasis on traditions*; and *Interactions with locals*. Firstly, *Highlighting local delicacies* stresses the introduction to the dishes that are unique to a region and are hard to find in others. Secondly, *Emphasis on traditions* focuses on how traditional clothes and cultures are highlighted, respected, and reflected by nostalgia. Lastly, *Interactions with locals* highlights the interaction between cast members and locals were highlighted through challenges.

Additionally, the analysis also revealed that the practices of product placements did alter the content of the adapted version of the program. Specifically, three main themes regarding product placements were found, including *Branded products as incentives* (branded products were given to the public guests as incentives after joining in challenges) and *Rewriting casts' reputations as trustworthy celebrities* (Guest cast members demonstrating a branded product that is considered to be going 'hand-in-hand' with the scenarios to audiences in different scenarios as a persuasion tactic). Through these patterns, product placement was proven to be diverse in variations and could be displayed as "natural" as Russell and Belch (2005) mentioned.

It is also important to recognize that the original version of the program consists of the theme of *Emphasis on cast-production team relationships*, which was missing in the adapted version and is worth mentioning as it can be explained through content alterations

due to product placement. In this chapter, the main themes are explained in detail using examples from both textual and visual cues, as well as the meanings of each theme and variations in some cases. The overviews of the main themes are provided in Appendix C (Korea) and Appendix D (Vietnam).

4.1 Similarities between Vietnam and South Korea

As noted, the two versions of *2 Days 1 Night* shared three themes: *Highlighting local delicacies*, *Emphasis on traditions*, and *Interactions with locals*. The similarities between the two versions can also be explained through cultural proximity. Additionally, the three types of product placements that were mentioned in the theoretical chapter, including implicit and non-integrated explicit (D'Astous & Serguin, 1999) and screen placement (Russell, 1998), occurred throughout these themes in the adapted version from Vietnam. Coming from East Asia and Southeast Asia, Vietnam and Korea have a lot of cultural similarities, of which some of them are reflected through the shows. Examples of such similarities are the senses of humor, lexical choices, and mannerism. However, it is important to mention that although the case studies shared certain patterns, differences in executions occurred and remained relevant to this research as they allow more in-depth investigations into differences in contents. Besides, it is vital to know and understand these similarities between the two versions of the program as they assist the process of pinpointing how product placements alter the contents of the adapted version from Vietnam. These similarities can be further explained through the three themes that both versions of the program shared.

4.1.1 *Highlight of local delicacies*

Since the main purpose of the show was to introduce new locations and delicacies to audiences, *2 Days 1 Night* focused lots of its screen time on the dishes that each location had to offer. This pattern of *Highlighting local delicacies* stressed the ways in which unique dishes are introduced, and how they are difficult to find in other places. In the case of Korea, local delicacies were presented to be very appealing to audiences visually. Specifically, every mealtime scene started with the dishes being introduced individually using the filming technique of forefront prominent shots with full-screen display. These prominent shots allow audiences to see the dishes individually better and, in more detail, while having the dishes on full-screen display also brings the food to life and potentially increases audiences' cravings and desires toward the meal.

Additionally, the ways in which casts enjoy the dishes were also expressive using non-verbal cues and verbal suppressions. For instance, a Korean cast mentioned in episode 137 that the cockle "taste like I just got it from the mud flat", or in episode 129 that the abalone "[this] tastes like when the ocean is boiled" to indicate the freshness of the meal he was having (see Figure 1). Meanwhile, this cast member's non-verbal cues reflected on his appreciation and enjoyment of the meal, such as raising brows with wide eyes open, and lightly smiling while chewing. On top of that, the Korean production team also edited exploding-hearts filters on casts' faces whenever they seem to be enjoying the delicacies to further showcase (1) the deliciousness of the food and (2) to convince audiences about a potential holiday location that has great dishes (see Figure 1). Generally, the original version of *2 Days 1 Night* focused on food the most, and by having one of the casts being the "food king" or food expert of the team, this program has been able to be the travel and food guide for audiences.



Figure 1: *2 Days 1 Night* Korean edits for mealtime scenes of exploding hearts (left) and illustrative (right) – derived from KBS World YouTube channel

Similarly, in the case of Vietnam, local delicacies were also presented in ways that would be visually appealing to audiences, especially through filming and display techniques. However, the ways in which linguistic and textual elements are used were different from the original version. Within this pattern of *Highlight of local delicacies*, the Vietnamese version of *2 Days 1 Night* revealed two different variations, including *Food with professionals* and *Food between casts*. These variations repeatedly resurfaced throughout the analysis, where the local dishes would be introduced verbally either through personal knowledge of the casts (similar to Korean's version of "food king") or via a third party of professional cooks/chefs. The difference between these variations was pinpointed through lexical choices and way of speaking.

On one hand, *Food between casts* depicts that the Vietnamese casts would speak informally with one another when suggesting a way of enjoying the dishes, and others would imitate and show non-verbal cues of agreement (i.e., nodding heads). For instance, in episode

1 a participant mentioned "I know how to roll very well, I can roll for you!" after he saw his fellow cast member struggling to make a hand-rolled roll. Since making hand-rolled rolls is considered a difficult state-of-the-art task in certain regions in Vietnam, such gesture reveals the close-knit relationships between casts, as well as to educate audiences on the dishes and all the how-tos. Visually, it is very visible to find Lifebuoy's sanitizer bottles at the corner of the table (see Figure 2). According to D'Astous and Serguin (1999), this is the type of implicit product placement. Such placements were applied in various mealtime scenes throughout the program.

On the other hand, *Food with professionals* represents how the adapted version of the program invited professional cooks/chefs to join the mealtime scenes to explain further on the dishes' origins, meanings, and how to appreciate the delicacies in the best ways possible. For instance, episode 8 invited two professional royal cooks to the show, where they prepared the royal-replicate dishes for the casts and explained to them the meanings of these delicacies that "the art of Hue royal's delicacies lays in the between the structures of colors using all your senses, as well as the best ingredients available". These royal cooks also shared with the program the origins of the dishes that directly link back to Vietnam's history when they mentioned: "meals like these were organized by the monarchs to treat and celebrate the newly doctorate graduates". Similar to the previous variation, this variation also included the implicit type of product placement (D'Astous & Serguin, 1999) and screen placement (Russell, 1998). Within the scenes, the branded product remained subtle yet visible to audiences, especially where the casts dine (see Figure 2).



Figure 2: Screenshots of Lifebuoy's placements during mealtime scenes of episode 1 (left) and episode 8 (right) – derived from Dong Tay Promotion YouTube channel

In short, regardless of a few differences in execution, both versions of *2 Days 1 Night* seemed to pay extensive focus on local delicacies by putting efforts into explaining and introducing the dishes using linguistic elements, while allowing the audiences to experience the delicacies second-handedly by appealing visual details. However, although the Vietnamese version is the hard adapted format (van Keulen, 2016), and the two versions

shared some similarities, different types of product placement that were mentioned in D'Astous and Serguin (1999) and Russell (1998) occurred consistently in the Vietnamese version of *2 Days 1 Night*, making the content of the adapted version different from the original version, without placements, from Korea. The subtleness of product placements in this theme introduced one of the ways that the Vietnamese version of *2 Days 1 Night* situated such practice, while unveiling how these subtle applications can go unnoticed easily, yet still have positive impacts on viewers due to its repetition (Homer, 2009).

4.1.2 Interaction with locals

This theme was extracted from the analysis based on the interactions that casts have with locals or the publics throughout the programs. Specifically, these interactions often happen within different challenges that casts had to complete, where the public was part of the missions. Although both versions of the program shared this theme with one another, various linguistic and visual aspects were noted to further compare the two versions of *2 Days 1 Night* and to pinpoint any potential differences within the theme. In terms of similarities, all of the casts from both versions communicate with each other informally, while remaining professional or using formal tones when speaking to the public/locals who joined in on a scene. This similarity can be explained and understood through linguistic politeness that is influenced by the Chinese culture and has had impacts on many (South) East Asian countries (Lee, 2020). In media contents, being polite and remaining formal in linguistic communication, especially from a format program, can increase sympathy from consumers as it reflects on audiences' socio-cultural surroundings and proximities (Straubhaar, 2021) – which in turns improves the likeliness that audiences would enjoy the program and continue to support it. By keeping the tone formal and respectful, the casts can therefore create positive impressions about themselves while expressing their respect toward the public/locals within the programs and toward the audiences who view it.

Furthermore, politeness, respect, honor, and positive impressions can also occur in non-verbal cues and visual aspects. In Asian cultures, including Korean and Vietnamese, people show respect to others through bows or slightly bending over or using both hands to receive something (Lee, 2020). For instance, the Korean casts had to play a guessing game with local elderly women who are also divers in Jeju Island in episode 130, where formal linguistic communication means were applied, and the casts were bowing to the elderly women when they entered the room. In the adapted version of *2 Days 1 Night*, the casts also applied a similar way of communication when interacting with people from Kon Tum, and

the action of bowing to others occurred at the end of the scene as a way to show respect and appreciation. This interaction with the people from Kon Tum also revealed gifting incentives as a form of showing respect (see section 4.2.2), where the type implicit of product placements (D'Astous and Serguin, 1999) occurred in the gifts and were visible on screen (see Figure 3). This placement also fits the definition of screen and script placements by Russell (1998).



Figure 3: Cast members showing acts of politeness through branded products and traditional clothes – derived from Dong Tay Promotion YouTube channel

4.1.3 Emphasis on traditions

The last similarity that both versions of *2 Days 1 Night* share is through the theme of *Emphasis on traditions*. This theme stresses on the visual aspects that occurred within the programs, specifically through clothing and the ways in which casts feel about the garments. In various episodes, the casts of both versions of the program would dress accordingly to either the location of the trip, or the trip's theme. For instance, the Korean casts were wearing high school uniforms in episode 133 because the theme of the trip was “school trip loyalty” and that they were visiting the mountain called Beopjusa – a famous school trip location for many Koreans. In the case of *2 Days 1 Night* Vietnam, the Vietnamese casts wore the traditional shirts of the Degar people – a minor ethnicity in Vietnam – in episode 6 as they were traveling through Kon Tum with the theme relating to brotherhood. Similar to the variation of *Interaction with locals*, this variation showcased how the programs tried to connect with their audiences through cultural proximity by creating meaningful themes and garments using both linguistic and visual elements. By having casts dressed in certain clothing pieces, for example, high school uniforms, many Korean audiences would be able to relate to the theme or feel nostalgic when watching the episode. Likewise, the Vietnamese audiences – especially those coming from minor ethnicities – would find comfort in watching a program that highlighted and honored their cultures while emphasizing on national

traditions (see Figure 3). To intensify the cultural closeness between the contents and audiences, the casts from both versions also expressed themselves verbally by repeating terms like "we are so honored" or "this is so beautiful" in the case of Vietnam, and "wow I feel so old wearing this" or "this [uniform] reminds me of my own school trips" in the case of Korea.

Additionally, this theme also highlights the ways in which both versions of the program embraced their culture explicitly – besides from clothing garments. Specifically, in many episodes, the activities often happen on the floor or close to the floor. For instance, the casts played guessing games with elder women from Jeju Island while sitting on the floor in episode 130; or that the casts were sitting on the floor of the restaurant in episode 133; the casts also sleep on the floor (episodes 130 and 132). In contrast, the Vietnamese version showcases casts doing different activities off the floor (i.e., sleeping in bed, eating at a high dining table). This element of culture is heavily embedded in Korean society and is known from the ondol heating technique, where the house relies on underground heating before the availability of conduction heating (My Korean Addiction, 2022). Due to the heating method, many Koreans prefer to do activities closer to the floor to stay warm. In the case of Vietnam, traditions were showcased through different challenges and trips' locations. For instance, the trip to Hue (episodes 7-9) involved many challenges that were related to the country's history through visiting points, music, and food, to highlight different national identities.

At first glance, it seems that the three shared themes from both versions of *2 Days 1 Night* are not relevant to the proposed research question. However, these themes revealed that although the Vietnamese version (with product placements) is a hard-adapted format, where the program's structures and cultures are similar to the original version from Korea, the ways in which product placements were included were very subtle and 'natural', with the intentions of promoting the branded products to audiences unconsciously. This finding is in line with Gupta and Lord's (1998) study between prominent and subtle placements, as well as Russell and Belch's (2005) study on how practitioners (such as advertisers) would avoid oversaturating product placements when creating contents for a program. With that being said, the shared themes between case studies explained that product placements could be inserted in ways that are more subtle and less explicit to viewers. In this study, these shared themes and findings also equate to the small impacts that product placements have on the contents of the program while acting as the foundations for more prominent placements to be included.

4.2 Product placement patterns from *2 Days 1 Night Vietnam*

Aside from numbers of similarities between the two versions of *2 Days 1 Night*, this paper also pinpointed the differences that occurred due to the involvement of product placement within the Vietnamese version. There are two main patterns that are connected to the application of product placements that would be further explained in this section, and the ways in which the contents changed compared to the original version from Korea. These main patterns resurfaced throughout the analysis and hence became important to mention here as they revealed several product placement tactics that can be seen as 'natural' to some audiences – which Russell and Belch (2005) mentioned to be practitioners' initial intentions when planning such tactics. Additionally, these patterns of product placements would reflect on the type of integrated explicit product placement (D'Astous & Serguin, 1999), alongside with Russell's (1998) script and plot placements, as they are more likely to impact the contents directly, as aforementioned in the Data collection section.

4.2.1 *Rewrite casts' reputations as trustworthy celebrities*

This pattern of *Rewrite casts' reputations as trustworthy celebrities* reoccurred the most often in *2 Days 1 Night Vietnam*. The pattern depicts the ways in which (guest) casts were the main means to deliver a branded message or to carry out product placement practices. As the casts of the program are celebrities, their reputations are often seen as worthy by audiences (Brennen, 2021). In return, it would be easier for marketing and advertising practitioners to take advantage of the casts for endorsements and as a tool to persuade audiences more easily. Within this pattern, there are different variations of how celebrities were the main mean of communication when it comes to applications of product placements. These variations were identified according to the topics or scenarios that were created within the program, including *Hygiene*, *Skincare*, *Laundry*, and *Advice*. It is also important to note that a few of the scenarios seemed to be purely for and about advertisement, meaning that the control that brands had over the program's content is profound.

Amongst the variations of the main pattern, *Hygiene* was the variation that was built to be a part of the mealtime scenes, where integrated explicit product placements (D'Astous & Serguin, 1999) and script placement (Russell, 1998) were presented in the scene through Lifebuoy's sanitizers. Specifically, the program's contents made it easier for audiences to acknowledge the existence of the branded product, namely Lifebuoy's sanitizers, by placing the products visually nearby the delicacies in most of the mealtime scenes. To further

intensify audiences' awareness on such product placement, other linguistical and visual elements were also included. For instance, the casts would say to each other "Have you used Lifebuoy? You should use Lifebuoy!" tagline – the brand's official slogan for promotion – while sharing the sanitizer bottles around the dining table, the action of using the sanitizer was focused and on full-screen display (see Figure 4). This particular scene can be interpreted in different ways, which include (1) the program tries to educate audiences about general hygiene knowledge, (2) the program tries to advertise the branded product, and (3) the brand tries to persuade audiences into consuming such product in their daily lives. In addition, such scenes of casts talking about hygiene and mentioning the brand's tagline are followed right after the main objects of the night – local delicacies – were introduced. In other words, the mealtime scenes and Lifebuoy's product placements scenes were a duo within *2 Days 1 Night* Vietnam. And this means that product placements can be designed in such ways that would interfere with the program's content visually, but also verbally through the use of scripts – aligning with Russell's (1998) definition of script placements.



Figure 4: Casts use and share Lifebuoy's product while saying the brand's tagline – derived from Dong Tay Promotion YouTube channel

Similar to the *Hygiene* variation, *Skincare* and *Laundry* were deemed to be associated with nighttime scenes. However, these two variations tend to be presented individually using scenarios-like scenes – these scenes did not occur in the Korean version, but rather an add-in from the Vietnamese version. In specific, the scenes that were intended to focus on laundry time and skincare time were not parts of the program's contents itself. Rather, these scenes focused on showcasing to audiences the ways in which certain branded products were used,

as well as the almost instant effects that these branded products had. Precisely, the *Skincare* variation depicts on Pond's skincare products, including cleanser and serum, as well as how the brand was highlighted throughout the analyzed scenes. For instance, a cast had to do skincare after finishing a challenge where he got soot – the residue of charcoals and pots – covered his face in episode 6. Within this scenario, both linguistic and visual elements were applied, from prominent shots of the cleanser to the action of washing one's face (see Figure 5), to the cast's comment "if I don't wash my face now, I will be left behind with some damages, luckily I brought Pond's [...]" . Scenarios similar like this resurfaced throughout the program's nighttime scenes.



Figure 5: Cast cleaning his face using a branded product – derived from Dong Tay Promotion YouTube channel

Similarly, the variation of *Laundry* focuses on highlighting a brand called OMO, including its laundry powders. Throughout the selected scenes, this variation was displayed in similar ways to the variation of *Skincare*, where a cast (or more) would perform the activity of doing laundry in order to promote the brand and its branded product. For instance, also in episode 6, the scenario of a cast hand-washing a dirty shirt was presented right before the scene of the *Skincare* variation, with both linguistic and visual elements included. This Laundry scenario showcased that the shirt got dirty after the tug-of-war challenge, and OMO's laundry powder was presented as the issue solver through prominent and focused shots of the product, as well as cast's comment after he finished washing the shirt "isn't it magic? The shirt is now clean and smells amazing!" (see Figure 6). These scenarios allow the brands to insert product placements into the program without having to alter the contents, yet such scenarios revealed brands' intentions to expose branded products to audiences directly.

Amongst scenes that are in the *Skincare* and *Laundry* variations, the most visible pattern was the scenes' compatibility towards Vietnamese suburban lifestyles – from washing clothes to cleansing faces outdoors, as depicted in Figures 5 and 6 – these scenes are perfect examples of product placements as persuasion tactics that targeted suburban/lower class

audiences who are not aware of the intentions of the placements – or as what Boerman and colleagues (2012) mentioned as lack of persuasion knowledge. Therefore, these variations portrayed product placements as a part of the production of culture very well by creating ads-like scenes that are relatable and relevant to certain groups of target audiences. Moreover, the scenarios ads-like scenes also unveiled the involvements and the impacts of product placements in *2 Days 1 Night* Vietnam's contents by plotting scenes that are only dedicated towards the brands – Russell (1998) called such scenes plot placements.



Figure 6: Cast hand-washing shirt with OMO – derived from Dong Tay Promotion YouTube channel

The last variation within this main pattern is called *Advice*. The variation of *Advice* highlights celebrities as a trustworthy source for information, in this case is branded products within the program. When compared to other variations, *Advice* does not play a big role in answering the research question, however, it is important to mention this pattern as it mirrors the brand's involvement in the progress of altering the program's contents through product placements. In specific, this variation surfaced mostly based on the linguistic elements, more than its visual counterparts, focusing on the script of the (guest) casts and the ways in which they communicated with the public, which in turn revealed the main sponsor of the scene and/or episode through Russell's (1998) script placements. For instance, episode 3 showcased itself to be sponsored by Pond's – a skincare brand – by having a female guest cast speaking about her skincare tips to female university students, in which she said "the job I have [as an actress] requires lots of mobility, hence the easiest way is to use [Pond's] serum 2-3 times a day to keep my skin fresh and lively, so you should also try it tonight" (see Figure 7). As mentioned before, celebrities can have a huge impact on influencing audiences, as their reputations are high in public eyes, hence what they say can be tremendously influential (Brennen, 2021). When brands like Pond's take advantages of celebrity endorsement within programs like *2 Days 1 Night*, the brand and its products will receive more exposure. This shows that the trustworthiness of the celebrities seems important and is capitalized on by the

brands/sponsors. When viewing this scene from a visual perspective, the brand presented itself through an expressive of color (pink), from prominent shots of the stage's background to guests' outfits (see Figure 7).



Figure 7: Pond's product placements through stage (left), outfits (right) and endorsement (center) – derived from Dong Tay Promotion YouTube channel

When viewing all of these variations together, it is clear that the pattern of *Rewrite casts' reputations as trustworthy celebrities* play an important role in defining the ways in which contents are altered in *2 Days 1 Night* Vietnam, as well as how product placements can be applied differently in the program's content – ranking from low involvements (branded products on dining tables) to high involvements (verbal usage of brand's names, tagline, via endorsements). When comparing these findings to the Korean version, the differences between layers of product placement's involvements are translated to how this practice is heavily embedded in the adapted version, which in turn impacts the contents of the program.

4.2.2 Branded products as incentives

This pattern was occurring amongst the data because it did not only depict the role that product placements play, but also how branded products were used as modes of showing respect and appreciation to the public. This pattern was discovered through both linguistic and visual elements, however visual elements were more outstanding. Additionally, since it is important for one to show others their respect in different Asian cultures, this adapted version of *2 Days 1 Night* showed that Vietnamese show respect through actions, like bowing to

others or using both hands when taking/receiving things, as well as through incentives (see Figure 3). For instance, female university students who participated in the guessing games in episode 3 were given a bag of Pond's products with serums inside. This act of gifting incentives was later boosted as product placements when a female guest cast 'shared her skincare tips' – as mentioned in the previous pattern. In addition, those who joined in the tug-of-war challenge in episode 6 were receiving gift bags filled with branded products from the program, and the logos of these products were facing the cameras and can be spotted easily due to its prominence (see Figure 8). When logos of brands are being presented prominently on screens, it is considered a practice of product placements (Babacan, et al., 2012), and therefore increases exposure for both the brands and the branded products. This finding explains that the ways in which product placement impact *2 Days 1 Night* Vietnam are varied in executions and display and have vast impacts on the contents of the program. With that being said, using branded products as incentives in the case of *2 Days 1 Night* Vietnam would be seen as product placements first and as an act of appreciation second.



Figure 8: Branded incentives from *2 Days 1 Night* Vietnam to local participants – derived from Dong Tay Promotion YouTube channel

Additionally, from the laws and regulations point of view, *2 Days 1 Night* Vietnam followed all requirements on the Advertising Law, from durations per episode (see Appendix A) to brand's font sizes within a program (see Figure 7). The contents of this adapted version were executed by Đông Tây Promotion publishing house, which followed the Vietnamese government's regulation on how international format has to be produced by a domestic publishing entity (Ministry of Information and Communications, 2012). Since *2 Days 1 Night* Vietnam is published and broadcasted, it means that the government has approved the contents beforehand (Ministry of Information and Communications, 2012). However, when it comes to Article 16 of the Advertising law regarding audiences' right to refuse ads (Vietnam Government, 2012), it is questionable for the contents to contain ads-like scenes, as suggested

in Skincare and Laundry variations, because audiences cannot refuse and/or avoid these scenes.

4.3 Additional pattern from *2 Days 1 Night* Korea

Aside from the shared patterns with the case of the adapted version of the program, the original version of *2 Days 1 Night* revealed a unique pattern that was not adapted in the Vietnamese version. Specifically, this pattern is called *Emphasis on relationships between casts and the production team*, and it depicts on the close-knitted and caring relationships between the casts and the production team that are often carried out and expressed in nighttime scenes. Such reoccurring relationships can be explained through the Broadcasting Act for South Korean broadcasting organizations, where it is a requirement for broadcasters to deliver contents that promote harmony in the citizen bodies (see section 2.4.2). In the case of *2 Days 1 Night* Korea, the harmonious atmosphere was delivered through close-knitted relationships between the casts and the production teams.

Within this pattern, different linguistic and visual elements were gathered in order to make sense of "close-knitted" relationships. For instance, the nighttime scenes would often happen with the production team briefing the next day's schedule to the casts (episode 134), or that the casts would have to complete a challenge during the nighttime scenes and/or their sleeping times (episode 132). Throughout these nighttime scenes, linguistic elements that are related to "close-knitted" relationships were occurring based on what the casts said, such as "Goodnight, everyone!" and "Good job, everyone" in various episodes (i.e., 130, 132, 134).

In terms of visual elements, these nighttime scenes are often focusing on the casts in bedroom settings, while wearing pajamas and chatting with one another. In episode 132, the casts also revealed to be playful during nighttime scenes due to a challenge where they have to draw on each other's faces, especially those that fall asleep. This challenge showed that the casts have close relationships with one another, while unveiling their informal and playful sides to audiences. At the end of the scenes, the camera would be zooming into the dark blue sky, hinting that bedtime was approaching. By exchanging these phrases with each other and with the production team while showing playful nighttime scenes, the program was able to portray itself as a family-friendly program that expressed intimacy explicitly through the use of appreciative language. Creating more intimacy between casts and the production team, therefore, also allows the program to connect with audiences through a caring personality.

It is important to know this finding from the original version of the *2 Days 1 Night* program because it allows the researcher to see the differences between the two versions more clearly. Furthermore, the "close-knitted" relationship in the original version also shows

how the Vietnamese version has sacrificed such details in the adapted version, in replacements of ads-like scenarios and focused more on brands and branded products. This sacrifice also unveils the adapted version's willingness to lose the (family-)friendly atmosphere to get the advertising atmosphere instead.

5. Conclusion

As this research set out to answer the research question of *How does product placement impact the Vietnamese adaptation of the Korean series 2 Days 1 Night?*, different aspects of product placements were unfolded using the MCDA method for analyses. When reviewing all of the patterns and variations found between the two case studies, the impacts that product placements have on the adapted version of the program have been unfolded and answered the research question. When comparing between the selected scenes from both versions of *2 Days 1 Night*, most scenes regarding local delicacies, traditions, and people were filmed similarly, with different cultural elements being adapted appropriately according to the countries. However, the contents of the adapted version from Vietnam were indeed altered in the selected scenes due to the involvements of product placements and various brands. When comparing all of the found themes with one another, it is clear that the usage of product placements intensifies over time – from simple and subtle placement (Gupta & Lord, 1998) to complicated combinations of plot placement (Russell, 1998) with integrated visual, audio (D'Astous & Serguin, 1999), and celebrity endorsement (Brennen, 2021) aspects. For instance, local delicacies are the highlights of mealtime scenes in both versions, yet the adapted version showcased that local delicacies should be supported by good hygiene and the brand Lifebuoy. Although the product placements did not take away the main star of the scene, these placements still allowed brands to get more exposure, and the scenes are added scenes at the cost of the personal touch of the original version.

In some cases, certain practices of product placements can be associated with being a part of the culture in the adapted version of the program, specifically through the pattern of *Branded products as incentives*. When comparing to the Korean version of *2 Days 1 Night*, the appreciation from the casts towards the public was presented differently, due to the involvement of product placements, regardless of cultural similarities between Vietnam and Korea. As product placements were used as a part of the production of culture in such format program, this marketing and advertising practice indeed should be included in the production of culture, as mentioned in the Theoretical Framework chapter, and should be portrayed as a socio-cultural element within the culture production.

Furthermore, the inclusion of product placements also caused the contents of the adapted version of the program to be less personal to viewers by excluding the nighttime scenes that revealed personal relationships between casts and the production team. More specific, when reviewing the nighttime contents between case studies, the Vietnamese version tends to present ads-like scenes with obvious applications of integrated product

placement while the original version of the program focused more on interpersonal relationships. These ads-like scenes were included within the program in replacement of scenes that reveal more intimacy between people, and they were out of context compared to the program as a whole, which then led *2 Days 1 Night* Vietnam to have less personality and less of a friend. Product placement does have an impact on this, yet we have to investigate the production further in order to confirm this finding.

Generally, the findings of this research unveiled that although product placements can be "natural" when apply correctly, as Russell and Belch (2005) mentioned, the overuse of product placement can instead backfire on the outcomes. Additionally, when the scenes are out of context and completely focused on promoting a brand and its products, it is clear that the production team did not have complete control over the creation and production of product placements as van Reijmersdal and colleagues (2009) found in their study, especially as they sacrificed content to accommodate the brands. Asides from the conflicting information between researchers regarding the knowledge of product placements and its definitions and/or impacts, this research also found that product placement as a theory and practice should be included in the production of culture due to the ways in which such practices can be adapted according to a specific culture – for instance, hand-washing laundry on the floor is a normal way of living for people who reside in the suburban/countryside of Vietnam – which are aligned with Peterson and Anand's (2004) findings on how laws and regulations are different between countries, as well as how such scenes were intended to attract local audiences by keeping cultural proximity in mind during creation.

From the laws and regulations perspectives, it seems that the Vietnamese government is not as strict as the South Korean government when it comes to broadcasting and advertising (including product placements) governances. This is due to various differences in requirements, fines, or even purposes of the programs' contents.

Regardless of how brands veiled themselves to be having good intentions (such as good hygiene and skincare, and growing trees to help with afforestation), the number of product placements and ads within the Vietnamese adaptation of *2 Days 1 Night* have revealed otherwise. Specifically, brands' greediness surfaced when multiple different advertising and marketing applications were included within one scene. For instance, the tagline of Lifebuoy would be inserted in the casts' scripts, while one member uses Lifebuoy's product, aside from Lifebuoy's footer banner filter on the screen, in between scenes' full-screen panels, and rotations between the program's logo and Lifebuoy's logo. This bombardment of one brand (out of four that were in the program) shows how much brands try

to persuade audiences toward overconsumption using the program of 2 Days 1 Night. Therefore, it is important to raise the question of whether the program was meant to introduce Vietnam to audiences, as promoted? Or was it the program's purpose to overly-promote the brands through greenwashing?

5.1 Limitations and recommendations

This research set out to understand how product placements have altered the contents of the Vietnamese adaptation of the *2 Days 1 Night* program from Korea, where different elements of product placements were focused on throughout the process of analysis. As mentioned at the beginning of this research, in nature, product placements are often difficult to pinpoint due to its variety in types (see Babacan, et al., 2012) and the ways in which they were created and distributed within certain media products, such as TV-format programs (see Balasubramanian & Gistri, 2022; D'Astous & Berrada, 2011). Within this study, product placements were found in obvious scenes within the adapted version of the program, however, it is important to keep in mind that whether the original version of *2 Days 1 Night* had included any branded placements in its contents or not, is still in debate.

Although product placements were inserted heavily within the adapted version of *2 Days 1 Night*, the impacts that this practice had were not as strong as expected – this outcome would possibly be creating stronger impacts when including all elements of advertising and marketing within the program (such as footer banner, full-screen ads display, et cetera). Additionally, it is a limitation of this research for not focusing on audience studies. In order to know whether the combinations of different advertising and marketing applications work or not, and to what extent, researchers should consider this matter when interviewing audiences in future research.

Furthermore, on one hand, since this research focused on product placements' impacts on contents but not on audience behaviors, there is a lack of knowledge on the ways in which the findings would affect audiences' reactions toward the program and the occurred placements. Under the Advertising Law of the Vietnamese government, see theoretical chapter, it is unlawful for viewers to not be able to refuse and/or avoid ads when watching a program. In similar scenes where product placements are subtle, how ethical is it for audiences to watch and consume the contents unconsciously? And is it legal to do so?

On the other hand, this study also did not take into account the perspectives of the production teams behind TV format programs, and such perspectives are crucial to the conversation of product placements. With many studies focused on the voice of advertising

management personnel (see van Reijmersdal, et al., 2009; Russell & Belch, 2005), it is unfair to not acknowledge the production team's voices, especially when they are the ones that bring programs and placements to life. The findings of this research suggest there are indications toward brands overseeing product placements, and not vice versa as van Reijmersdal and colleagues (2009) mentioned. Therefore, such topics in question are related to the knowledge of product placement and are interesting for scholars to discover and expand in the future.

Lastly, it is crucial to mention the positionality of the researcher in this study. As a Vietnamese who researched Vietnamese and Korean contents, through the lens of product placements, I understood the Vietnamese version of *2 Days 1 Night* very well and was able to dissect all of the underlying meanings that were hidden in texts and visuals. In the case of Korea, my Korean is not as good as my Vietnamese, which has led to my dependence on the official translation that was available on KBS World's YouTube channel, as well as the available laws and regulations from South Korea when analyzing contents. Due to limited knowledge of culture and language barriers, it is possible that I have missed a few cultural-related details. For future research, it is recommended that scholars should investigate case studies that are both interesting and resonating with them (see van Keulen and Krijnen, 2014), linguistically and culturally, in order to avoid this limitation.

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Appendix A

Overview of selected scenes

| Vietnam | | | | South Korea | | | |
|---------|-----------|----------|------------------|-------------|-----------|----------|------------------|
| Episode | Scene | Duration | Publication date | Episode | Scene | Duration | Publication date |
| 1 | Mealtime | 0:09:25 | 19-Jun-2022 | 129 | Mealtime | 0:06:00 | 19-Jun-2022 |
| 2 | Nighttime | 0:01:30 | 26-Jun-2022 | 130 | Challenge | 0:12:30 | 26-Jun-2022 |
| 3 | Challenge | 0:09:00 | 7-Mar-2022 | 130 | Nighttime | 0:03:15 | 26-Jun-2022 |
| 3 | Mealtime | 0:05:00 | 7-Mar-2022 | 131 | Nighttime | 0:07:30 | 3-Jul-2022 |
| 4 | Nighttime | 0:02:00 | 7-Oct-2022 | 132 | Mealtime | 0:10:15 | 10-Jul-2022 |
| 5 | Mealtime | 0:08:35 | 17-Jul-2022 | 132 | Nighttime | 0:06:00 | 10-Jul-2022 |
| 6 | Challenge | 0:12:00 | 24-Jul-2022 | 133 | Challenge | 0:04:30 | 17-Jul-2022 |
| 6 | Nighttime | 0:01:00 | 24-Jul-2022 | 133 | Mealtime | 0:03:30 | 17-Jul-2022 |
| 6 | Nighttime | 0:01:00 | 24-Jul-2022 | 134 | Mealtime | 0:10:00 | 24-Jul-2022 |
| 8 | Mealtime | 0:09:00 | 8-Jul-2022 | 134 | Nighttime | 0:05:00 | 24-Jul-2022 |
| 8 | Nighttime | 0:01:00 | 8-Jul-2022 | 135 | Challenge | 0:09:00 | 31-Jul-2022 |
| 9 | Mealtime | 0:05:00 | 14-Aug-2022 | 137 | Mealtime | 0:06:30 | 14-Aug-2022 |
| 9 | Challenge | 0:10:00 | 14-Aug-2022 | 138 | Mealtime | 0:09:00 | 21-Aug-2022 |
| 10 | Mealtime | 0:06:00 | 21-Aug-2022 | 139 | Mealtime | 0:04:30 | 28-Aug-2022 |
| | | 1:20:30 | | | | 1:37:30 | |

Appendix B

Overview of Product Placement Analysis

| 2 Days 1 Night (2D1N) Vietnam season 1 - episode 1-10 | | | | |
|---|--------------------------------|---------------------------|---|---|
| Brand | Duration in total (rough est.) | Type of product placement | PPLs according to D'Astous & Serguin (1999) | Note (for analysis) |
| Episode One (19/06/2022) - link: https://youtu.be/T6uymZbt4eA | | | | |
| OMO | 0:00:00 | n/a | n/a | |
| Pond's | 0:00:00 | n/a | n/a | |
| Lifebuoy | 0:15:00 | Visual | non-integrated explicit | travel size lifebuoy sanitizer, in screen but subtle |
| | | | implicit | full size hand soaps were prominent in different scenes (both foreground and focused) |
| Wall's | 0:00:12 | Audio | integrated explicit | sanitizer before meal, slogan "lifebuoy chua, lifebuoy di"*, promoting hygiene |
| | 0:00:00 | | n/a | |
| Episode Two (26/06/2022) - link: https://youtu.be/spZV-B1rlZo | | | | |
| OMO | 0:00:00 | n/a | n/a | |
| Pond's | 0:00:28 | Visual+Audio | integrated explicit | scenario of a cast using skincare products after a long day of filming, on screen including steps of how to use the product, cast said slogan "sáng mịn sạch sâu"** |
| Lifebuoy | 0:00:10 | Visual | implicit | minute 14:20, handsoaps by the sink, on screen captions "cùng lifebuoy giữ đôi tay cho sạch nào" before dinner |
| | 0:01:00 | | integrated explicit | casts use handsoaps to wash their hands before dinner, on screen included steps of how to wash hands |
| Wall's | 0:00:00 | n/a | n/a | |
| Episode Three (03/07/2022) - link: https://youtu.be/ezh7rQaDoJ4 | | | | |
| OMO | 0:30:45 | Visual | non-integrated explicit | Omo's logo on shirts for everyone to play football |
| | 0:00:30 | | integrated explicit | one cast worried about shirt being dirty, another said "no worries, i'll wash it for you tonight using Omo" |
| Pond's | 0:10:00 | Visual | implicit | background of a temporary stage; games' rewards for public participants |
| | 0:02:48 | | integrated explicit | female guest shared her "tips for skincare routine" using pond's serum |
| Lifebuoy | 0:01:30 | Visual | non-integrated explicit | travel size sanitizers hang on personal bag in different scenes |
| | 0:00:30 | | integrated explicit | cast used slogan "lifebuoy chua, lifebuoy di" while using travel size sanitizer |
| Wall's | 0:04:00 | Visual | implicit | ice cream truck with umbrella in the background; display of different ice creams |
| | 0:01:00 | | integrated explicit | winning team of a challenge gets to eat ice creams; "this is mango ice cream" "omg it's like having real mangoes" "so delicious" |

Episode Four (10/07/2022) - link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BR11QO5k8ZA>

| | | | | |
|----------|---------|--------------|-------------------------|--|
| OMO | 0:00:26 | Visual+Audio | integrated explicit | A few casts washed clothes with Omo by hands before bed; one complained that the foundation makeup stuck on the shirt, worried that it wouldn't be washed away – Omo laundry powder cleaned everything |
| Pond's | 0:01:30 | Visual+Audio | integrated explicit | pre-bed time by using pond's product for skincare - one cast asking for skincare tips, female guest suggested skincare using cleanser and serum from pond's while showing the products |
| Lifebuoy | 0:00:45 | Visual | non-integrated explicit | travel size (subtle) and full size (prominent) sanitizers were in screen |
| | 0:00:10 | Audio | integrated explicit | "Lifebuoy chua, Lifebuoy di!" before meal using spraying sanitizer |
| Wall's | 0:00:30 | Visual | non-integrated explicit | ice cream truck and poster of wall's in the background |
| Wall's | 0:00:28 | Visual+Audio | integrated explicit | winning team of a farming challenge received a container of wall's ice cream as reward; cast said "nothing's better than wall's ice creams under the sun" |

Episode Five (17/07/2022) - link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1ppkFEyF6Nk>

| | | | | |
|----------|---------|--------------|---------------------|--|
| OMO | 0:00:00 | n/a | n/a | |
| Pond's | 0:00:00 | n/a | n/a | |
| Lifebuoy | 0:12:00 | Visual | implicit | Lifebuoy sanitizer presents on the table in front of the food (mostly subtle) |
| | 0:00:30 | Visual+Audio | integrated explicit | "Lifebuoy chua, Lifebuoy di!" were used by casts while using sanitizer before meal |
| Wall's | 0:00:00 | n/a | n/a | |

Episode Six (24/07/2022) - link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3HxRUhJ4djY>

| | | | | |
|----------|---------|--------------|---------------------|--|
| OMO | 0:01:00 | Visual | implicit | gifts from program to local people, a bag of sponsored products for everyone who joined |
| | 0:02:00 | Visual+Audio | integrated explicit | washing clothes after tug of war game, using omo makes shirt become new again |
| Pond's | 0:01:00 | Visual+Audio | integrated explicit | Using pond's cleanser to wash face after tug of war challenge, where the losing team would be consequence with soot - the residue from charcoal and wood |
| Lifebuoy | 0:01:00 | Visual | implicit | gifts from program to local people, a bag of sponsored products for everyone who joined; crew wears travel size sanitizer on hand bag |
| Wall's | 0:00:00 | n/a | n/a | |

Episode Seven (31/07/2022) - link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WpnspZK5qdk>

| | | | | |
|----------|---------|-----|-----|--|
| OMO | 0:00:00 | n/a | n/a | |
| Pond's | 0:00:00 | n/a | n/a | |
| Lifebuoy | 0:00:00 | n/a | n/a | |
| Wall's | 0:00:00 | n/a | n/a | |

Episode Eight (07/08/2022) - link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7cD75twgw4E>

| | | | | |
|---|---------|--------------|-------------------------|--|
| OMO | 0:01:30 | Visual | implicit | A pack of Omo laundry powder next to the sink in the bathroom (more prominent) |
| | 0:03:00 | Visual | non-integrated explicit | casts wear white shirts with Omo logo on the sleeve (subtle) |
| | 0:01:30 | Visual+Audio | integrated explicit | A cast told another about how to wash a white shirt by hand quickly by using Omo; he also said "if there's dirt, let Omo takes care of it" then managed to instructed the other cast of how to use Omo |
| Pond's | 0:00:00 | n/a | n/a | |
| Lifebuoy | 0:01:32 | Visual | implicit | LIfebuoy's sanitizers on the table, next to the local food (very subtle) |
| | 0:00:30 | Visual+Audio | integrated explicit | Casts and guests past around the sanitizer and said "Lifebuoy chua, Lifebuoy di!" |
| Wall's | 0:00:00 | n/a | n/a | |
| Episode Nine (14/08/2022) - link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2oMTbpSPBmM | | | | |
| OMO | 0:30:00 | Visual | non-integrated explicit | Casts wear white shirts with Omo logo on the sleeve |
| | 0:07:00 | Audio | integrated explicit | Casts joke around and got their shirts dirty, one mentioned "don't worry, we got Omo at home"; mission of growing jungle, where casts had to grow 100 trees in national park Bạch Mã, in the background the planting tree song from Omo Vietnam was playing; cast later gifted 1000 planting seeds to the national park while explicitly mention Omo |
| Pond's | 0:00:00 | n/a | n/a | |
| Lifebuoy | 0:02:00 | Visual | implicit | Bottles of sanitizers on the dining table, next to food |
| | 0:02:00 | Audio | integrated explicit | Casts use Lifebuoy sanitizers to clean their hands before meal; some said "we should keep good hygiene! Here's Lifebuoy, LIfebuoy, Lifebuoy"; they used Lifebuoy before and after the meal |
| Wall's | 0:01:00 | Visual | implicit | ice cream truck with umbrella and poster |
| | 0:02:00 | Visual+Audio | integrated explicit | the music melody of Wall's was included; casts commenting on their favorite flavors while having ice creams and complementing on it |
| Episode Ten (21/08/2022) - link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aEEpdQ48cQo | | | | |
| OMO | 0:00:00 | n/a | n/a | |
| Pond's | 0:00:00 | n/a | n/a | |
| Lifebuoy | 0:15:00 | Visual | non-integrated explicit | travel size lifebuouy sanitizer, in screen but subtle (either on bagpacks or fanny packs); full size sanitizers on dining table next to local food (subtle) |
| | 0:00:16 | Visual+Audio | integrated explicit | Cast mentioned "Lifebuoy chua, Lifebuoy di!" while sharing sanitizers with others |
| Wall's | 0:00:00 | n/a | n/a | |

Note:

*Translates to "Have you used Lifebuoy? You should use Lifebuoy!"

**Translates to "Bright, Soft, Fresh, Deep"

Appendix C

Patterns in 2 Days 1 Night Korea

| Pattern | Pattern's definition | Variations | Textual example | Visual example |
|---|---|------------------------------------|--|---|
| Highlight of local delicacies | Introduction to the dishes that are unique to a region and are hard to find in others | Metaphor of the dishes' freshness | e.g., "This tastes like when the ocean is boiled" | Exploding-hearts filter after casts try a dish |
| | | Various dishes from one ingredient | "eel"; "mullet"; "cockles"; "beef" | Prominent shots of the dishes |
| Interaction with locals | Interaction between cast members and locals were highlighted through challenges | | "dive"; "divers"; "I couldn't understand what they said" | Depiction of diverse dialects between casts and the publics through teamwork challenges |
| Emphasis on traditions | Traditional clothes and cultures are highlighted, respected, and reflected by nostalgia | | e.g., "These uniforms remind me of my youth" | Depiction of nostalgic feelings/memories that certain piece of clothing provoked |
| Emphasis on relationships between casts and production team | Respectful and caring behaviors were carried out by casts and production team with each other | | e.g., "Good work, everyone!"; "Goodnight!" | Depiction of ending a long filming day with dark night/turning off lights scenes |

Appendix D

Table 3: Patterns in 2 Days 1 Night Vietnam

| Pattern | Pattern's definition | Variations | Textual example | Visual example |
|---|---|------------------------|--|---|
| Highlighting local delicacies | Introduction to the dishes that are unique to a region and are hard to find in others | Food with professional | e.g., "This is how to do the handmade rolls, the flavors of the vegetables will mix together" | Prominent shots of chef's hands making the rolls |
| | | Food between casts | e.g., "You should try this seaweed salad, it's very famous here" | Focused shots of a cast giving others the seaweed |
| Branded products as incentives | Branded products were given to the public guests as incentives after joining in challenges | | "We want to thank our Degan brothers [...] by gifting you all these very meaningful presents" | Focused scenes of big gift bags with all branded products; all logos were prominent and visible |
| Rewrite casts' reputations as trustworthy celebrities | (Guest) casts demonstrating branded product that is considered to be going 'hand-in-hand' with the scenarios to audiences in different scenarios as a persuasion tactic | Skincare | e.g., "If I don't clean face now, I'll be left behind with some damages, luckily I brought Pond's" | Branded product was in the foreground of the scene; depiction of skincare through face cleanser and skincare before bed |
| | | Laundry | "doing laundry"; "it's gone"; "so clean" | Branded product was in the foreground of the scene; depiction of great laundry products through dirty shirts |
| | | Hygiene | e.g., "Have you used LFB? you should use LFB!"; "You should keep your hands clean before meals" | Prominent shots of casts sharing/using the sanitizers; logo of the sanitizer is forefront and focused |
| | | Advise | e.g., "The job i have requires lots of mobility, hence the easiest way is to use [Pond's] serum 2-3 times a day to keep my skin fresh and lively, so you should also try it tonight" | Brand's logo was in the scene's background; high contrasts in clothings and stage (pink versus earth-toned colors) |
| Interaction with locals | Interaction between cast members and locals were highlighted through challenges | | "Our brothers from Kon Tum"; "the locals" | Depiction of close-knit connections between casts and the publics through teamwork challenges |
| Emphasis on traditions | Traditional clothes and cultures are highlighted, respected | | e.g., "These ao dai made us look so elegant" | Depiction of nostalgic feelings/memories that certain piece of clothing provoked |