

Gestalt in Research Methodology

Vikash Konathala

National Institute of Design R&D campus, Bengaluru

Abstract:- In the Research methodology Course, we have undergone the Finest Methods like Observation research, Contextual Enquiry, Questionnaire, survey method, Unstructured and Structured interview of Users in the context of Refrigerator. “Gestalt in Research Methodology” is new research to observe and find out the connections between all these methods and how Gestalt is hidden in the very structure of Research Methodology, playing a crucial role in connecting elements, which leads us to perceive the Research about refrigerators as a whole. As a Design student, the aspect of perceiving “Research as Design” is of prime importance and Exploring the Laws of Gestalt in the Research methodology, is a necessity. Hence, the need for further research on Gestalt in Research Methodology is Emphasized.

Keywords:- Gestalt , Research Methodology, Questionnaire, Contextual Enquiry, Design.

I. INTRODUCTION

It is very important to consider Emic and Etic aspects of Research while conducting the six research methods. The Analysis of Correlation between the six research methods and Gestalt is done in this research and the Gestalt paradigms are evaluated with examples from the recent research carried out on Refrigerator. The prime importance of analysis is to consider the Users perspective and Designer’s perspective while evaluating the paradigms of Gestalt in Research Methodology. There are two dimensions to this research, they are Observation of Gestalt in the Information gathered while doing research and Gestalt in the structure of Research methods. The Laws of Gestalt give us a clear understanding of User perception of subjects and Objects. Hence, it is very user centric and user Psychology dependent. The Research about Refrigerators is also carried out giving a major importance to the user, treating the user as Master for the Process of Interaction with the product. Hence, the inferences will be made in a user centric manner.

II. METHOD

The method carried out to do the Research about “Gestalt in Research Methodology” is Observation Research and it is a new perception of Looking at Research Methodology. Hence, the research is pure observation and Analogy Correlation. The observation is purely Inferential and Qualitative.

III. FINDINGS

Laws of Gestalt are:-

(i) Law of Figure and Ground,

It states that the Figure cannot be perceived properly without proper Ground to it. Relating to this law, In the case of Research on Refrigerators we have conducted the research purely in the Indian context. Hence the Indian context is perceived as a ground here with more number of Variables involved and the Figure is refrigerator. Indian context includes Regional differences in using the Fridge, Cultural aspects and the mindset of people.

(ii) The law of Proximity,

It states about the relativity of the elements and how they are interrelated with each other or representing other aspects. Here, in the context of Refrigerator research, there is a proximity of Refrigerator compartments, usage aspects (time, frequency, period), food items and other Fast moving Consumer Goods, each of them leads to the requirement of others and dependent on each other. Hence, the Proximity analogy is justified.

(iii) Law of Good continuation states

The user always perceives the majority of aligned elements as a single group or chunk. In the context of Refrigerator research we have done Affinity Mapping, in which we have organized the User centric information in smaller chunks which has resembled the Law of Good continuation in Analysing User experience with Refrigerator.

(iv) Law of Similarity states

The human eye tends to perceive similar elements in a design as a single, complete picture or a group. In this context of Refrigerator research, it is observed that the users unconventional use of Refrigerator is predominant in Indian context, here, the user is using different compartments randomly putting random items adjusting the space and using the refrigerator unconventionally. Hence, it is observed that the user is perceiving the parts in a refrigerator as the group and registering them subconsciously as a whole to utilize.

(v) Law of Closure:

It states that we humans have a tendency to perceive the form as complete even though it is incomplete, just to rationalize the whole. This Law of closure is found in Researcher’s Psychological temptation to fill the gaps which were left by the user, by his/her own assumptions. This generally happens in the process of collecting the Data or information from the user/s. Hence, it is observed that the

Purity of User Information collected and utilized in the research, is justified by Law of Closure.

IV. GESTALT IN SIX RESEARCH METHODS AND THE PROCESSES

(i) *Observation research Method:*

If we clearly observe in the Observation research method, there are these aspects called Qualitative Recording, Inferential observation, Semi structured and Casual observation. All these categories are related to the Human Psychology of Handling things and the environment around them. We as Researchers, observe this entire action process of User as an Apprentice without influencing the user while performing his task. Hence, we are experiencing the user action and information he/she communicates as a Form all together. Then We are Reducing the Original complex Form of information (Reality) to the simplest Form(Analysable information). Here the Law of Pragnanz is justified.

(ii) *Contextual Inquiry:*

In Contextual inquiry the base of the Inquiry lies on the four Principles like Focus, context of cleaning, Task allotment to the user, apprentice level observation, Interpretation. All these aspects are in a line and they are procedural. Hence, we can assert that these Aligned elements can be perceived as a group which are interpreted as being more related than unrelated. It is the Law of Good Continuation.

(iii) *A day in a Life:*

“A day in a Life” is a Qualitative observation/recording of the Researcher/user’s perspective about the Process of their intervention and interaction with the product in 24 hours. It can be an intangible or Inanimate perspective of recording the experience of a product, assuming the product as a character. This process of Qualitative recording can be correlated with the Law of Common Fate. It states that the Humans tend to perceive elements moving in the same direction as being more related than the elements that are stationary or moving in different directions. Here if we observe, the recording of the Process is done on the basis of Time frame. So, the process of this recording, though having many directions of exploration, is still travelling forward in the direction of time with a certain time period of observation.

(iv) *Survey,*

By Survey method, the quantitative research is given a prime importance through sampling a set of users and taking necessary surveys through Questions. This survey emphasizes the Users mindset and user’s decision making. Hence, the different directions based on the region, locality, climate, family, Genes etc, are to be considered. Hence, there is a requirement of perceiving the Ground of User before evaluating his Figure (His interaction with the product). The Law of Figure and Ground is observed and correlated here.

(v) *Structured Interview,*

The structured Interview is also done considering the set of users as a sample and interviewing them regarding the Product Interaction with a predefined, created, structured questionnaire. For that also the Ground(Regional, cultural background of the user has to be considered).

(vi) *Unstructured Interview:*

The Law of Figure and Ground is also observed in the Unstructured Interview, in which the User is posed with open ended questions and there is a room for User’s suggestions and opinions in different directions. This is a Form which has multiple dimensions. Here the Ground is Indian user and the Figure is a Refrigerator.

V. CONCLUSION

The very structure of Research Methodology is a Form itself. This Form has multiple directions and dimensions, and it satisfies the Laws of Gestalt. The six methods of Research are also an Interconnected Gestalt similar to a Banyan tree which has different branches but lies on a huge trunk, on the same ground.

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