How do consumers perceive a/an logotype/emblem in the advertisements: an eye tracking study

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Abstract: Logotype and emblems are the signatures of the brands which often lead consumers to recognize the brands before even getting exposed to any marketing communication messages. The logotype/emblem’s design used on marketing communication materials are usually decided by graphic designers and brand managers, depending on mostly instinct not to the scientific evidences. This study aims to understand not the self-reported but evidential level of perception of the 24 participants who had seen series of TV commercials that the logotypes of the advertising brands are located at the pack shot. The emblems are located on left, on top and right hand side of the logotypes. The study had different logo type/emblem combinations from automobile, appeal, telecommunication and banking sectors. The eye tracking results show that, some positions for emblems are hard to see for the consumers, while the others do have a better position.

Keywords: Consumer Behavior, Logotype, Emblem, Brand Recognition, Eye Tracking, Neuromarketing, Applied Consumer Neuroscience, Pre-test, Biometric Measurement

1. Introduction

Brand communication activities are usually difficult to measure and also very essential for the companies that depend on the perceived brand equity. While the media and integrated marketing communication budgets are raised, the effectiveness gains even more importance. Brands plan and try to control every message they are sending for the potential or real customers while what part of the messages perceives by the customers or if the messages perceived correctly or not are not that easy to be measured.

Classical marketing communication measurements use the claimed data of the customers or the sales figures. The sales figures can be affected by number of variables and the communication activity results might not be sudden. On the other hand, generating sales are not the only aim of the marketing communication activities. Creating strong emotional bonds with the customers and brands are also critical for marketing communication activities. In order to influence customers.
logotype and emblems, ambassador of the brand are used commonly, hope to get
the exposure of the brand and brand identity as much as possible.

The goal of this study is to understand how the consumers see the logotypes
and emblems when there have been different placement alternatives and discuss the
best placement for the brand ambassadors while distributing the marketing
communication messages. Locating emblem and logotype with the advertising
message should be very well balanced, so all of the elements can be perceived clearly
and none of the pieces should be lost through the communication. This study aims
to figure out the best alternative to offer emblem, logotype and the advertising
message in an advertising pack shot.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Brand logotype/emblem

Brand concept has many different dimensions, seen and unseen. Foley and
Kendrick defines brand as “…a set of promises, associations, images, and emotions
that companies create to build loyalty with their customers” [1]. As brands have been
defined over and over again, the sensual elements identifying the brand are always
included. Color, logotype, emblem, scent etc. are all included in the brand package.

Logotype can be defined as the typical characteristic font and shape used to
write the brand’s name continuously. Logotype also includes the decorative and
design attribute of the typeface, where the color and the placement also get the
importance as the typography [2]. As a result a representative logotype has a
differentiating, unique style and color of writing. Even though the logotype by name
includes the meaning of owning and representing the whole brand name, it is a term
that is generally confused with emblem. Emblem on the other hand is a
representation of a brand with shapes color and design but without any typography.

Logotype and emblem, from the brand identity design point of view, are
complementary elements of visual short presentation of brand, which aims to
symbolize all the value and promises a brand has to offer to its potential customers
[3]. This study focuses on not only on the brand signature perspective of the
logotype but also the usage of emblem as an advertising element.

2.2. Brand measurements

Brand and marketing communication efforts are usually high budget efforts,
which require marketers to evaluate the results very carefully and qualitatively.
Advertising effectiveness measurements are especially crucial for marketing
communication companies to secure the proof of their effectiveness.

Pre-test and post-test approaches for integrated marketing communication
measurements have been widely used since 1950. These marketing communication
effectiveness measurements focus on four different steps: awareness, information
(interest), attitude and action [4].

Measurement actions differ from the other marketing communication
measurements with the data source. Some companies review the sales results to see
the short term and long term effects of the marketing communication activities.
Even though this method has many problems, companies tend to find sales, market
share and profit figures more understandable than the attention, interest and
attitude measurements.
Classical brand awareness measurements are depending their theoretical ground on the assumption that if the brain receives stimuli, it processes and stores the data in the memory. This assumption relies on the conscious process of observational learning. Short-term or long-term memories differ with the stimulus and the connections are built by brain while storing it [5]. The problem of this kind of attention and learning measurements are that these kinds of studies need a starting base for comparison since measurements are over the recall process.

Classical brand interest and brand attitude measurements are more complex than the attention measurements. The methods usually use requires the researcher to ask directly to the customer about their interest or attitude. This might not be always the best way to gather the information, since the customers might not know or not willing to answer. This also depends on the assumption that the marketing communication process causes a conscious learning path and the consumers are aware of all the information that they receive.

Attention studies on the other hand have been evaluated with mechanical base measurements for some time now. The pupil or pulse measurements are tested and accepted as the signs of increased attention and even interest [6] [7]. Marketing and consumer science are recently borrowing other technology from medicine and use EEG, MRI and other medical diagnostic equipment to understand how the consumer/people response to marketing stimulants.

2.3. Eye tracking

Eye tracking is simply the methodology in which the eye movements are observed. The gaze and the head pose are the two main criteria for distinguishing the direction a human is looking at [8] and this gaze is usually the interest of the psychology and neurobehavioral studies. There are three different muscle pairs which allow the human eye to move to sides, up and down and rotate. Eye movements are not just limited to the muscles but also have a different dimension with the eye pupils. [9].

There are different types of eye movements, which are modeled to understand the relation with the eye movement, attention, interest, learning and memory. Conjunctive movements include movements where both eyes are parallel in movement, while disjunctive movements define where two eyes have different directions and movements [10]. Conjunctive movements are more meaningful to evaluate while processing different information coming from two different optical sources is not always very easy and healthy. The major eye movements which base the eye tracking measurement models and systems are these three;

- Fixation is one of the most important conjunctive movement, where the eye remains still on a certain point between 150-600 milliseconds. Fixation is the only period where the visual data could be processed in the brain [10]. Fixation remains on the basis of the eye tracking studies, which relate to memory since it is the only eye movement, which allows the brain to process the data. Even though the fixation refers to a single point, human eye fovea covers an angle of 2° which makes the fixation point a bit larger than a single location but an area. The fixation center is still the center of attention but the fixation impact is larger than this point itself [11]. That usually allows researchers to build a fixation area map. Some models focus on fixation duration to understand the main attention element while some of the models focus on the fixation points themselves. [9]
-Saccades could be defined as the movements in-between fixations. Eye movements are continuous but the direction point can be changed with outer stimuli or conscious processes [10]. These shifts take very short periods but still could be measured and allow researchers to see the eye tracking paths.

-Pursuit movements are possible during dynamic scenes and include moving material on a static background or moving background itself.

The studies on eye tracking, especially on eye fixation are aimed to understand the stimuli which have captured the respondents’ attention. Defining the attention map or the object could help the researcher to understand how to capture one’s attention while it is intended. Neuromarketing or consumer neuroscience studies aim to understand the ways to capture the attention of customers with advertising, web sites or at the point of purchase. The result of the logotype placement studies could help the marketers to change the logotype place and make it more attractive for the customers [12] or measure the degree to which consumers focus on any stimuli related to the brand [13]. For point of purchase eye tracking studies fixation on a product considers as evaluation process of a product purchase by those consumers [14]. As it can be seen the fixation is not only a measurement of attention but also can be modeled to link to the memory [15].

Web sites are another very widely used field of eye tracking measurements. Studies show that, text typo, size and color has a significant correlation with saccade duration [16]. When the image features gain importance for websites these features should be considered important for the other visual stimuli. The eye tracking studies show that especially at the web site interaction, people have the tendency to choose a “reference point” for themselves to navigate in the system and decide on their eye movements. [17]. Most of the time, the design of the web site helps people to find their reference points easily but if there is not a significant reference point people tend to develop “F style gaze”, which focuses the fixation on top left and decreasing level of fixation while viewing to the right and to the bottom of the web page [18] [19].

2.4. Eye movement evaluation models and usage

The relation of the eye movements with the stimuli creates different attention models. Le Muer et. al. [20] summarize and group the attention models under two different titles:

Bottom up or stimuli driven attention models are based on the external effect. In this model the attention is created with the incoming source of data, not intended by the responder. The main idea is that the stimuli are sensory driven and the selective process of data evaluation is non-existent.

Top-down or goal driven attention model includes both the external stimuli and the internal goal altogether to form a cognitive and intentional attention model. In the top-down attention model the respondent is not just objected to a stimulus but also has a purpose of processing those stimuli voluntarily [20].

These two models have very different outcomes of eye tracking modeling. When the eye tracking measurements are evaluated fixation is usually associated with the attention point/s of the respondents. If the searching or evaluating kind of behavior (like visiting a web page or processing brand on a store shelf etc.) has an end purpose, then the researcher needs to define his/her model as a top-down model and also needs to include the success of the intended outcome for the research.
3. Research methodology

The aim of this study is to understand the eye movement (gaze) of the participants and define the best location for a brand logotype/emblem. The eye tracking study aims to understand if the bottom up (with no search intention) reviews of pack shots (brand message at the end of the advertising including brand logotype and emblem) show any significant pattern for emblem placement or not.

The study uses nine different brands from different industries. Advertisements are shown to the participants and the pack shot scene remains available for 5 seconds after every advertisement. During this period the participants’ eye movements are measured and mapped.

The sample of the study consists of 24 volunteers (12 males and 12 females) between the ages of 18-32. All of the brands are familiar to the participants, prior. The participants take a short survey to make sure that they have no prior negative perception towards any brands.

Participants are asked to sit down in a homey living room environment where they would not feel extra agitated because of the measurement. The eye tracking device is set in front of them while they view the advertisements. All of the participants have the same distance to the monitor and the eye tracking devices are adjusted for their posture and height.

After the eye tracking measurements, collected data is analyzed and average gaze plot of all 24 participants are reported as heat map results.

4. Results

The accumulated results of the eye tracking fixation points for each advertisement pack shot are shown in each figure (Figure 1-Figure 9). The Mapping focused on the hot spots, which means more fixated points. Higher fixated areas are shown with red, less with yellow and the least with green, whereas the other parts shown in the pack shots clearly did not get any fixation.

Figure 1. Eye Tracking Results for “Arçelik” Brand
Figure 1 shows Arcelik a house goods brand from Turkey. As seen in Figure 1 the emblem (red rectangular shape) received no fixation while the logotype and even the website address received some fixation. The hot spot for this pack shot is almost the center of the image.

Figure 2 is a pack shot of a bank advertisement of Garanti Bank brand. The clover emblem had no hot spots while the brand logotype and the message had different hotspots on the image.

Figure 3 shows Turkcell brand a Turkish GSM operator’s advertising pack shot with several small hot points on the logotype where there were no hot spots on the emblem. As shown in Figure 1-3, all of the emblems for these pack shots were placed on the left beginning of the logotypes an did not get any fixation.
Figure 4 shows the pack shot of another bank, with a left emblem placed on the right hand side, after the logotype. Denizbank brand logotype receives small hot spots on the logotype while the emblem has a relatively larger hotspot.

Figure 5 belongs to Turkish Airlines company advertisement’s pack shot where the logotype and emblem both received the hotspots. The beginning logotype has a greater fixation area compared to the emblem.
In Figure 6, Timberland brand appeal and outdoor accessories company pack shot also has the emblem placed on the right hand side of the logotype. The hot spot of fixation is on the emblem. The logotype has fewer hot spots.

Figure 7 belongs to automobile company Renault brand’s pack shot, in which the emblem was placed on the top. The hot spots are placed on the emblem.
Figure 8 shows Fiat Doblo brand’s pack shot where the major hot spots are located on the logotype + emblem and the message of the pack shot. Additionally, there is another logotype and emblem which represents the distributor of the brand in Turkey on the left bottom side of the pack shot. Logotype (on the right) receives hot spots while the emblem receives no fixation.

The last figure shows the pack shot of Toyota brand. The emblem is located on the top of the pack shot and receives the hottest point of the fixation, while logotype and message also receive hot spots.

The results shot different positions of different emblems, right, left and the top on the pack shots. The hot spot locations show easy to recognize positioning of
differences between right and left emblem positioning. Top positioning also shows differences compared to right-left positioning.

5. Conclusion

The aim of this study is to understand the bottom-up fixation points of the pack shot and understand if the consumers see emblem located on the left, right and the top of the logotypes differently. The stimuli as the pack shot are mapped to understand the fixation points and how these fixation points are related to the brands’ logotype, emblem or message in the pack shot.

The participants could not get fixated to the emblems that are on the left hand side of the logotypes. Even though the general understanding refers to “people read from left to right”, these results show that the left side of the logotype is a blind spot and are not detected by the participant. The main reason is the people read from left to right do not see

On the other hand, the right hand side emblem placements receive an important part of the eye fixation. These three (Figure 4-Figure 6) pack shots also show readability of logotype. More area of fixation gives the brand communication a better chance of effectiveness.

Placement of the emblem on the top of the logotype has more covered area compared to both right and left hand side emblem placement. Putting the emblem on the top successfully ends up participants to cover and even fixate almost all the material on the pack shots. These results show that the installation of the emblem on the top of the advertising materials produces the best result to achieve the maximum exposure of the whole material. Figure 8 has an exception of “Doblo” brand logotype which should also be separately studied.

The sample size of 24 people and lack of numerical analyses of the eye tracking data could arguably seem like an obstacle of the study to be generalized. But the results show the pure human behavior which is limited to very small proportions of time and cannot be manipulated. The results of these studies divert the advertising and marketing practitioners to another direction. The results should be tested with different additional features, like color, size, movement etc. to get a better understanding.

Another limitation of this study is the lack of information regarding the beginning familiarity of the participants with the logotypes/emblems. Dreze and Hussherr’s research (however it was focused on the internet advertising) concludes that the repetition is more important than the size, shape, color, animation or the message of the advertising. In this study the level of participants’ interaction with the logotype/emblem or the brand communication cannot be known and should be regarded while evaluating the results [21].

For further research, it is recommended to evaluate different demographic groups separately and compare them since the literature suggests that the eye tracking results may differ for these different groups [22][21]. The fact that people are using social media in their communication activities in different transactions and sectors (bank, tourism sector) [23] [24] [25] opens the way of examining the way advertising messages are perceived in online communication media and platforms.
References


