
Headlines Readers' Avoidance Attitude Towards Visual Material? Effects of the Camcorder Symbol on Selective Exposure to Headlines

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Abstract: Two quasi-experiments were conducted to test the effects of the camcorder symbol, a “peripheral cue” attached to headlines with either low or high utility, and the role of verbal and visual cognitive style in the process of headlines selection.

Three experimental groups were exposed to online headlines with camcorder symbol of a created portal and the control group to headlines without the camcorder ($N = 250$).

In both experiments students who preferred visual information processing chose more headlines with the camcorder. However, those with high scores on the verbal scale chose fewer headlines without the camcorder. In addition, those with high scores on both verbal and visual scales selected more and more headlines with low utility, avoiding those with the camcorder.

In the second experiment ($N = 160$) in experimental group respondents' dominant cognitive style was primed with a camcorder. Primed respondents with dominant visual cognitive style chose more headlines with the camcorder than respondents in the control group. Priming decreased the selection of headlines with the camcorder among respondents high on both scales, and average scores on verbal scale and low on visual scale, confirmed by eye-tracker.

Keywords: selective exposure, Dual Coding Theory, Informational Utility Model, Elaboration Likelihood Model, eye tracking

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