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CONTENTS

Sr. No.	TITLE & NAME OF THE AUTHOR (S)	Page No.
1.	BRAND THEOLOGY: CONDITIONING AND CONFIGURING CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR ANM FARUKH	1
2.	IMPACT OF EMPLOYEE SATISFACTION AND UNION – MANAGEMENT RELATION ON ENHANCED CUSTOMER SATISFACTION- REGRESSION ANALYSIS: A STUDY OF ANDHRA PRADESH STATE ROAD TRANSPORT CORPORATION (A.P.S.R.T.C) A. R. VIJAYA CHANDRAN, DR. MOHAMMED ABBAS ALI & DR. V. M. PRASAD	5
3.	A STUDY OF THE ATTITUDE OF THE YOUTH TOWARDS ADOPTION OF INTERNET ENTERPRENEURSHIP IN NIGERIA DR. I C NWAIZUGBO & V N O AGHARA	7
4.	THE IMPACT OF SMALL BUSINESS MANAGEMENT ON SOCIETAL MARKETING PRACTICES IN LAGOS MEGA CITY, NIGERIA DR. HALIRU BALA	11
5.	IMPACT OF HUMAN ERROR IN MAINTENANCE MANAGEMENT AND MINIMIZING METHODOLOGY N. K. K. PRASANNA & TUSHAR N. DESAI	15
6.	INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIP-AN ATTEMPT AT QUANTIFYING IT T K PARAMESWARAN NAIR	21
7.	PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL SYSTEM IN TEXTILE INDUSTRY WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO TIRUPUR- AN EXPLORATORY STUDY DR. S. KUPPUSAMY, E.DEEPA & M. STELLA	27
8.	MANAGERIAL PERCEPTION TOWARDS INDUSTRIAL SUBSIDY AND ITS IMPACT ON INDUSTRIALIZATION IN UTTARAKHAND: AN EMPIRICAL STUDY DR. D S CHAUBEY, SIDHESWAR PATRA & PRAVEEN KUKRETI	33
9.	EMPLOYEE'S DISSONANCE TOWARDS SAFETY, HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENT (SHE) IN CONFECTIONERY INDUSTRY DR.MU.SUBRAHMANIAN & P. RENGANATHAN	40
10.	ACCEPTANCE AND USAGE OF MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SYSTEM (MIS) IN SMALL SCALE INDUSTRIES C.G. RAMACHANDRA & T.R. SRINIVAS	43
11.	DEVELOPING RIGHT HUMAN EQUATION BY SELF KNOWLEDGE FOR CHANGE MANAGEMENT: LEARNING FROM INDIAN MYTHOLOGY DR. K. V. ALIAS. BALAJI, DR. M.SIVAGNANASUNDARAM & BIDYANAND JHA	47
12.	A STUDY ON WORK- LIFE BALANCE AMONG WOMEN TEACHERS WORKING IN SELF-FINANCING ENGINEERING INSTITUTIONS S.PATTU MEENAKSHI & DR. K. RAVICHANDRAN	51
13.	THE EFFECT OF TEAM PROCESS AND KEY COMPENSATION FACTORS WHILE MOTIVATING HIGH PERFORMANCE IN PHARMACEUTICAL SALES TEAMS DR. SURENDRA KUMAR	56
14.	SUPPLY CHAIN MANAGEMENT IN TWO WHEELER INDUSTRY - A STUDY ON HERO HONDA AND BAJAJ AUTO SUPPLY CHAIN PRACTICES R.VENKATESHWAR RAO.	61
15.	OPTIMUM PERFORMANCE OF TURMERIC EXTRACTION FIRMS: AN INPUT-OUTPUT ANALYSIS V.ABIRAMI & DR. HANSA LYSANDER MANOHAR	67
16.	ANALYSIS OF PERSISTENCY IN THE MONTHLY COIMBATORE RAINFALL TAMIL SELVI .S & SAMUEL SELVARAJ. R	71
17.	PROS AND CONS OF IMPLEMENTING EMPLOYEE EMPOWERMENT IN SERVICE SECTOR- A META ANALYSIS OF RESEARCH LITERATURE ELIZABETH GEORGE & DR. ZAKKARIYA K.A.	73
18.	STUDY OF CONSUMER AWARENESS ABOUT E-BANKING SERVICES AND ITS APPLICATION IN SELECT AREA OF PUNE CITY KRISHNA MOHAN SHARMA & VINEETA DEOLIA	77
19.	CSR – A NEW ROLE ENTRUSTED TO EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS PRAGATI CHAUHAN & YOGITA SHARMA	80
20.	A STUDY ON EFFECTIVENESS OF CAPITAL STRUCTURE AMONG SELECTED PRIVATE TEXTILE COMPANIES IN INDIA VIVEK SUBRAMANIAM	84
21.	IMPACT OF GLOBAL FINANCIAL CRISIS ON BUSINESS CYCLES IN DEVELOPING ASIA AND THE DECOUPLING HYPOTHESIS DR. RAVI SINGLA	91
22.	SYSTEMATIC RISK AND RETURN ANALYSIS IN SECURITY MARKET NIVEDHITA.J & REVATHI.P	97
23.	ASSETS FORMATION AND BUSINESS IN PUNJAB NATIONAL BANK: A CASE STUDY NAMITA MAINI	102
24.	GOVERNANCE AND RESPONSIBILITY - A JOINT VENTURE (WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO TATA) RADHAKRISHNA MISHRA & MALAVIKA PATTHAIK	105
25.	FACTORS EFFECTING READING DECISION OF PRINT ADVERTISEMENT: AN EXPLORATORY AND EXPERIMENTAL STUDY ANUPAMA SUNDAR & JATIN PANDEY	108
26.	WORKING CAPITAL MANAGEMENT AND PROFITABILITY –A CASE STUDY OF BALRAMPUR CHINNI MILLS LIMITED DR. P. C. NARWARE	111
27.	ROLE OF ICT MICRO ENTERPRISES ON WOMEN DEVELOPMENT IN KERALA DR. C.S. SIVA PRAKASH	115
28.	ENTREPRENEURSHIP AMONG RURAL WOMEN -A STUDY IN ANDHRA PRADESH DR. NANU LUNAVATH	122
29.	BUSINESS EXCELLENCE MODELS: QUANTIFYING THE IMPLEMENTATION AND MATURITY LEVEL – A STATISTICAL APPROACH RUCHIK GANDHI & JUBIN MEHTA	130
30.	STUDENT'S ATTITUDE TOWARDS APPLICATION OF STATISTICS: A STUDY OF UNIVERSITY OF JAMMU ANJU THAPA & ANKUSH BHARTI	135
	REQUEST FOR FEEDBACK	138

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FACTORS EFFECTING READING DECISION OF PRINT ADVERTISEMENT: AN EXPLORATORY AND EXPERIMENTAL STUDY

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ABSTRACT

The paper identifies the factors that affect the reading decision of students in print advertisements. A preliminary study was conducted to identify the constructs followed by questionnaire design, analysis and interpretation. The three factors identified were font effect, source effect and content effect. An experimental study investigated how font size and font type would influence the appeal of advertisements based solely on appearance, and if that would impact the likelihood that the advertisement would be viewed. Two ways to achieve this goal is use the best Font size and font type. If the advertisement is not readable, then the subjects will not be able to appreciate the advertiser's effort or may not decide to look further into the advertisement details. The experiment revealed a significant impact of font size and type. The most proffered combination is of big font size in normal font type.

KEYWORDS

Advertisement readability, Font effect, Font size, Font type, Source Effect.

INTRODUCTION

American marketing association Defines marketing as "Marketing is the activity, set of institutions, and processes for creating, communicating, delivering, and exchanging offerings that have value for customers, clients, partners, and society at large." (Approved October 2007)

The definition deals with communicating which is also the promotional part of marketing mix. Promotion mix is defined as the various communication techniques such as advertising, personal selling, sales promotion, and public relations/product publicity available to a marketer that are combined to achieve specific goals.

In the promotion mix advertising plays an important role. Any announcement or persuasive message placed in the mass media in paid or donated time or space by an identified individual, company, or organization.

For advertisement to reach people mass media is essential, print media is one such medium which serves the purpose. The print media is not intrusive like radio and TV, and they generally require some effort on the part of the reader for the advertising message to have impact. For this reason it is often referred to as high involvement mediaⁱ.

Since it is referred as high involvement media it demands greater conviction to make audience read the intended message. The message in print media is usually through the use of characters and images.

Characters form the unit of the message therefore must be clear and appealing the two factors that can make or break the attention of the audience are Font size (also referred as point) and font type which can be termed as "Font Effect".

CSS defines the font size to be the size of the font when set solid. This means that the height of the font is the distance from the highest point in the highest glyph to the lowest point in the lowest glyph

Font Type here refers basically to the presentation of characters and has been classified into simple that are easy to read and complex those are not very legible

An evaluation of popular print advertisements brought to notice that the font type and size varies to a large extent in print advertisements. A large part of the print space remains unutilized still the fonts are not legible in terms of size and font type these observations led the researcher to consider the font effect in the evaluation of print media.

Gary L. Clark, Peter F. Kaminski, Gene Brown uses Gunning's Fog Index to compare the readability levels of 101 trade journal advertisements to the readability levels of articles in 13 trade journals randomly selected for analysis.ⁱⁱⁱ

Steven B Leichter, Janice A Nieman, Robert W Moore, Peggy Collins and Anne Rhodes conducted a study on the readability of written instructional materials for diabetic patients it argues assessment should be carried out by multiple formulas to produce a more representative index of reading difficulty than the application of a single test.^{iv}

DC Spadaro, LA Robinson, and LT Smith described tests that provide relatively simple methods for assessing readability levels.^v

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A preliminary study with 10 students was conducted to identify the constructs that might affect the reading decision of an advertisement by students. A questionnaire was prepared and administered to 30 students the standard deviation of the responses was substituted in the formula

Sample size = $((Z * S)/e)^2$

The required sample size was 110. The questionnaire was analyzed using SPSS. The reliability of the questions was found to be .89 which is above .7 hence the questions are reliable.

An exploratory factor analysis was done on the responses to find the predominant factors that affect the reading decision. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy had the value of .810 which is greater than .5 hence the sample was adequate for factor analysis. Three factors were extracted based on Eigen values greater than 1. The factors were named Font Effect, Source Effect and Content Effect by the researcher after the analysis of the questions that compose each factors

Next and experiment was conducted to test the font effect identified through factor analysis

PARTICIPANTS

A total of 30 participants, from the JSSCMS Mysore, completed a questionnaire for this experiment. The reason they were chosen were due to their aptitude to look at the advertisement from the rational view and allocate score without biases.

DESIGN

This study used two 2 (Font type: Times New Roman (Simple), Informal Roman (complex)) x 3 (font size: 8-point font (Small), 12-point font (medium), 16-point font (Large)) within design. The dependent variable was rating score.

The study uses Factorial Design with two factors experimental design. This type of design is employed when we have two or more independent factors in the present study font type and font size are the independent factors and the score is the dependent factor.

MATERIALS

Six custom made advertisements were created using the font size and font type combinations Containing same general content and format. The questionnaire included rating those advertisements with maximum 10-point.

PROCEDURE

The study took place at JSSCMS in the SJCE Campus Mysore. The 3rd semester MBA class were included to participate in the experiment. The packs of advertisements with different font type and size combinations were given to thirty students randomly. Each participant rated each advertisement that he/she received.

Experiment took approximately ten minutes.

RESULTS

At 95% confidence level

Font size had a significant main effect, $F = 231$, $p < .05$; 16-point font (large) ($M=7.3$) was rated most positive.

Font type had a significant main effect, $F = 61.5$, $p < .05$; Times New Roman font (Simple) ($M=4.867$) was rated most positive.

The 2 (font type) x 3 (font size) has a significant interaction effect= 4.455 , $p < .05$;

The advertisement with Times New Roman font (Simple) and 16-point font (large) ($M=8.6$) was rated most positive.

The means score plot shows a steep upwards bent as font size is increased from medium to large thus indicating the chances of reading an advertisement increases drastically as font size is increased from medium to higher size.

CONCLUSION

The study identifies three factors that influence the reading decision of an advertisement. The factors are font effect, Content Effect and Source effect. The study also shows that large and simple font size and type combination are preferred by audience of a print advertisement. It brings into concern the complex font and small font sizes used in many print advertisements to give additional information is not effective. Many observations showed that inspire of the existence of free space small font sizes have been used instead the free space can be efficiently utilised for bigger font sizes.

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ⁱⁱ Herbert Krugman, (1966-67), "the measurement of advertising involvement", Public Opinion Quarterly, pg 583-596

ⁱⁱⁱ The readability of advertisements and articles in trade journals, Gary L. Clark, Peter F. Kaminski, Gene Brown, Industrial Marketing Management, Volume 19, Issue 3, August 1990, Pages 251–260

^{iv} Readability of Self-Care Instructional Pamphlets for Diabetic Patients, Steven B Leichter, Janice A Nieman, Robert W Moore, Peggy Collins and Anne Rhodes, Diabetes journal, November/December 1981 vol. 4 no. 6 627-630

^v Assessing readability of patient information materials, DC Spadaro, LA Robinson, and LT Smith, American Journal of Health-System Pharmacy February 1, 1980 vol. 37 no. 2 215-221

APPENDIX**TABLE 1: RELIABILITY STATISTICS**

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.899	25

TABLE 2: KMO AND BARTLETT'S TEST

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.	Approx. Chi-Square	.810
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	df	296.833
	Sig.	15
		.000

TABLE 3: ROTATED COMPONENT MATRIXA

	Component		
	1	2	3
I prefer big font size in print advertisements	.778		
I prefer coloured fonts in print advertisements	.718		
I prefer simple fonts to complex fonts in an advertisement	.891		
I prefer newspaper advertisement than other print advertisements		.758	
I prefer magazine advertisement than other print advertisements		0.767	
The paper quality decides my reading decision of an advertisement		0.657	
The heading has an impact on my reading decision			.571
I prefer images to text in a print advertisement			.605
I like cartoon characters in an advertisement			.559
Italics in an advertisement attract my attention	.538		
Bold letters in an advertisement attract my attention	.771		
Underlined letters in an advertisement attract my attention	.853		
The background colour of a print advertisement attracts my attention			.630
The justification of text in an advertisement affects my reading decision			.778
Highlighted text in an advertisement attracts my attention	.718		
The number of paragraphs in an advertisement have an impact on my reading decision			.891
The spacing between the words have an impact on my reading decision	.510		
I prefer the pictures in an advertisement to be on the left side of the ad space			.741
The headlines of the print ad should be attractive			0.784
The information in the ads should be of larger font	0.679		
I don't read print ads if it's not in normal font.	.729		
The headlines in a print ad should be in large font size	.842		
The amount of information given in the ad should be less.			.894
The emphasis of information should be only on key /attributes/USP points			.526

TABLE 4

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

Dependent Variable: Score

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Model	675.200 ^a	6	112.533	306.909	.000
FontSize	169.400	2	84.700	231.000	.000
FontType	22.533	1	22.533	61.455	.000
FontSize * FontType	3.267	2	1.633	4.455	.023
Error	8.800	24	.367		
Total	684.000	30			

a. R Squared = .987 (Adjusted R Squared = .984)

TABLE 5

Estimated Marginal Means

1. FontSize

Dependent Variable: Score

FontSize	Mean	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval	
			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Small	1.800	.191	1.405	2.195
Medium	2.900	.191	2.505	3.295
Large	7.300	.191	6.905	7.695

2. FontType

Dependent Variable: Score

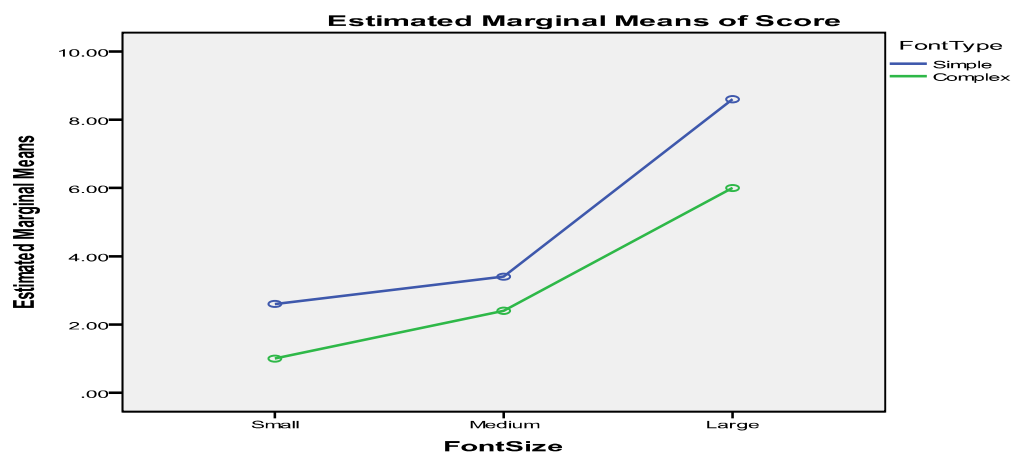
FontType	Mean	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval	
			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Simple	4.867	.156	4.544	5.189
Complex	3.133	.156	2.811	3.456

3. FontSize * FontType

Dependent Variable: Score

FontSize	FontType	Mean	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval	
				Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Small	Simple	2.600	.271	2.041	3.159
	Complex	1.000	.271	.441	1.559
Medium	Simple	3.400	.271	2.841	3.959
	Complex	2.400	.271	1.841	2.959
Large	Simple	8.600	.271	8.041	9.159
	Complex	6.000	.271	5.441	6.559

FIGURE 1



REQUEST FOR FEEDBACK

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At the very outset, International Journal of Research in Commerce, IT and Management (IJRCM) acknowledges & appreciates your efforts in showing interest in our present issue under your kind perusal.

I would like to request you to supply your critical comments and suggestions about the material published in this issue as well as on the journal as a whole, on our E-mails i.e. **infoijrcm@gmail.com** or **info@ijrcm.org.in** for further improvements in the interest of research.

If you have any queries please feel free to contact us on our E-mail infoijrcm@gmail.com.

I am sure that your feedback and deliberations would make future issues better – a result of our joint effort.

Looking forward an appropriate consideration.

With sincere regards

Thanking you profoundly

Academically yours

Sd/-

Co-ordinator

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In this age of Commerce, Economics, Computer, I.T. & Management and cut throat competition, a group of intellectuals felt the need to have some platform, where young and budding managers and academicians could express their views and discuss the problems among their peers. This journal was conceived with this noble intention in view. This journal has been introduced to give an opportunity for expressing refined and innovative ideas in this field. It is our humble endeavour to provide a springboard to the upcoming specialists and give a chance to know about the latest in the sphere of research and knowledge. We have taken a small step and we hope that with the active co-operation of like-minded scholars, we shall be able to serve the society with our humble efforts.

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