

**Dra. María RODRÍGUEZ-RABADÁN**

Universidad Internacional de La Rioja. Spain. maria.rodriguez-rabadan@unir.net.  
<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2601-4545>

**Dra. Helena GALÁN-FAJARDO**

Universidad Carlos III de Madrid. Spain. egalan@hum.uc3m.es. <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0217-8457>

**Dra. Cristina DEL-PINO-ROMERO**

Universidad Carlos III de Madrid. Spain. cpino@hum.uc3m.es. <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0217-8457>

## **Mediterráneamente. Quantitative efficacy study in Estrella Damm's advertising films**

### **Mediterráneamente. Estudio de la eficacia cuantitativa del branded content en las películas publicitarias de Estrella Damm**

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#### **Abstract**

This study seeks to analyse two branded content advertising films in a short film format, assigned by the Catalan beer brand Estrella Damm. Both productions are located under the same claim: *Mediterráneamente*. This is the name of the campaign that the brand has employed from 2009 to the present, based on a strategy that pursues brand-territory identification under the formula of entertainment. For this reason, in addition to the creation of content by a brand (branded content), we are clearly faced with two cases of branded entertainment. The two campaigns are *Vale* (Amenábar, 2015) and *Las pequeñas cosas* (Rodríguez, 2016), programmed in the summer period, focusing on the ideal that people usually have about the Mediterranean lifestyle. This article's main contribution is the methodological proposal, to analyse the effect produced on the viewer by a greater or lesser presence of brand placement within the context of branded content in these two productions. We use the Fisher Test applied to university students. It led us to the conclusion that a greater or lesser degree of brand placement does not directly impede understanding of the values of the story, nor does it impose a negative attitude towards brand presence. The study also reveals a direct relation between the short film entertainment level and the product's purchase intention.

#### **Keywords**

Branded Content; Branded entertainment; Storytelling; Estrella Damm; Fisher Test.

#### **Resumen**

El objeto de estudio de esta investigación está comprendido por dos de las películas publicitarias de branded content en formato cortometraje de la marca de cervezas Estrella Damm: *Vale* (Amenábar, 2015) y *Las pequeñas cosas* (Rodríguez, 2016), programadas en período estival. Ambas comparten el mismo claim: *Mediterráneamente*, basado en una estrategia de identificación marca-territorio bajo la fórmula del entretenimiento. Además de tratarse de creación de contenido por parte de una marca o branded content, nos encontramos ante dos casos de branded entertainment. La principal aportación de este artículo es la elaboración de una novedosa propuesta metodológica con el fin analizar el efecto que produce en el espectador una mayor o menor presencia de brand placement en el contexto del branded content. Mediante el Test de Fisher se hace un estudio de eficacia cuantitativa que se aplica a una muestra constituida por 66 estudiantes universitarios. A partir de las hipótesis se deduce que un mayor o menor número de brand placement no interfiere directamente en la comprensión de los valores de la historia, tampoco influye en una actitud negativa hacia la presencia de la marca. El estudio también demuestra una relación directa entre el nivel de entretenimiento de los cortometrajes y la intención de compra del producto.

#### **Palabras clave**

Branded content; branded entertainment; storytelling; Estrella Damm; Test Fisher

## 1. Storytelling and Estrella Damm's advertising films

In 1876, a young brew master named August Kuentzmann Damm immigrated to the Mediterranean coast with his wife to flee from Alsace as a result of the Franco-Prussian war. There they opened their first brewery, creating a type of beer that was lighter than those of Central Europe, and more adapted to the climate<sup>1</sup>.

This emotional anecdote was the beginning of the storytelling that would be developed over the years and consolidated in the storyline of *Mediterráneamente* (2009-2021), created by Oriol Villar.

The Anglo-Saxon word *storytelling* (Baker & Greene, 1987; Watts, 2006; Lamb, 2008; Goodman, 2008; Buster, 2013; Snowden, 1999) has various uses and connotations. It has been applied to the organisational realm (Barker & Gower, 2010), politics (Swan, 2009), business (Denning, 2005; Hensel, 2010), law (Meyer, 2014), mass culture (Fulford, 2000), and more specifically, marketing and advertising (Núñez, 2007; Farran, 2013; Vizcaíno, 2017), and it has become an indispensable tool for attracting consumers in an information-saturated environment. Storytelling provides narrative techniques and rhetorical strategies that foster identification through emotion and engagement, in order to encourage the audience to empathise with environments that are close to their hearts (Signorelli, 2014; Lambert, 2002).

The aim of this research is to analyse two of the short films in the campaign under study: *Vale* (Amenábar, 2015); and *Las pequeñas cosas* (Rodríguez, 2016). Written by Oriol Villar and Amenábar himself, *Vale* has a duration of 13:26 minutes. It was shot on the island of Ibiza, and Estrella Damm was the company in charge of production. The campaign began in June of 2015 and ended in July of the same year, and it was broadcast nationwide. The story revolves around a group of friends at a party who meet Rachel (Dakota Johnson), who is an American tourist, and they invite her to discover the most unique places on the island. One of the friends in the group (Quim Gutiérrez) falls in love with Rachel and overcomes his lack of English through the word "vale", or OK, which he uses as a wild card that will eventually narrate a beautiful love story.

*Las Pequeñas Cosas* (2016) has a running time of 10:00 minutes and was written by Oriol Villar and Alberto Rodríguez, with the latter serving as the director. It belongs to the same genre and has the same tone as the previous film: A well-known, veteran French actor (Jean Reno) has the filming of his movie interrupted and is forced to spend four days engaging in tourism and leisure in Mallorca. He is assigned a tour guide (Laija Costa), who takes him to the most authentic restaurants and magical places on the island. The actor, rugged and proud, gradually leaves his bad mood behind thanks to the sympathy of his companion, as he is impressed by her ability to enjoy the "little things" that the Mediterranean life has to offer. In short, both productions have an unmistakable magnetism inspired by the vast potential of the product that is the origin and basis of this study: beer (Cristofol, 2017).

In light of the foregoing, the aim of this study is to identify the effects that a greater or lesser recurrence of brand placement can have on the viewer, based on the premise that both campaigns represent a change in strategy by merging the product (brand) with the content in a natural way, through their own storytelling, which in turn encourages "integration of the tangible values of the brand" (Núñez, Mañas-Viniegra, Lavín, 2021: 80). On the other hand, we have proceeded to specifically examine the extent to which branded content, within the context of branded entertainment, is a determining factor in obtaining a greater understanding of the brand's values, as well as in producing a positive attitude toward the brand. To this end, several variables have been considered, such as the assimilation of values and the positive feeling that the plot is able to engender in the viewer, as well as the correlation between entertainment and purchase intention.

On the other hand, this study has been complemented with other pioneering work, such as that of consultancy firm Sociograph (2021), whose objective was to demonstrate the effectiveness of branded content for brand communication, measuring conscious and unconscious variables based on a total of 192 people, divided into subgroups of 64 participants, who were exposed to branded content stimuli in formats such as audio-visual and sound, as well as traditional advertising stimuli such as spots. Among the main conclusions, one that stands out is that the format of branded content obtains better results than traditional advertising because it connects emotionally with the viewer, and it has been demonstrated that branded content provides more credibility, in addition to being interesting and entertaining.

### 1.1. State of the issue regarding branded content

The short films analysed in this study have followed the advertising format known as branded content, which in turn falls within the category of entertainment. This entertaining aspect is the common thread that guides the tone of the stories analysed. As such, entertainment is the foundation on which the plot, or the content itself is based. Therefore, we can say that branded content lies within the branded entertainment format. In addition to being a powerful, persuasive instrument for future consumers, entertainment has also become an important tool for transmitting values and ideology. Furthermore,

if something entertains us, we tend to pay more attention to it and lower our resistance. Finally, in this regard it should be added that branded entertainment presents fictional, narrative elements in line with the brand's values, and it takes advantage of the expressive resources of a film script.

In general terms, we can say that branded content has an extraordinary capacity to help society move forward (Asmussen, Wider, Williams, Stevenson, Whitehead and Canter, 2016). Through the creation of valuable content, brands can connect emotionally with consumers and achieve a significant, transformative impact on society (Rodríguez-Rabadán, 2021). There are examples of projects that have been able to change the vision that parents and teachers have of education, or the way companies look to the future (Casanova, 2021). Along the same lines, Elliot-Bauzá (2021) focuses on the generosity of users with regard to content creation, as well as on the vast potential of brands to change society with the investment of time and talent. Hence, it is a format that transcends advertising itself. Such content is created and chosen freely by the public, and is easy to measure (Barbosa, 2012), thereby providing valuable information. Moreover, it works if the foundation on which the content is built is solid and in line with the brand's values. In short, it is about making an impact and contribution through branded content (Castelló-Martínez and del Pino-Romero, 2018).

The two branded content cases of Estrella Damm contain a large amount of brand presence of the product itself, which is beer. This is considered to be product placement, or brand placement within the production itself. Brand placement, or in other words, the presence of a brand in the content itself is an advertising format that has been widely studied at the academic level (Victoria Más, 1999; del Pino-Romero, 2004; del Pino-Romero and Olivares, 2006; Alamillo, 2018; Castelló-Martínez and del Pino-Romero, 2018).

For their part, Hudson and Hudson (2006), as well as other more recent authors (Nelli, 2012; Martí, Ruiz-Mafe and Scribner, 2015; Brown, Jone and Wang, 2016; and Grinta, 2017), agree on the need to analyse the effects of this brand presence on the viewer. For her part, Russell (2002) points out that the memory of a product placement or brand placement is stronger if it is meaningful, and if there is a connection with the content presented. In essence, even though the brand is the content creator, this does not negate the physical or visual presence of the product on screen. Instead, the brand chooses to show a certain number of visualisations of the product, logo, consumption, and dialogue that allude to the product, and consequently, branded entertainment items include a greater or lesser presence of brand placement in their productions.

## **1.2. *Mediterráneamente*: the brand's summer strategy**

*Formentera* (2009) was the first of the campaigns that Estrella Damm launched in line with its brand-territory identification strategy. It was a major milestone in the world of advertising, and from that moment until 2014, all the paradigmatic campaigns of branded content were strategically launched in the summertime with the following common characteristics: they adopted the video clip format; they lasted about three and a half minutes; and the natural locations were diverse settings of the Mediterranean landscape: specifically, Catalonia and the Balearic Islands. Moreover, they featured unknown protagonists, mostly models, who embodied the brand's ideal of beauty as being athletic, young, and healthy. These were very simple stories of friendship and love between people who were twenty-something, where it bears mentioning that there was no diversity of ethnicity, gender, age, or physical appearance, and where the love stories lasted as long as a summer holiday.

One of the most important ingredients was using a backdrop of international groups and bands with catchy, laid-back songs, such as Billie the Vision & the Dancers, Love of Lesbian, Lacrosse, Herman Düne, and The Vaccines, which highlighted the nostalgic perspective, appealing directly to the emotions. They also used slogans that were an invitation to enjoy: "Good things never end if there is something to remind you of them" (*Formentera*, 2009); "Sometimes what you're looking for is so close it's hard to see" (*San Juan*, 2010); "Sometimes the ordinary can be extraordinary" (*El Bulli*, 2011); and "When you love what you have, you have everything you want" (*Tramontana*, 2012). Moreover, innovation took the spotlight with the proposal that one of the productions, *El Bulli*, should be carried out by Catalan director Isabel Coixet, in which the famous chef Ferrán Adrià also appeared. Many of these features were maintained in the following years, yet others changed.

From 2015 onward, a different format was used: the short film, with an approximate length of 15-20 minutes, direct sound, and an international focus. While emotional engagement continued to be promoted through international bands and singers, the story (the content) took centre stage. The short films were shot by directors such as Alejandro Amenábar, Raúl Arévalo, Jonás Trueba and Claudia Llosa and starred internationally renowned actors and actresses such as Dakota Johnson, Peter Dinklage, Jean Reno, as well as national actors such as Quim Gutiérrez, Laia Acosta, Álvaro Cervantes, Ingrid García-Jonsson, Marcel Borràs, Michelle Jenner and Oriol Pla.

Since 2019, the brand has been evolving from a casual, summery style to one that is more committed to the environment, as in the short film series *Alma* (2019-2020), consisting of Act I. *Soul*, Act II. *Lovers*, and Act III. *Commitment*, which have given a voice to organizations dedicated to protecting the environment.

Estrella Damm's most prolific year was 2021 –first with *Chefs*, and then with *Volver al mar* (Return to the sea). *Chefs*, which was broadcast after the period of confinement caused by Covid-19, made a hopeful statement that supported national gastronomy, with the collaboration of big names such as the Roca brothers and other professionals such as Dabiz Muñoz, Maca de Castro, Paolo Casagrande, Carme Ruscalleda, Nandu Jubany, Fina Puigdevall and, once again, Ferrán Adrià.

*Amor a primera vista* (Love at first sight) was directed by Ian Pons, with Oriol Villar as the creative director. Filmed in Menorca, it starred Mario Casas, accompanied by Mireia Oriol and Rigoberta Bandini, author of "A ver qué pasa", the song that set the rhythm of the piece. Its slogan, "caring for the environment is sexy", served as the parameters of the romantic story, even though the love interest was not focused on the star actor Mario Casas (who plays himself in his "leading man" role) but rather on the character of the volunteer ecologist, although he was only given a brief shot at the end. In this way, and as defended by its creator, a new scale of values was proposed, because as stated in an article in Reasonwhy (2021) regarding the campaign, "Unfortunately, the activist or environmentalist was the oddball of the group".

The advertisement combined the two trends that the brand had been working on since the *Alma* trilogy: one was its commitment to preserving the environment on the Catalan coast; the other was the short film format, characteristic of previous editions. The aim was to give a nod to the cultural sector, which had experienced so many difficulties due to the pandemic. In reality, the nearly six minutes of the story was a play that ended with the spectacular image of an enormous, purple-coloured, theatrical curtain falling over the Mediterranean, followed by a few scenes far from the beach where the actors celebrated the end of the play in the backstage area of a theatre.

Following this trend, Estrella Damm developed a comprehensive programme of repositioning, communication, branding, and strategic management which, according to Fede Segarra, Director of Communication and External Relations of the brand (Cristofol, 2017: 102), was based on a pioneering brand-territory strategy of communication and differentiation. To this end, they chose as a starting point the ideal image that people have of the Mediterranean lifestyle. Estrella Damm was then defined as "the Catalan beer brand with a Mediterranean flavour", as stated in its creative brief for the *Eficacia* awards:

Estrella Damm is the beer of the Mediterranean. It writes its history next to the sea, so it has sought to differentiate itself from its competitors through its values, such as gastronomy and the Mediterranean culture. It is a way of living, being and understanding life, which has allowed it to create an emotional connection with people. As such, *Mediterráneamente* is no longer a concept, a claim, or a slogan, but an expression that epitomizes the sea, walking on the sand, meals with friends, and a toast with beer to celebrate the entire scene (Scopen, 2016: 111).

In this differentiation process, the advertiser created specific content for its consumers based on three foundational aspects: the positioning or symbolic place a brand wants to use to fill the collective imagination; the brand's personality from an emotional point of view; and the essence or distinctive aspect that characterises the brand (Cristofól, 2017). This identity reinforcement and definition made sense in an uneasy, interrelated context involving the local and the global, which could be summarised as follows: expanding nationally without losing the origins, while at the same time strengthening those origins in a scenario that is not only national, but international as well.

It is striking that in all the advertisements a strong sense of belonging was being developed based on the concept of an "imagined community" (Anderson, 1983). Along the same lines, Lladonosa-Latorre & Visa-Barbosa (2020) have associated this type of advertising with an attempt to represent the nation and its identity through what has been defined by Billing (2014/1995) as "banal nationalism".

Based on the above, and once the parameters of the context on which this study is founded have been defined, the following hypotheses have been proposed for their verification:

H1. The consumer understands the values inherent in the story regardless of the number of times the brand placement appears in the short film.

H2. Increased repetition of brand placement can have a negative impact (wear-out) on purchase intention.

H3. Increased repetition of brand placement in a branded entertainment story causes discomfort for the viewer, who may see it as intrusive.

H4. Increased or decreased repetition of brand placement in the short film does not affect the level of entertainment experienced by the viewer.

H5. The feeling of being entertained by the short film is related to the understanding of the values of the story.

H6. A positive branded entertainment experience influences the viewer's purchase intention.

## 2. Methodology

The short film was chosen as the object of study over other formats because it is a self-contained production of short duration. As such, it was possible to allow the sample group to have the same experience as that of the viewers who saw the short film on its broadcast date, due to the sample group being exposed to it as a complete unit. Therefore, the target group included young people between 18 and 23 years of age, who are potential beer consumers. A sample of 66 students from the bilingual Bachelor's Degree of Film, Television, and Media Studies was chosen for the experiment. The sample group directly represented the target group for which the content was intended. However, they were students in which the bias in favour of advertising was very limited, as they were not specifically studying a degree in Advertising, so they were highly critical of advertising content in general, and conventional advertising in particular.

The screening of the short films took place in a classroom of the Faculty of Humanities, Communication and Documentation. The viewing of the films took place on the pretext of being an academic activity, and at no time was the objective of the screening revealed in order to replicate spontaneous responses. The students could also choose whether or not to participate in the viewing and questionnaire.

The 66 participants were further divided into two groups, A and B. Group A, with 35 people, was assigned to the A Screening (*Vale*); Group B, consisting of 31 people, was assigned to the B Screening (*Las cosas pequeñas*). Each group was given a pre-screening questionnaire to assess spontaneous recall and familiarity with the brand. These questionnaires were collected after their completion. Subsequently, each group watched the film separately and then responded to the questionnaire (Table 1), as well as to whether or not they identified with the issues discussed and their intention to purchase the beer.

**Table 1. Demographic characteristics of the sample**

Characteristic	Group	Levels	Total	Average age
Gender	A	Male	10	
	B	Male	7	
	A	Female	25	
	B	Female	24	
N=66			66	19

Source: prepared by the authors

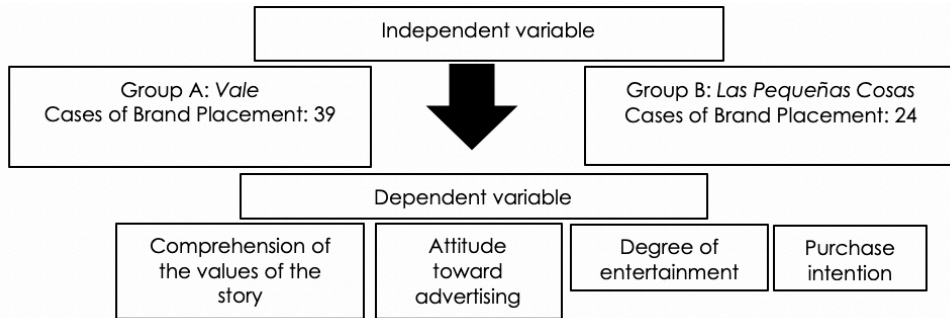
The responses were subjected to a quantitative-descriptive statistical process using Fisher's exact test to verify or reject the hypotheses. Fisher's test measures statistical significance used in the analysis of contingency tables. The sample parameter of this experiment is ideal for this particular test as it offers high precision when sample sizes are small. Fisher's offers a high level of accuracy by using many factors in its formula, such as the two-sample factor for variances. Due to the composition of its formula, the error is very limited. Finally, in Fisher's test, the 0 or null hypothesis is posed by testing whether the two compared variables behave similarly. The possible results are "accepted" or "rejected" with the consequent explanation and interpretation: "The null hypothesis is always stated as an equality, so that it specifies an exact parameter value" (Moya and Robles, 2010: 401).

This methodology is suitable for assessing the weight, or importance, of the greater or lesser brand presence or brand placement in a branded content item, and discusses the relevance and intrusiveness of brand placement within this framework.

In the quantitative study (Figure 1), Groups A and B were considered as independent variables, which were differentiated in this study by the greater or lesser number of repetitions of brand placement.

On the other hand, comprehension of the values of the brand, purchase intention, attitudes toward advertising, and the degree of entertainment were used as dependent variables.

**Table 2: Summary of variables used to analyse the effects on the viewer of greater or lesser repetition of brand placement. Related to H1-H4**



Source: prepared by the authors

On a second level, the variables were altered to study the effects produced by a greater or lesser level of entertainment and its relationship with a better or worse understanding of values, and with the purchase intention. As shown in Table 2, the relationship between the level of entertainment as an independent variable and the understanding of the values of the story as a dependent variable was studied as well.

Based on this premise, it was observed whether a greater or lesser degree of entertainment had an influence on understanding the values of the story. Finally, the degree of entertainment of the short film was analysed as an independent variable, and purchase intention as a dependent variable.

**Table 3: Variables related to the level of entertainment**

Independent variable	Dependent variable
Degree of entertainment of all the participants	Understanding the story's values
Groups A + B	
Degree of entertainment of all the participants	Purchase intention
Groups A + B	

Source: prepared by the authors

Before screening the video, the students in the two groups answered a question about spontaneous recall. They were given a questionnaire together with the poster of the short film, but without a beer logo nor brand placement. In order to evaluate spontaneous recall, the students who were divided into two separate groups, A and B, had to answer the first question of the survey according to the content of the poster of the short film they were going to watch later. The question was, "Do you remember which brand appears in this short film?" In this way, the students had to answer which brand appeared in the short film without having received any information that could influence their answer.

In the final research results, this section was discarded from the development of the hypotheses put forward, for the following reasons: firstly, the main objective of these questions was to provide an initial framework for the test group, offering a broad spectrum of questions so that they would not be predisposed to giving biased answers to the questions related to branded entertainment; Secondly, after the data was collected, in order to carry out a study on spontaneous recall and brand familiarity, it was necessary to include more questions for an optimal analysis. Curiously, 20 of the 35 interviewees in Group A identified the Estrella Damm brand when they saw the poster of the short film. Among Group B, 21 out of a total of 31 respondents identified the brand related to the film's poster. With regard to the question on familiarity with brands of beer, the most frequently mentioned, from highest to lowest, were Heineken, Mahou, Galicia, Damm, Carlsberg and Ámbar.



At the end of the screening, the survey was distributed to the students, in which questions were asked about the repetition of the brand placement stimulus, understanding of the values, their attitude toward the advertised brand and the short film, and purchase intention. Participants were told to answer according to their preferences, based on a five-point Likert scale using the following remark: "Please indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with the following statements (1=strongly disagree ...5=strongly agree). Circle the option chosen in each case. Legend: SD= Strongly Disagree. D= Disagree. I= Indifferent. A= Agree. SA= Strongly Agree. The questions are summarised below in Tables 4-7.

**Table 4: Replication of survey questions related to stimulus repetition**

Question	SD	D	I	A	SA
R.1. Would you watch a short film if you knew beforehand that it was produced by a brand?	1	2	3	4	5
R.2. The brand presence plays a role in the story.	1	2	3	4	5
R.3. If I changed the beer brand, I would have to change the story.	1	2	3	4	5
R.4. The brand presence is realistic and doesn't seem intrusive to me.	1	2	3	4	5

Source: prepared by the authors

**Table 5. Replication of questionnaire on the degree of entertainment of the short film**

Question	SD	D	I	A	SA
R.5. I liked the short film I watched.	1	2	3	4	5
R.6. The story was plausible.	1	2	3	4	5
R.7. The short film offered me something new.	1	2	3	4	5
R.8. The topic of the short film captured my interest.	1	2	3	4	5
R.9. The short film I watched inspired me.	1	2	3	4	5
R.10. While watching the short film, I felt like I was living the experiences of the characters.	1	2	3	4	5
R.11. While watching the short film, time passed quickly without my noticing.	1	2	3	4	5
R.12. I discovered something new about the qualities of Estrella Damm beer.	1	2	3	4	5

Source: prepared by the authors

**Table 6: Replication of the attitudes toward brand placement in the short film**

Question	SD	D	I	A	SA
R.13. I generally find adverts entertaining.	1	2	3	4	5
R.14. I often try products that are advertised.	1	2	3	4	5
R.15. I think the presence of real brands in short films makes the brands more attractive.	1	2	3	4	5
R.16. I prefer short films that include brands.	1	2	3	4	5
R.17. The presence of the brand does not hinder me from following the story.	1	2	3	4	5

Source: prepared by the authors

**Table 7. Replication of the survey questions regarding purchase intention**

Question	SD	D	I	A	SA
R.18. I would like to drink a Damm beer.	1	2	3	4	5
R.19. The next time I buy a beer, it will be Damm.	1	2	3	4	5

Source: prepared by the authors

In addition, the following open-ended question regarding the understanding of values was also asked: "What is the topic of the short film?" The students answered freely according to what they believed the story was about. The answers were transferred to the database as 0 for Yes and 1 for No, considering the following values established by the brand when devising the story: "gastronomy", "enjoyment", "the sea", "friends" and "little things" (the blind identification of these values offers relevant data, as it indicates whether or not the viewer grasps what the brand wants to say).

An association of terms, which was agreed upon for this research, was also carried out, in which the answers given were equated. For example, "love", "friendship", "camaraderie", "spending time together" and "bringing people together" were equated with the answer "friendship". The words "having a good time", "happiness", "having experiences", "good memories", and "carefree" are associated with the response "enjoyment".

Data processing was carried out with an Excel programme, using boxes with pre-selected values on a Likert scale from 1 to 5 to reduce the possibility of introducing erroneous data. The Excel spreadsheet was exported to StatPlus software for quantitative analysis and for making comparisons between Groups A and B, and also for making comparisons between several specific questions asked of all the participants.

The hypotheses were tested using a descriptive, quantitative, statistical analysis and Fisher's exact test (Moya and Robles, 2010). As mentioned above, given the characteristics of the study, this particular test is recommended, since the variables extracted are categorical or discrete; in other words, they are translated into specific numbers and not continuous intervals with decimals. In turn, Fisher's test for small samples is advisable as it offers accuracy in the interpretation of the data, which is ideal for this group of 66 participants.

### 3. Results

The results of the hypotheses proposed in this research are presented below, according to the data provided by Fisher's test.

#### 3.1. Results of Hypothesis 1

Hypothesis H1 has been confirmed: the consumer understands the values of the story, regardless of the number of times the brand placement is presented in the short film.

**Table 8: Results of Fisher's test for H1**

#### Two-sample F-test for variances

Descriptive statistics	A	B
Sample size	175	155
Mean	0.2	0.29677
Variance	0.16092	0.21005
Standard deviation	0.40115	0.45832
Standard error of the Mean	0.03032	0.03681
Variance ratio Var[A]/Var[B]		
F	0.76608	
F Critical Value (5%)	0.77342	
Two-tailed F Critical value (5%)	0.73618	



### Two-sample F-test for variances

Two-tailed p-value (H1: $F \neq 1$ )	0.08806	H1 rejected
One-tailed p-value (H1: $F > 1$ )	0.95597	H1 rejected
One-tailed p-value (H1: $F < 1$ )	0.04403	H1 accepted
F [larger/smaller]		
F	130.534	
F Critical Value (5%)	129.296	
Two-tailed F Critical Value (5%)	135.836	
H0 F=1 (5%)?	Accepted	

Source: prepared by the authors

### 3.2. Results of Hypothesis 2

According to the second hypothesis of this study (H2), repetition of the visual stimulus of the product can have a negative impact (wear-out) on purchase intention (Table 9). The hypothesis accepted in this case by Fisher's Test states that both Group A and Group B behave in the same way when watching the short film. The differences are not significant, neither statistically nor with regard to probability. Therefore, it could be said that a greater or lesser number of brand placements in the two short films has no direct effect. Therefore, H2 of this research is rejected: more brand placement does not necessarily have a direct negative relationship with purchase intention.

Table 9: Results of Fisher's Test for H2

Two-sample F-test for variances	Only with R-18	
Descriptive statistics	A	B
Sample size	35	31
Mean	1.934.286	1.877.419
Variance	211.429	124.731
Standard deviation	145.406	111.683
Standard error of the Mean	0.24578	0.20059
Variance ratio $\text{Var}[a]/\text{Var}[b]$		
F	169.507	
F Critical Value (5%)	181.813	
Two-tailed F Critical value (5%)	204.375	
Two-tailed p-value (H1: $F \neq 1$ )	0.14582	H1 rejected
One-tailed p-value (H1: $F > 1$ )	0.07291	H1 rejected
One-tailed p-value (H1: $F < 1$ )	0.92709	H1 rejected
F [larger/smaller]		
F	169.507	
F Critical Value (5%)	181.813	
Two-tailed F Critical Value (5%)	204.375	
H0 F=1 (5%)?	Accepted	

Source: prepared by the authors

### 3.3. Results of Hypothesis 3

Hypothesis 3 focuses on the viewer's reaction to the brand placement: greater repetition of brand placement in a branded entertainment story causes the viewer discomfort, and they may feel it is intrusive.

To analyse this hypothesis, Groups A and B were treated as independent variables. The dependent variable was the sum of the results of the questions included in the section of the questionnaire related to repetition of the stimulus (Table 4), and on attitudes toward advertising (Table 6). According to Fisher's test, H3 of this study is rejected. Group A as well as Group B behaved in a similar way with regard to the dependent variable (from R1 to R4 and R13 to R17), so it can be deduced that the greater or lesser presence of brand placement in the two short films is not a determining factor in the viewer's perception of the brand as intrusive and annoying in the context of the story.

**Table 10: Results of Fisher's Test for H3**

<b>Two-tailed F-Test for Variances</b>		
<b>Descriptive statistics</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>
Sample size	314	276
Mean	323.567	315.942
Variance	122.224	145.086
Standard deviation	110.555	120.452
Standard error of the Mean	0.06239	0.07250
Variance ratio Var[A]/Var[B]		
F	0.84243	
F Critical value (5%)	0.82541	
Two-tailed F Critical value (5%)	0.79558	
Two-tailed p-value (H1: $F \neq 1$ )	0.14154	H1 rejected
One-tailed p-value (H1: $F > 1$ )	0.92923	H1 rejected
One-tailed p-value (H1: $F < 1$ )	0.07077	H1 rejected
F [larger/smaller]		
F	118.705	
F Critical Value (5%)	121.153	
Two-tailed F Critical Value (5%)	125.694	
<b>H0 F=1 (5%)?</b>	<b>Accepted</b>	

Source: prepared by the authors

### 3.4. Results of Hypothesis 4

Hypothesis 4 examines the influence of brand placement on entertainment in a production with these characteristics, under the following premise: "The level of entertainment generated by the audio-visual project is unaffected by the number of times the product is inserted as brand placement (repetition of the stimulus)". In order to measure the level of entertainment, answers R5 to R12 from the questionnaire were examined and presented in Table 5. The questions try to evaluate the attitude of viewers in relation to the most creative aspect of the branded entertainment audio-visual items.

For this hypothesis, Fisher's test was used to analyse the behaviour of Group A and Group B as independent variables with regard to the dependent variable of entertainment. It has been shown that H0 is accepted; in other words, the variables of Group A and Group B are independent and are not affected by what distinguishes them (in our case study, it means a greater or lesser number of brand placements in the short film). Therefore, it has been confirmed that H4 is valid: the level of entertainment generated by a branded entertainment short film is unaffected by the number of times the product (brand placement) or repetition of the brand stimulus is inserted.

**Table 11: Results of Fisher's Test for H4****Two-tailed F-Test for Variances**

<b>Descriptive Statistics</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>
Sample size	276	245
Mean	342.391	343.673
Variance	129.237	140.274
Standard deviation	113.683	118.437
Standard error of the Mean	0.06843	0.07567
Variance ratio Var[A]/Var[B]		
F	0.92132	
F Critical Value (5%)	0.81527	
Two-tailed F Critical Value (5%)	0.78395	
Two-tailed p-value (H1: $F \neq 1$ )	0.50849	H1 rejected
One-tailed p-value (H1: $F > 1$ )	0.74575	H1 rejected
One-tailed p-value (H1: $F < 1$ )	0.25425	H1 rejected
F [larger/smaller]		
F	108.540	
F Critical Value (5%)	122.658	
Two-tailed F Critical Value (5%)	127.559	
H0 $F=1$ (5%)?	Accepted	

Source: prepared by the authors

**3.5. Results of Hypothesis 5**

Hypothesis 5 states the following: "The level of entertainment generated by the short film is related to the understanding of the story's values". The independent variable used is the general level of entertainment generated by the short film (R5 to R12) studied above. The dependent variable used was extracted from the answers to Item 4 of the questionnaire regarding the understanding of the brand's values (the answers were evaluated according to the criteria explained in the data collection section of this experiment).

Fisher's test shows a result of  $H_0 F=1$ , or in other words, it is rejected; the two variables do not behave similarly. According to the data obtained, the level of entertainment generated by the short films does not have a direct relationship to a better understanding of the values of the story.

**Table 12: Results of Fisher's Test for H5****Two-sample F-test for variances**

<b>Descriptive statistics</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>
Sample size	451	400
Mean	217.295	2.22
Variance	332.558	328.481
Standard deviation	182.362	181.241

### Two-sample F-test for variances

Descriptive statistics	A	B
Standard error of the mean	0.08587	0.09062
Variance ratio Var[A]/Var[B]		
F	101.241	
F Critical value (5%)	117.420	
Two-tailed F Critical value (5%)	121.096	
Two-tailed p-value (H1: F ≠ 1)	0.90069	H1 rejected
One-tailed p-value (H1: F > 1)	0.45034	H1 rejected
One-tailed p-value (H1: F < 1)	0.54966	H1 rejected
F [larger/smaller]		
F	101.241	
F Critical value (5%)	117.420	
Two-tailed F Critical Value (5%)	121.096	
H0 F=1 (5%)?	Accepted	

Source: prepared by the authors

### 3.6. Results of Hypothesis 6

Finally, the impact of entertainment on purchase intention has been analysed. Hypothesis 6 proposes how a positive branded content entertainment experience influences purchase intention. For this purpose, the attitudes of the total number of participants have been evaluated. This was used as an independent variable. Fisher's Test measures the relationship of this behaviour with the purchase intention, in relation to the R18 statement: "I would like to drink a Damm beer".

It also shows that H0=accepted. In other words, the two variables behaved in a similar way. If the spectator answers questions R5 to R12 related to entertainment on a Likert scale of 1 to 5, with a positive evaluation (from 4 to 5), this means the dependent variable of purchase intention will also show similar behaviour on a Likert scale from 1 to 5, with a positive assessment of 4 to 5 as well.

Table 13: Results of Fisher's Test for H6

### Two-sample F-test for Variances

Descriptive statistics	A	B
Sample size	276	245
Mean	342.391	343.673
Variance	129.237	140.274
Standard deviation	113.683	118.437
Standard error of the Mean	0.06843	0.07567
Variance ratio Var[A]/Var[B]		
F	0.92132	
F Critical Value (5%)	0.81527	
Two-tailed F Critical Value (5%)	0.78395	

### Two-sample F-test for Variances

Descriptive statistics	A	B
Two-tailed p-value (H1: $F \neq 1$ )	0.50849	H1 rejected
One-tailed p-value (H1: $F > 1$ )	0.74575	H1 rejected
One-tailed p-value (H1: $F < 1$ )	0.25425	H1 rejected
F [larger/smaller]		
F	108.540	
F Critical Value (5%)	122.658	
Two-tailed F Critical Value (5%)	127.559	
H0 F=1 (5%)?	Accepted	

Source: prepared by the authors

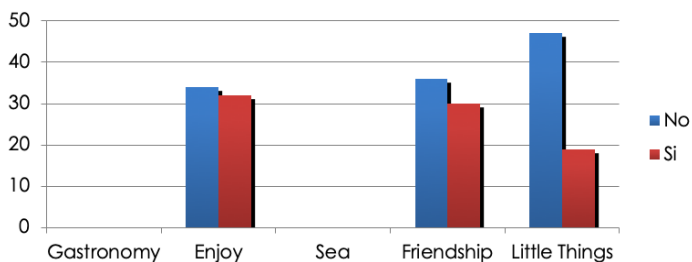
#### 4. Discussion

Considering the results obtained, it can be affirmed that in all the hypotheses contrasted through Fisher's exact test, it can be shown that a greater or lesser number of cases of brand placement in a branded entertainment short film (two in this case), such as the ones analysed, does not directly interfere with understanding the values of the story, nor does it engender a negative attitude toward the presence of the brand in the short film/s.

With regard to identifying the values of the story, it is relevant to note that none of the respondents answered the question with values related to "gastronomy" and "the sea". On the other hand, they responded positively to the terms "enjoyment", "friendship" and "little things", in this same order, from highest to lowest frequency. Even so, and according to Alemany (2017)<sup>2</sup>, the viewer is able to maintain subconscious associations in his or her mind that do not manifest themselves in a first free response which, if reformulated in another way, could identify those elements that are also present in each short film, such as "gastronomy" and "the sea", in this case. After comparing the results of the empirical study with the brand repositioning strategy, it can be seen that the group that has participated in this experiment understands the values of a unique way of seeing life, such as the one conveyed by Estrella Damm beer in its campaigns.

The frequency of these responses can be seen below (Figure 1), which includes the identification of the values of the story by the participants.

**Figure 1: Interpretation of the values according to the frequency of response by the total number of participants**



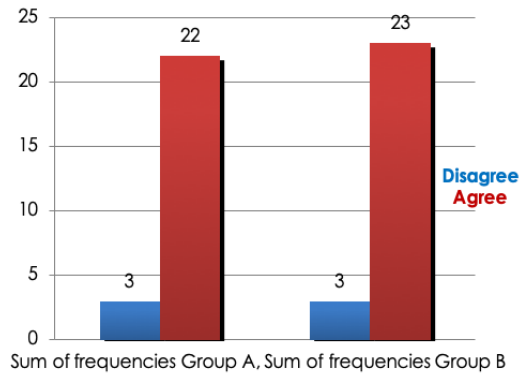
Source: prepared by the authors

Another important factor to consider in this section is the positive or negative impact that the repetition of brand placement in a content item can have. The empirical study makes a strong case for considering brand placement to be a technique that is distinct from branded entertainment. The test shows that a greater or lesser presence of the product on screen is not a determining factor for the viewer in perceiving the brand as intrusive and annoying in the context of the story (H3). As shown in this research, and based on a review of the literature, storytelling becomes a tool capable of capturing the viewer's interest and fostering engagement with the brand. Pereira (2018) points out that when faced with the

dilemma of seeking greater or lesser product presence in a branded entertainment project, the answer is different for each brand and each story, which is an idea that is supported in this analysis with the findings presented.

It is interesting to note that the people interviewed are accepting of fictional content produced by a brand (Figure 4), and in the two short films studied, brand placement is perceived as realistic and non-intrusive (Figure 5).

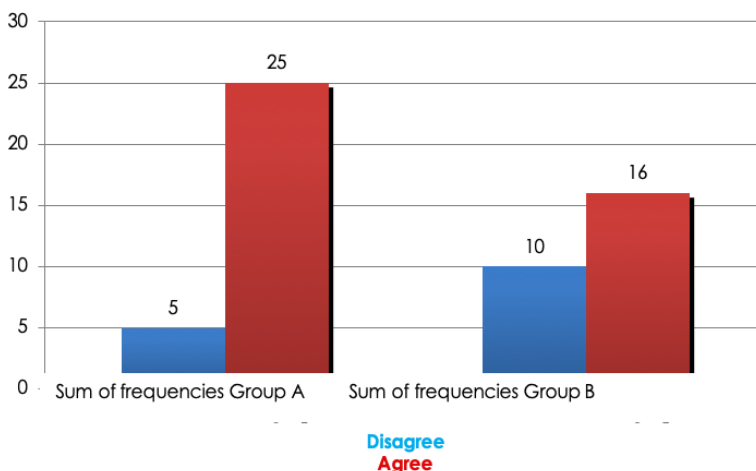
**Figure 2: Interpretation of the sum of frequencies group A and group B: “I would watch the content if it were produced by a brand”.**



Source: prepared by the authors

As illustrated in Figure 3 responses to the R4 statement, “The brand presence is realistic and does not seem intrusive”, is very positive, with a frequency index on the Likert scale of 4 and 5, grouped in a single value as “agree” among 25 respondents from Group A, and “agree” as well among a total of 16 from Group B. It is interesting to note that Group A watched the short film *Vale*, which had a total of 39 shots of the beer, while Group B’s short film, *Las Pequeñas Cosas*, had brand placement of 24 shots on screen. Therefore, according to the theoretical corpus and data obtained from this experiment, the higher number of repetitions of brand placement is not linked to a feeling of intrusion and rejection in a branded entertainment context, as other factors can cause this effect.

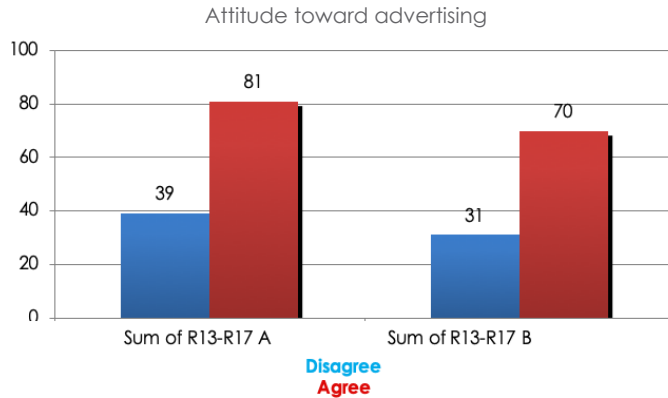
**Figure 3: Interpretation of the sum of frequencies of Group A and Group B to statement R4 of the questionnaire**



Source: prepared by the authors

The questionnaire also addressed aspects related to the viewer’s attitude toward advertising (Table 6), thus allowing for new responses and to check their consistency with previously given scores. As can be seen in the following graph (Figure 4), the general attitude toward advertising in branded entertainment short films is positive.

**Figure 4: Interpretation of the sum of frequencies of Group A and Group B to statements R13-R17 of the questionnaire.**



Source: prepared by the authors

Hypothesis 3 shows that the greater or lesser presence of brand placement is not a determining factor in whether the viewer perceives the brand as intrusive in the context of the story.

This finding serves as a preamble to Hypothesis 4, since it is important to know whether brand placement and the level of entertainment have a correlation. Fisher's test verifies that the entertainment value generated by the audio-visual production is unaffected by the number of times the product is inserted as brand placement (repetition of the stimulus).

Hypotheses 4, 5, and 6 examine entertainment issues. Firstly, Hypothesis 4 confirms the independence of branded entertainment and branded content, which are categorized as independent and complementary advertising techniques. Furthermore, it has been concluded that if an item of branded content has good storytelling features and is able to capture interest and entertain, brand placement does not lower the ability to foster engagement. We can add to these conclusions the considerations of the Branded Content Marketing Association (BCMA) effectiveness study (2021), which highlights the capability of branded content to connect emotionally and entertain.

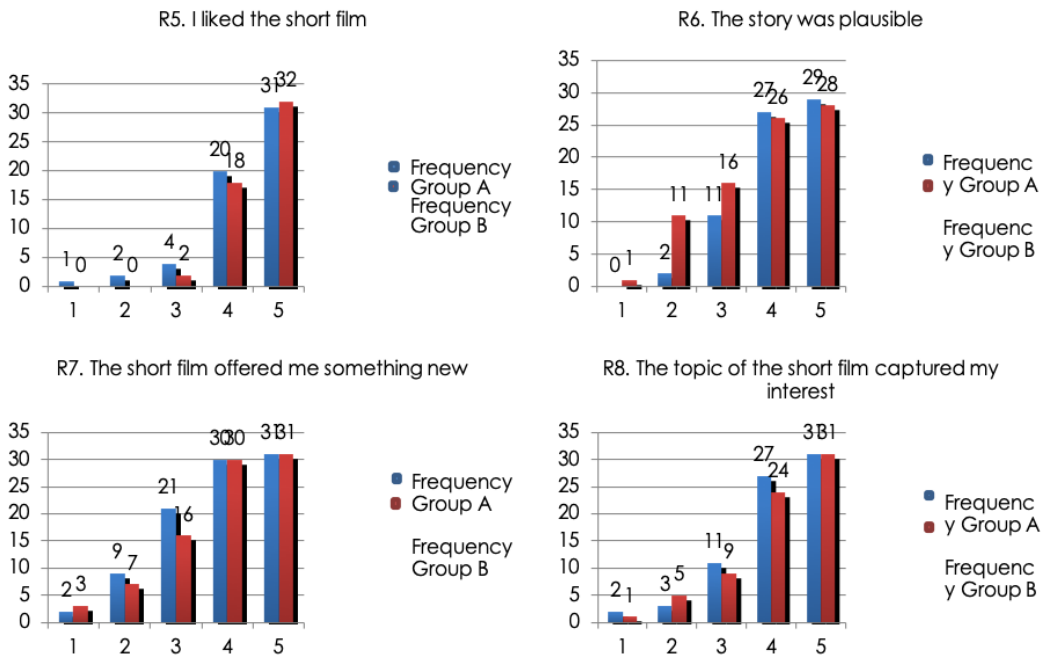
This research offers the novelty of a detailed level of different variables in order to measure the degree of entertainment at a quantitative level. We have taken into consideration the answers extracted from R5 to R12 of the questionnaire, presented in Table 5 of this study, which are questions that try to evaluate the attitude of viewers regarding the most creative aspect of branded entertainment audio-visual productions.

Figures 5 and 6 show that Groups A and B have given very similar responses, with a positive level of empathy and attitude toward the story.

The participants in the experiment felt inspired after watching the short films, as they perceived that they were living through the experiences of the characters. On the other hand, the topic of the story also captured their interest, provided them with something new, and was entertaining. Moreover, the short film seemed plausible to them as they discovered new qualities of the brand.

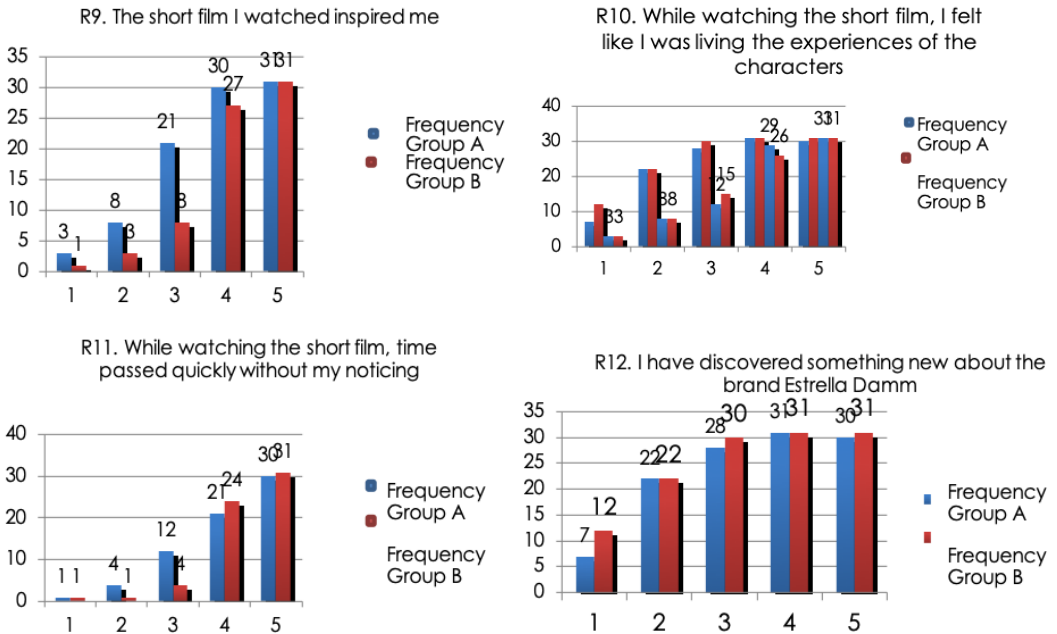


**Figure 5: Interpretation of the sum of frequencies of Group A and Group B to statements R5-R8 of the questionnaire**



Source: prepared by the authors

**Figure 6: Sum of frequencies of Group A and Group B statements R9-R12 of the questionnaire**



Source: prepared by the authors

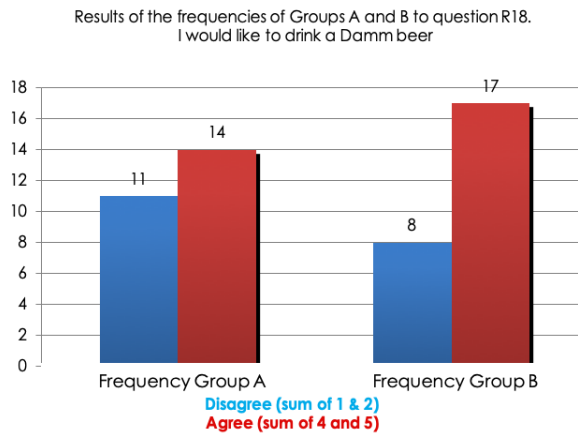
With regard to purchase intention, the results of Hypothesis 2 show that brand placement does not have a negative impact on purchase intention. On the other hand, the note that highlights the verification of Hypothesis 6 is innovative. It can be concluded that the higher the level of entertainment, the greater the purchase intention. Therefore, in line with the theoretical corpus seen above, the relationship

between a positive attitude toward entertainment and storytelling has been verified, as well as the impact this has on the viewer's inclination to purchase.

Based on the questionnaire, the R18 responses related to purchase intention appear in connection with the statement, "I would like to drink a Damm beer" (see Table 7). With all the evidence available at this point in the study, it is advisable that we should discard the use of the R19 response, "The next time I buy a beer, it will be a Damm", because the purchase concept may be subject to other factors involved in the consumer's perception, such as the context in which they interpret the concept of purchase. Some might interpret the context as going to the supermarket instead of ordering a bottle of beer in a bar or restaurant, which is something they might be more familiar with.

From this perspective, when comparing the behaviour of Group A and Group B with regard to purchase intention in Fisher's test, only the R18 statement, "I would like to drink a Damm beer" (from the questionnaire in Table 7), was taken into consideration. The following graph shows how Group A and Group B responded to the statement, "I would like to drink a Damm beer", with "I agree" as the most frequent response.

**Figure 7: Responses of purchase intention of the participants of Group A and Group B**



Source: prepared by the authors

## 5. Conclusions

One of the motivations for carrying out this research is based on the premise that in the empirical realm, the field of branded content is a vast domain to be addressed. As mentioned in the introduction, and according to Barbosa (2021), branded content is much more measurable than other disciplines within advertising, and this study has strived to address these measurable aspects.

The importance of offering narrative consistency and artistic quality in the development of the film script has been demonstrated. It has also been verified that greater mastery of expressive resources of the script can encourage the viewers to feel empathy and, as a consequence, create a positive attitude toward the brand. According to Hardy (2018), one of the benefits of branded entertainment is its remarkable capability to produce engagement with the consumer due to its non-intrusive nature, its ability to generate highly interesting content, and its capacity to create medium- and long-term bonds through entertaining narratives.

Finally, as an innovation, the present study demonstrates the fact that a direct relationship between entertainment and purchase intention can be measured at the quantitative level. In this field, methodologies to evaluate the effectiveness of branded content are starting to emerge, such as the Ipsos Branded Content Suite tool (BCMA, 2021), which offers instruments to measure attention, engagement, and impact on purchase intention, among other parameters. This empirical experiment scientifically demonstrates that entertainment is capable of having a strong impact on the purchase of a product. This datum confirms a new attribute of branded entertainment and can provide arguments for investing in this type of activity.

In general terms, the effectiveness of branded entertainment as an advertising format has been demonstrated. We are referring to content with cinematographic overtones freely chosen by the viewer, which can be shared and viralised (del Pino-Romero and Reinares-Lara, 2013), and which is not perceived as interruptive content. The results of this research shed light on both the advertiser and the

format itself. One might consider that studying the effectiveness of a branded content campaign such as the one addressed in this paper can provide knowledge of the sector to other advertisers, and to the advertising market in general, given the problem of the saturation of conventional advertising spaces.

Today's users are extremely selective in their preferences regarding how they spend their time in relation to audio-visual consumption.

With branded content, Estrella Damm has shrouded itself in strong emotional enticements. The key lies in the brand's ability to identify what is important for itself as an advertiser, but most of all, to discover what is important to consumers in order to offer an appealing product, which is a differentiating feature for a target audience increasingly immune to advertising, and who need to know who is talking to them, what they want, what they feel, and in what way.

According to Rodríguez-Rabadán (2019), the level of satisfaction and knowledge acquired in this study has created the desire to address new issues in future lines of research focused on the analysis of branded content and its possibilities in a multitude of formats and platforms. The scope of effects of the present study is the key in triangulating the results with other areas such as psychology or sociology. Similarly, within the framework of future lines of research, we consider that more effort should be made to discover the possibilities offered by branded entertainment through the use of new technology, virtual reality, and transmedia environments.

According to the conclusions of this study, branded content in the context of branded entertainment, together with brand placement within the latter, seem to be sound approaches for advertisers who embrace the new way of understanding advertising communication. Even so, it has become evident for the immediate future that there is a latent concern, both in academic as well as professional environments, about reaching a consensus with regard to the the most complete, affordable, effectiveness-measurement systems and solutions.

## 6. Specific contribution of each author

Contribution	Name and surnames of the signatories in each case
Conception and design of the study	María Rodríguez-Rabadán, Helena Galán and Cristina del Pino.
Documentary search	María Rodríguez-Rabadán, Helena Galán and Cristina del Pino.
Data collection	María Rodríguez-Rabadán and Cristina del Pino.
Critical analysis and interpretation of data	María Rodríguez-Rabadán.
Writing, formatting, review, and version approval	María Rodríguez-Rabadán, Helena Galán and Cristina del Pino.

## 7. Acknowledgement

Translator: Charles Edmond Arthur.

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## Notes

<sup>1</sup> <https://bit.ly/3yhzmA>

<sup>2</sup> Personal communication (29 June 2021)