



Beautiful Nothingness: The Power of Spaciousness

How spacious advertisements enhance organizational creativity, purchase intention, organizational effectiveness, trustworthiness and overall attitude toward the brand

Kevin Cuperus | 1844806

k.cuperus@student.utwente.nl

University of Twente | Enschede
Marketing Communication (MSc)

Dr. Thomas van Rompay

Dr. Mirjam Galetzka

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Abstract

So far research has mainly focussed on how abstract white space in advertisements may steer consumer brand perceptions including quality, sense of luxury, purchase intention and self-reported creativity. The study presented here shows that spacious imagery of nature included in advertisements of a marketing communication agency, which main goal is to develop creative marketing campaigns in cooperation with clients, can have a strong impact on perceived organizational creativity.

The impact of spacious imagery of nature (spacious versus non-spacious), a road toward the horizon (road versus no road) and verbal claims (creative versus direct) in advertisements on organizational creativity, purchase intention, brand evaluation and trustworthiness is measured.

Random people were confronted and asked to fill in the survey on a laptop or iPad. In total, 154 participants participated in the study. Results show that spaciousness has a positive influence on perceived organizational creativity, purchase intention, brand evaluation and trustworthiness. In addition, trustworthiness and perceived organizational effectiveness was influenced by the road in advertisements. Finally, congruent pairings of road and slogan (direct slogan + road) had a positive effect on brand evaluation.

Keywords: spaciousness, brand experience, marketing communication, creativity, effectiveness, nature

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1. Introduction

What do Apple and Google have in common? Both organizations use white space to direct consumers attention. White space can be defined as the visual space around subjects but it does not necessarily have to be white because it can also be described as negative space (Finke, 2001; Robbertson, 1994). However, Apple and Google are not striving to reach the same goal. Google uses a lot of white space on their homepage to effectively draw the eye's focus to the most important element on the page, the search bar. Apple however, uses white space as an element to enhance consumers perception of creativity (Müller, 2010). The difference in approaches is visualized in Figure 1. Apple not only uses white space in advertising, but also in web design, product design en lay out of the offline Apple store in order to increase the perception of creativity.

When focussing on advertisements, consumers are exposed to over a 1000 advertisements on a daily basis (Belch & Belch, 2004). Some of these advertisements are noticed but the majority is processed by our unconscious mind, or simply ignored.

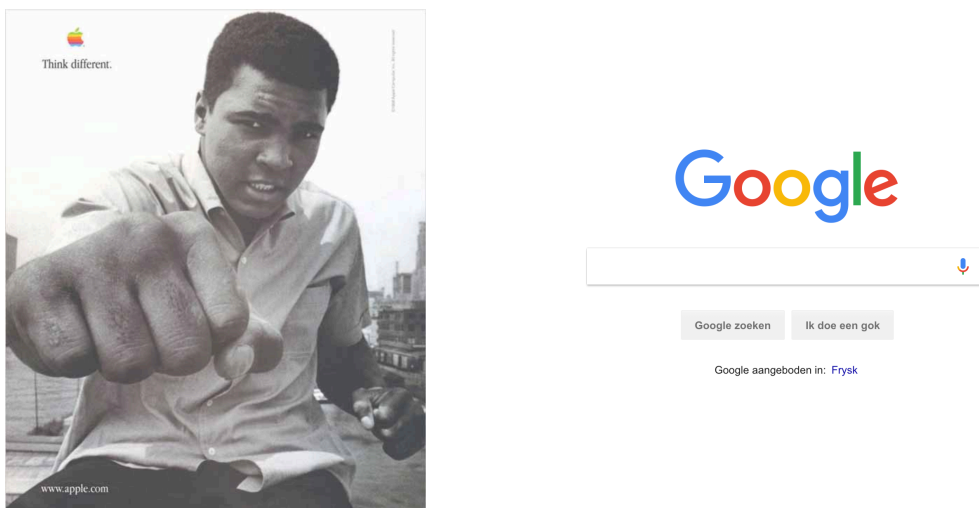


Figure 1. Different use of space: On the left panel: Apple creative advertisement; right panel: Google effective white space

Marketers publish all kinds of advertisements and every one of them is fighting for the consumers' attention. On average, consumers spend at most 5 – 10 seconds looking at a billboard before making a decision about whether they like it and want something to do with it (Taylor, Franke and Bang, 2006). Hence, as an organization performing marketing activities, it is extremely important to use advertisements that are comprehensible and easy to read. In addition, Cogălniceanu (2011), states that advertisements should be persuasive and distinctive from competing advertisements in order to be effective. How could white space enhance the effectiveness of advertisements?

When walking through a random busy shopping street in a fairly populated area, cluttered advertisements screaming for consumers attention are in the majority compared to spacious advertisements. Many clients and managers want to make the most out of their advertising budget and consider white space wasted space (Ambler and Hollier, 2004; Kirmani, 1990). They think it can be used to display more textual or visual information. With a cluttered advertisement as result. Cluttered designs are less effective at communication due to the excessive number of visual cues that detract users from efficient task performance (Rosenholtz, Masfield and Jin, 2005). In addition, Bradshaw and Johari (2002), Morgan (1999) and Parker (1988) argue that white space is critical for organizing content and to differentiate content by providing contrast against textual and visual cues. When effectively used in layouts, white space can create visual structure by defining relationships between elements and draw attention to specific important elements, such as call-to-actions for example (Truchard and Katz-Haas, 1998; White, 2011).

In addition to the positive effects of white space on hard copy or online advertisements, white space also has an impact in real everyday life. Meyers-levy and Zhu (2007) found that

individuals, when exposed to a large open space with high ceilings, became more creative, and experienced feelings of freedom and abstract thinking. Next to that, Van Rompay and Jol (2016) found that spacious and unpredictable environments in nature enhance self-reported creativity among high school students. Use of spaciousness not only has an impact on the creative processes of individuals, Okken, Van Rompay and Pruyn, (2013) found that individuals become more relaxed and disclose more personal information if there is plenty of open space between the two individuals.

As mentioned before, existing research found several positive effects on perceived creativity using spaciousness in real everyday settings. The novelty of this research lies in further exploring the effects of spaciousness in advertisements. Although highly spacious images could feel desolate due to the missing line of sight that will retract your eye to a certain point in the advertisement. Therefore it is interesting to see if results differ if a line of sight is added to the spacious image. Will the organization be evaluated as more effective and goal-oriented if a line of sight is added to a spacious image? In addition, slogans are a vital part of brands and frequently used in advertisements. Therefore we would like to see how various slogans perform in combination with spacious imagery.

It is interesting to see if the results of previous research concerning white space and perceived creativity will be similar to the results of this research where spacious advertisements will be tested in combination with a marketing communication agency. Hence, will the organization indeed be seen as more creative due to spacious advertisements?

Moreover, we hope to find evidence that individuals would be more willing to purchase from a marketing communication agency if the advertisements of this marketing communication agency showed spacious elements. At last, this research is interested in

finding a relationship between spacious imagery and consumer overall attitude toward the brand. Therefore, the following three research questions are proposed in this study:

RQ1: How does the use of spacious imagery in advertisements of a marketing communication agency affect the perceived organizational creativity, trustworthiness, effectiveness, overall attitude and purchase intention of individuals ?

Sub questions

SRQ1: How does the use of a line of sight in advertisements of a marketing communication agency affect the perceived organizational creativity, trustworthiness, effectiveness, overall attitude and purchase intention of individuals ?

SRQ2: How does the use of slogans in advertisements of a marketing communication agency affect the perceived organizational creativity, trustworthiness, effectiveness, overall attitude and purchase intention of individuals ?

2. Literature review

2.1 Understanding brand experience

It is important to get a clear understanding of the concept of brand experience. According to Brakus, Schmitt and Zarantonello (2009), brand experience is “conceptualized as sensations, feelings, cognitions, and behavioral responses evoked by brand-related stimuli that are part of a brand’s design and identity, packaging, communications, and environments. In other words, visual branding can have a huge impact on a positive brand experience.

Nowadays one of the most important visual design elements influencing visual branding is the use of white space. Even though white space is called white, it does not necessarily mean the space must be white. It can be any color, texture, pattern or even a background image. White space is said to contribute to the tone of the overall design and have the qualifications to balance design elements and better organize content to improve the visual communication experience and hence, brand experience (Johnson, 2010; Drewniany and Jewler, 2011).

For instance, research conducted by Pracejus et al. (2006) where undergraduate students examined six different advertisement with varying amounts of white space used. Results showed that white space, in fact, was quite influential in consumer brand perceptions. Respondents saw the advertised product with white space as higher in quality, prestige, trust, and leadership and lower in risk than did people who saw an ad without white space.

To expand the claim of Pracejus, O’Guinn and Olson (2006), Amber and Hollier

(2004); Kirmani (1990) conducted research with 449 respondents to understand the effects of white space in TV commercials. Results showed not only a positive influence on the perception of brand prestige and purchase intention but also showed a positive relation between the perception of advertisements expenses and perceived quality and reliability of the brand.

In addition, Van Rompay and Jol (2016) found that individuals exposed to spacious imagery scored higher on a creativity test than compared to individuals exposed to non-spacious imagery. In line with the above mentioned literature, it is interesting to study how the concept of spaciousness can be translated to advertisements in order for marketers to gain the same benefits. This information might be beneficial for marketers to use in marketing strategies in order to increase marketing potential.

Hence, literature suggests that white space can have a significant impact on a variety of variables including brand experience. Therefore the following hypothesis can be derived:

H1: Spacious advertisements enhance consumers' brand experience.

2.2 Spaciousness and creativity

Organizations can use spaciousness in order to enhance the feeling of creativeness. For instance, Apple Inc. is arguably the most creative brand in the world due to, among other things, frequent use of white space in product and advertisement design. Next to that, Apple Inc. extend this creative experience in the Apple retail stores by using a spacious

mapping of the store. Apple Inc. retail stores basically bring a creative lifestyle into mind through a combination of product design and retail design. Walking into an Apple Inc. retail store is almost like walking into a creative studio where products are not sorted by type but rather displayed on large tables in spacious environments with high ceilings and a lot of glass to enhance the perception of spaciousness.

Olson et al, (2012) conducted 31 phone interviews with creative directors to learn about their reasons to use white space in advertisements. The majority of the creative directors think that white space gives the brand the desired meaning and ultimately sells. White space is used to achieve “visual and graphic balance” but at the same time white space ads have a more creative approach which creates a contrast effect with the other elements to make the ads more salient. In addition, Meyers-Levy and Zhu (2007) and Rompay and Jol (2016) acknowledge the role a spacious environment can play in the perception of creativity. Meyers-Levy and Zhu, (2007) found that individuals, when exposed to high ceilings, experience associations with freedom and abstract thinking which result in creative thinking. In addition, Van Rompay and Jol (2016) found that spacious and unpredictable environments in nature enhance self-reported creativity among high school students.

Hence, spacious environments could have a positive influence on the perception of creativity and a spacious visual branding strategy might increase your creative brand image and will make you stand out from the rest. In creative industries like the marketing communication field of work where thinking of visual marketing campaigns are among the daily activities, organizations will benefit from a positive creative brand image.

These findings demonstrate that spacious imagery has the potential to foster

creativity in individuals. Therefore, a positive effect is plausible between spaciousness and advertisements. In line with the proposed relation between spaciousness and creativity (Meyers-levy and Zhu, 2007; Van Rompay and Jol, 2016; Olsen et al, 2012), it is expected that consumers' exposed to spacious advertisements evaluate the associated organization as more creative. Hence the following hypothesis can be derived:

H2: Spacious advertisements enhance consumers' perceived creativity of the organization.

2.3 Perceived organizational effectiveness

As a consumer starting a relationship with an organization, it is important to have confidence that the organization will meet your expectations. Especially in the marketing communication field of work where the organization often has the creative freedom to come up with a solution for the consumer's question. In order for this process to work fluently the organization often depends on consumers trust that the organization will complete the task successful and in the stated time.

Hence, organizations active in marketing communication, experience a double bind where they have to express their ability to focus, work under pressure and their straightforwardness on the one side and express their creativity and ingenuity on the other side.

Organizations and consumers work together to successfully come up with a solution. They walk the same path in order to succeed. In Western culture this 'path' or 'road' is a recurrent element in metaphors explaining how two or more individuals are heading down the same path (Lakoff and Johnson, 1999).

Metaphors consist of a comparison between two topics in order to make it more interesting, easier to understand or make subjects more vivid. Metaphors including a 'road' are quite frequently used. For example the metaphor "*It has been a long and bumpy road*" which describes a slow and difficult process in order to reach a goal.

Road metaphors are also used to display difficulties in love relationships. "Were heading in different directions" for example, perfectly tells us that the relationship is *not going anywhere* and that the two people involved have to *separate their ways* (Lakoff & Johnson, 1999).

In addition, spacious imagery could feel desolate without a line of sight that will retract your eye to certain points of the advertisement. The spaciousness gives room to breath and let your mind wander. It lacks a sense of directness. Furthermore, Fox (1985) found out that white space used in advertisements of government organizations could be interpreted as a signal of extravagance spending and therefore residents would be reluctant to use the advertised product or service because residents think that government advertisements are paid with tax money.

Consequently, it is interesting to investigate the effectiveness of a road in spacious advertisements. It is plausible that a straight road incorporated in advertisements can enhance consumers' feelings of organizational effectiveness and directness of the organization behind the advertisement. The organization could be perceived as more goal oriented and structured. Hence, the following hypothesis can be derived:

H3: A straight road in advertisements enhance the perception of organizational effectiveness and directness.

2.4 Fluent in visuals and text

Marketers have to understand how the brain processes information in order to distribute advertisements that are most likely to convert into sales. The theory of processing fluency explains these brain processes as a form of metacognitive experience and refers to the ease of identifying stimuli or identifying meanings. Fluent processing can be enhanced by quick and effortless processing (Jacoby, 1983; Schwarz, 1998). Reber, Schwarz and Winkielman (2004) and Reber, Winkielman and Schwarz (1998) add to this by stating that easily processed stimuli generally result in positive terms and favorable attitudes

A distinction can be made between high and low processing fluency. We tend to prefer things that are simple for us to understand or use and call this high processing fluency. Low processing fluency occurs when we find something difficult to interact with or understand as this will require more cognitive effort and strain, which results in a negative feeling and association or an unwillingness to engage further.

In general, advertisements merely exist of images only. Marketers often use both textual and visual cues in their advertisements to deliver information. The textual attribution is just as important as the visual cue to explain the offer, make announcements or perhaps stimulate an action. To practice effective communication, it is important to deliver a fluent experience to the consumer and make it as easy as possible for the consumer to understand. Marketers can enhance this fluent experience by creating coherence between text and images. For instance, Shen and Chen (2007) found that banners placed on a thematically congruent website, resulted in more favorable attitudes toward the advertisement as opposed to advertisements incongruent with the website.

In line with the proposed relation between processing fluency and product

evaluations (Reber et al. 2004), fluent processing is, in this study, understood as the congruence between the selected image in the advertisement and the different slogans.

It is expected that a spacious image in combination with a creative slogan is congruent. .

Also, an advertisement with a road in combination with a direct slogan should also be congruent and positively affect consumers' attitude towards the brand. Hence, the following hypothesis can be derived.

H4: Coherent advertisements positively influence consumer overall brand evaluation.

2.5 Spaciousness and purchase intention

Selling your product or service is often a vital part of the business model in order to survive. Marketers are always working to find new ways to increase sales. White space might do just that. Effective use of white space in an advertisement achieves balance between the images and the space that sets those images apart. White space can draw the viewer's eye to important parts of the advertisement without the need for funky graphics or added words and phrases. For example, using white space around a 'buy now" button attracts the viewer's eye toward the button, hence increasing the chance of a purchase.

Pracejus et al. (2006) conducted two user studies to investigate the use of white space on purchase intention. In the first study, results showed that creative directors of major North American advertising agencies believed that white space could influence the perception of prestige and luxury and would eventually influence purchase intention. In the second study, conducted with consumers, only the amount of white space differed in the

various conditions. Results showed that advertisements with more white space significantly influenced consumer perceptions of quality, prestige and purchase intention.

This is in line with research conducted by Amber & Hollier (2004); Kirmani (1990), about the effects of white space in TV commercials. Results showed not only a positive influence on the perception of brand prestige and purchase intention but also showed a positive relation between the perception of advertisements expenses and perceived quality and reliability of the brand. Using white space can add to the perception of extravagant spending, enhancing brand fitness and therefore positively influencing quality and reliability. According to Calvo-Porrá & Lévy-Mangin (2017), purchase intention is strongly influenced by high perceived quality. Hence, the following hypothesis can be derived:

H5: Spacious advertisements enhance consumers' purchase intention.

3. Method pre-study

3.1 Materials

In this study, it is important to determine whether images are assessed as being spacious due to the reason that in the main study one image will be used as a format for all the conditions. A selection of 16 images displaying similar nature scenes is used to determine which image is assessed as being most spacious. Half of these 16 similar images displayed a road to the horizon in order to test if there is a difference in perceived spaciousness between images with and without a road and to test if images with a road were indeed evaluated as more direct and goal-oriented (Figure 2).



Figure 2. Example spacious images (left panel: without road; right panel: with road).

3.2 Participants and procedure pre-study

In Qualtrics, a questionnaire is developed and diffused via snowball sampling in order to find out which image is assessed as being most spacious and to check if images that included a road were indeed assessed as being more direct and goal-oriented.

The respondents were thanked for their participation in this research. Brief instructions were provided before respondents were asked for their informed consent. After

that, all respondents were assigned to the 16 images. On a 5-point bipolar scale the spaciousness of the images was measured. The lower the score, the more spacious and direct the image was. Results of this can be found in table 3.1 and table 3.2. The images corresponding to the numbers in the tables can be found in Appendix A.

Table 3.1

Results pre-study 1 without road

Images	M Spaciousness	M directness / goal oriented
1	3.32	3.75
2	2.10	3.60
3	2.20	3.50
4	2.30	3.68
5	2.23	3.75
6	1.72	2.97
7	1.35	3.18
8	2.72	3.72

Table 3.2

Results pre-study 1 with road

Images	M spaciousness	M directness / goal oriented
9	1.68	2.10
10	1.82	1.90
11	1.82	1.80
12	1.77	2.33
13	2.95	2.63
14	2.08	2.18
15	2.60	2.15
16	1.71	2.35

In total 40 respondents completed the questionnaire. The age of the participants range from 18 to 65. Results indicated that image 7 ($M = 1.35$) was expressed as being most spacious. In addition, the results in table 3.2 showed that images with a road were slightly more assessed as being direct and goal-oriented.

Consequently, image 7 was selected as being most spacious and is used as a format for four conditions (spacious with road, spacious without road, non-spacious with road, non-spacious without road). Photoshop is used to add a road and trees in the most spacious image in order to create the conditions.

A second pre-study is conducted with these four conditions to validate that the images with trees are assessed as non-spacious and images with a road are assessed as direct and goal-oriented. The lower the score, the more spacious and direct the image was. Results from this second pre-study are displayed in table 3.3 and the corresponding images can be found in Appendix B.

Table 3.3

Results pre-study 2

Condition	M spaciousness	M directness / goal-oriented
Not spacious without a road	3.46	3.97
Spacious without a road	1.36	3.99
Not spacious with a road	3.47	2.19
Spacious with a road	1.26	1.80

In total, 23 respondents completed the second questionnaire. The results in the second pre-study indicated that the “non-spacious” conditions were indeed assessed as non-spacious ($M = 3.46$, $M = 3.47$) while the spacious conditions were assessed as spacious ($M = 1.36$, $M = 1.26$). Measuring the directness of the image yielded in similar results. Images without a road were assessed as not goal-oriented ($M = 3.97$, $M = 3.99$) while images with a road showed lower means meaning a more direct and goal-oriented evaluation ($M = 2.19$, $M = 1.80$). The second pre-study showed confirming results concerning spaciousness and directness. However, in the marketing communication field of work, a slogan is frequently used to attract attention of audiences or to describe services and products. Therefore a slogan is added to the four conditions and a logo for the fictional organization Vargas is developed.

To come up with suitable verbal claims, a slogan for both creativity and organizational effectiveness was developed, either stating “Efficient and goal-oriented....” (goal-oriented), or “Creative and open for ideas.....” (creativity).

The final stimulus material for the main study are reported in Figure 3.



Left panel: spacious, road, direct slogan; right panel: spacious, road, creative slogan



Left panel: spacious, no road, direct slogan; right panel: spacious, no road, creative slogan



Left panel: non-spacious, road, direct slogan; right panel: non-spacious, road, creative slogan



Left panel: non-spacious, no road, direct slogan; right panel: non-spacious, no road, creative slogan

Figure 3. Conditions used in the main study

4.0 Main study

4.1 Participants and procedure

154 people (78 male and 76 female respondents; mean age: 34.3 years; age range: 18 – 78 years) participated in the experiment. Table 4 presents age and gender across the various conditions. Participants were approached in public spaces and asked if they would be willing to participate in a test regarding the visual communication of a company. Next, they filled in the survey on an iPad or Macbook Pro. No mobile phones were aloud due to the smaller screen size.

Table 4

Demographics for participants for each experimental condition

Condition	N	Age		Male
		M	SD	
Non-spacious, no road, direct slogan	20	39.5	16.9	65%
Non-spacious, no road, creative slogan	20	33.3	12.3	50%
Non-spacious, road, direct slogan	18	33.2	13.8	27%
Non-spacious, road, creative slogan	20	33.4	12.5	65%
Spacious, no road, direct slogan	15	34.2	13.2	53%
Spacious, no road, creative slogan	19	34.9	14.2	47%
Spacious, road, direct slogan	21	32.2	12.8	33%
Spacious, road, creative slogan	21	33.8	15.0	62%

4.2 Measures

4.2.1 Perceived organizational creativity

To measure organizational creativity, White and Smith (2001) five-item organizational creativity scale was adapted to the current research. Example items include “This organization is creative” and “This organization is original”. In addition to the scale of White and Smith (2001), the scale of Im, Bayus and Mason (2003) is also adapted to the current research. Example items from this scale include “The organization has creative ideas” and “The organization always thinks of a solution when it runs into problems” (alpha = 0.93).

4.2.2 Perceived organizational effectiveness

To measure perceived organizational effectiveness, respondents were asked the following question: “To what extent do you think the following words are suitable for Vargas? Example items include: Efficient, effective and practical (alpha = 0.83). All items were scored on 5-point rating scale (scale anchors: “I strongly agree” versus “I strongly disagree”).

4.2.3 Purchase intention

To measure purchase intention, Rodgers (2004) five item scale was adapted to fit in the current research. Example items include “I am willing to buy a product from the organization” and “I would like to have more information about the product before I decide to make a purchase” (alpha = 0.88)

4.2.4 Overall attitude toward the brand

The scale of Sengupta and Johar (2002) is adapted to use in this research. Example items include “My opinion about the organization is positive” and “ I think the organization is a positive brand”. In addition, items of the overall attitude toward the brand scale of Rodgers (2004) is used in this research. Example items include “My overall impression of the organization is good” and My overall impression of the organization is positive” (alpha = 0.86)

4.2.5 Trustworthiness

To measure trustworthiness, the scale of Tax, Brown and Chandrashekar (1998) is adapted to the current research. Example items include “I believe this organization is trustworthy” and “This organization will meet my expectations” (alpha = 0.86). All items were scored on 5-point rating scales (scale anchors: “I strongly agree” versus “I strongly disagree”).

An overview of all items used for each construct can be found in Appendix C.

5 Results

5.1 Results main study

To investigate the effects of the independent variables, analyses of variance were conducted with spaciousness (spacious or non-spacious), road (road or no road), and slogan (creative vs direct) as independent variables, and the creativity measure, organizational effectiveness measure, product evaluation measure and purchase intention measure as dependent variables. The means vary from 1 to 5 where a lower mean stands for a more positive attitude.

5.2 Perceived organizational effectiveness

An ANOVA with organizational effectiveness as dependent variable did not reveal a main effect of spaciousness ($F(1, 152) = 0.15, p = 0.70, \eta^2 = 0.00$). The main effect of road did reach significance ($F(1, 152) = 43.87, p < 0.001, \eta^2 = 0.22$). Figure 5 shows that advertisements that contained a road were (as expected) evaluated significantly more goal oriented than the advertisements without a road ($M = 2.37, SD = 0.65$ versus $M = 3.02, SD = 0.58$)

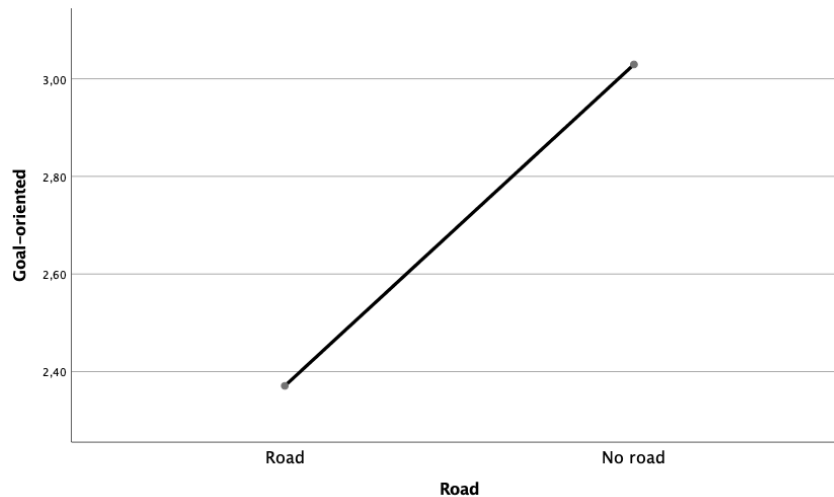


Figure 5. Means of goal-oriented on road.

The main effect of slogan was not significant ($F(1, 152) = 1.21, p = 0.27, \eta^2 = 0.01$). Neither were the interaction effects (road X spaciousness: $F(1, 152) = 0.28, p = 0.60, \eta^2 = .00$; road X slogan: $F(1, 152) = 0.19, p = 0.67, \eta^2 = 0.00$; spaciousness X slogan: $F(1, 152) = 0.00, p = .97, \eta^2 = 0.00$; road X spaciousness X slogan: $F(1, 152) = 0.99, p = 0.32, \eta^2 = 0.01$)

5.3 Perceived organizational creativity

An ANOVA with creativity as dependent variable revealed an expected main effect of spaciousness ($F(1, 152) = 16.69, p = <0.001, \eta^2 = 0.10$). As shown in Figure 6, the marketing communication agency is evaluated as more creative when spacious advertisements were displayed as opposed to the non-spacious variant of the advertisements ($M = 2.58, SD = 0.82$ versus $M = 3.05, SD = 0.66$).

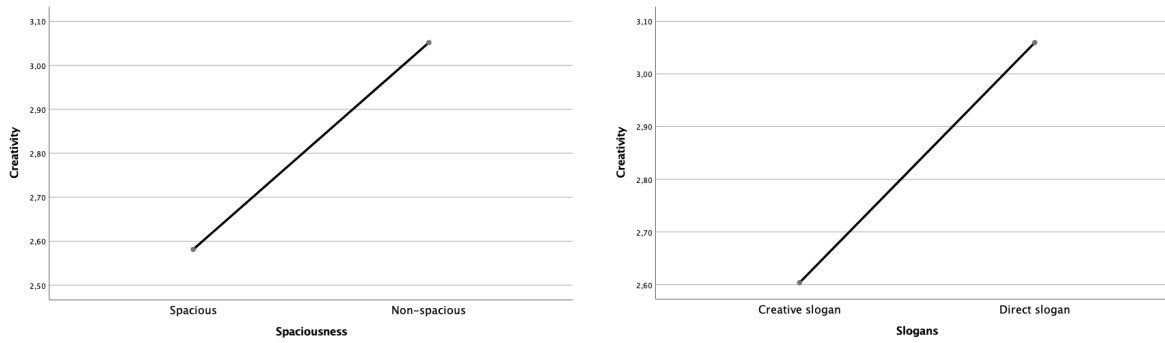


Figure 6. Left panel: Means of creativity on spaciousness; right panel: Means of creativity on slogan

The main effect of road was not significant ($p = 0.63$). In addition, the main effect of slogan was, as expected, also significant ($F(1, 152) = 14,21, p = <0.001, \eta^2 = 0.09$). As shown in Figure 6, the marketing communication agency is evaluated more creatively when a creative slogan is displayed as apposed to the variant where the direct and goal-oriented slogan is displayed ($M = 2.60, SD = 0.73$ versus $M = 3.06, SD = 0.76$).

All of the interaction effects were not significant (road X spaciousness: $F(1, 152) = 0.79, p = 0.38, \eta^2 = 0.01$; road X slogan: $F(1, 152) = 1.77, p = 0.19, \eta^2 = 0.01$; spaciousness X slogan: $F(1, 152) = 0.51, p = 0.48, \eta^2 = 0.00$; road X spaciousness X slogan: $F(1, 152) = 0.53, p = 0.47, \eta^2 = 0.00$).

5.4 Trustworthiness

An ANOVA with trustworthiness as dependent variable revealed a main effect of spaciousness ($F(1, 152) = 4.56, p = 0.03, \eta^2 = 0.03$). The marketing communication agency is evaluated as more trustworthy when spacious advertisements are shown as opposed to non-spacious advertisements ($M = 2.41, SD = 0.63$ versus $M = 2.65, SD = 0.72$).

The main effect of road was also significant ($F(1, 152) = 4.09, p = 0.05, \eta^2 = 0.03$). As shown in Figure 8, the marketing communication agency is (as expected) evaluated as more trustworthy when advertisements included a road as opposed to advertisements without a road ($M = 2.42, SD = 0.71$ versus $M = 2.65, SD = 0.64$).

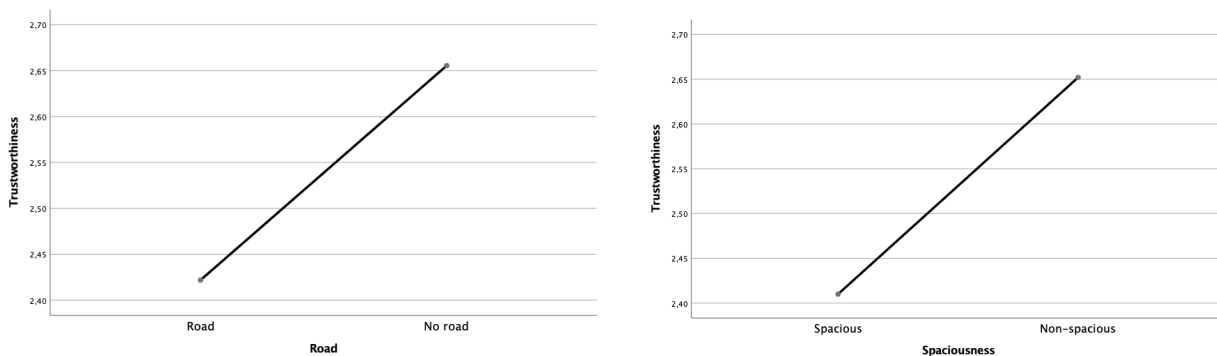


Figure 8. Left panel: Means of trustworthiness on road; right panel: means of trustworthiness on spaciousness

The main effect of slogan was not significant. Neither were all of the interaction effects (road X spaciousness: $F(1, 152) = 1.65, p = 0.20, \eta^2 = 0.01$; road X slogan: $F(1, 152) = 0.38, p = 0.54, \eta^2 = 0.00$; spaciousness X slogan: $F(1, 152) = 0.01, p = 0.92, \eta^2 = 0.00$; road X spaciousness X slogan: $F(1, 152) = 1.30, p = 0.26, \eta^2 = 0.01$)

5.5 Purchase intention

An ANOVA with purchase intention as dependent variable revealed a main effect of spaciousness ($F(1, 152) = 7.79, p = 0.01, \eta^2 = 0.05$). Figure 9 shows that respondents were slightly more likely to make a purchase when the marketing organization bureau used a spacious advertisement as opposed to the non-spacious advertisement. ($M = 2.48, SD = 0.88$ versus $M = 2.88, SD = 0.88$).

The main effect of road was not significant ($F < 1, ns$). Neither was the main effect of slogan ($F(1, 152) = 2.47, p = 0.12, \eta^2 = 0.02$). In addition, none of the interaction effects were significant (road X spaciousness: $F(1, 152) = 0.01, p = 0.94, \eta^2 = 0.00$; road X slogan: $F(1, 152) = 0.26, p = 0.61, \eta^2 = 0.00$; spaciousness X slogan: $F(1, 152) = 0.16, p = 0.69, \eta^2 = 0.00$; road X spaciousness X slogan: $F(1, 152) = 1.19, p = 0.28, \eta^2 = 0.01$)

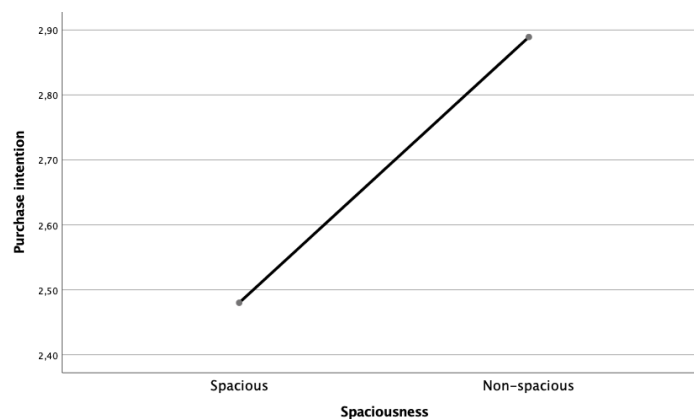


Figure 9. Means of purchase intention on spaciousness

5.6 Overall attitude toward the brand

When performing an ANOVA with overall attitude toward the brand as dependent variable, spaciousness, again, reached significance ($F(1, 152) = 4.72, p = 0.03, \eta^2 = 0.03$). Figure 10 shows that when respondents were exposed to a spacious advertisement, respondents stood more favorable towards the marketing communication agency than they were when exposed to the non-spacious advertisement ($M = 2.32, SD = 0.64$ versus $M = 2.58, SD = 0.71$).

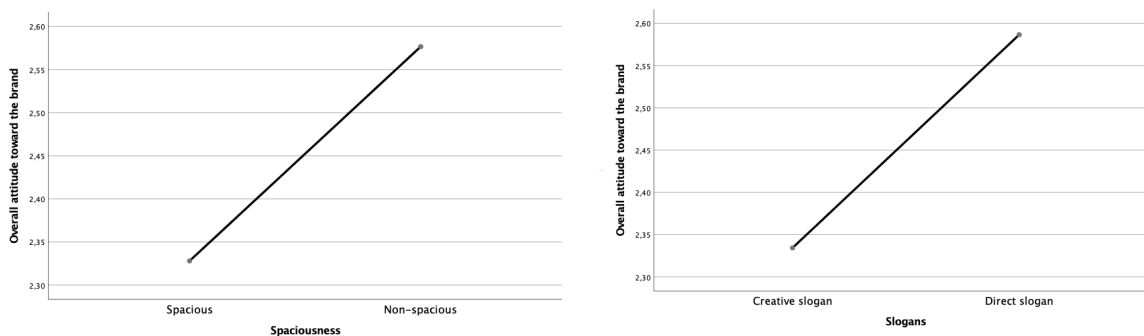


Figure 10. Means of overall attitude toward the brand on spaciousness.

The main effect of road did not reach significance. The main effect of slogan, however, appeared to be significant ($F(1, 152) = 5.25, p = 0.02, \eta^2 = 0.04$). As shown in Figure 10, it appears to be the case that advertisements using a creative slogan resulted in a more positive attitude toward the brand as opposed to advertisements using the direct / goal-oriented slogan ($M = 2.33, SD = 0.63$ versus $M = 2.58, SD = 0.72$).

Again, none of the interaction effects were significant (road X spaciousness: $F(1, 152) = 0.04, p = 0.85, \eta^2 = 0.00$; road X slogan: $F(1, 152) = 0.00, p = 0.10, \eta^2 = 0.00$;

spaciousness X slogan: $F(1, 152) = 0.07, p = 0.80, \eta^2 = 0.00$; road X spaciousness X

slogan: $F(1, 152) = 0.69, p = 0.41, \eta^2 = 0.01$)

6 Discussion

6.1 Main findings

Every product or service has its own do's and don'ts when it comes to setting up new marketing campaigns. Some strategies are pretty common to execute. For example the use of gold colors when you want to increase the perception of luxury and status (Folsche, 2018). Other strategies are more complicated. For example when you are willing to enhance the perceived creativity of your brand. Research shows that abstract white space could have a positive influence on perceived organizational creativity. This raises the question if spacious imagery of nature can also add to the perceived organizational creativity. Organizations that will benefit from an increased customer perception of creativity are marketing communication agencies that rely on their own creativity when working on marketing campaigns for their clients. Hence, the purpose of this study was to answer the main research question: *How does the use of spacious imagery in advertisements of a marketing communication agency affect the perceived organizational creativity, trustworthiness, effectiveness, overall attitude and purchase intention of individuals ?*

The findings presented clearly show that spaciousness in advertisements of a marketing communication agency may have a strong effect on perceived organizational creativity. Strong main effects were obtained of spaciousness on creativity. Specifically, and in line with previous research of Meyers-Levy & Zhu (2007), spacious imagery in advertisements resulted in a more positive evaluation of perceived organizational creativity. Our findings of the effects of spaciousness on creativity also add to research conducted by Van Rompay & Jol (2016) where they found results that images of spacious and unpredictable environments in nature enhance self-reported creativity among high school students.

Thus, spacious images have a positive influence on the perception of creativity. In addition, the main effect of (creative) slogan with overall attitude toward the brand as dependent variable was also significant. Meaning that a spacious environment in combination with a creative slogan resulted in a more positive attitude toward the brand.

Similar results were found in a significant main effect of road in combination with organizational effectiveness as dependent variable. The organization was evaluated as more direct and goal-oriented when the advertisement included a road. Again, the main effect of (direct) slogan with overall attitude toward the brand was significant meaning that an advertisement in combination with a road and a direct slogan resulted in a more positive overall attitude toward the brand.

Similar results are found in research of Shen & Chen (2007) where banners placed on a thematically congruent website resulted in a more positive attitude toward the brand. Congruent images and text do have a positive influence the overall attitude toward the brand.

Moreover, both manipulations of spaciousness and road in advertisements were significant predictors for perceived organizational trustworthiness. In both cases individuals evaluated the organization as being more trustworthy. Respondents believed that the organization would honor the commitments they have entered into. A plausible explanation for this phenomenon can be that spacious images are open and transparent. There is nothing to hide, which may reflect on the open and transparent way of doing business with the organization that is presented in the advertisement.

At last, purchase intention is also positively influenced by spacious imagery. Results show that individuals were more likely to make a purchase if the advertisement included the spacious image. This is line with research conducted by Amber & Hollier (2004) and Kirmani (1990) where white space in TV commercials positively influenced purchase intention of the

advertised product.

Although there are multiple main effects found in this study, none interaction effects were found. The combined effects of road, spaciousness and slogan on the dependent measure did not depend on the level of other factors. For example, the presence of a road in advertisements did not strengthen the effect slogans have on the independent variables. An explanation could be that there is little coherence between the three factors.

6.2 Scientific contribution

The findings of this research add up to previously conducted research. Previous research about white space focused predominantly on perceptions of creativity, consumer brand experience and purchase intention. Van Rompay & Jol (2016) for example, conducted research with high school students to test how spacious and unpredictable nature would influence self-reported creativity. Also research conducted by Pracejus et al. (2006) showed that white space in advertisements was influential on consumer brand perceptions. Respondents saw the advertised product with white space as higher in quality, prestige, trust, and leadership and lower in risk than did people who saw an ad without white space. This research expands these results by using spacious images of nature instead of images with plain white space.

6.3 Practical implications

While the outcome of this study is contributing scientifically, the results can also be applied to the business and marketing field of work. Marketers and business owners can learn from

this research in how to develop a striking marketing strategy in order distinguish their self from competitors. Nowadays it is of even greater importance because the competition in the work field of marketing communication agencies is increasing.

Trust is an important factor when clients are looking for a marketing communication agency to outsource their marketing. This study shows that advertisements that include a spacious image of nature has a positive influence on trustworthiness. Next to spaciousness, a road is also beneficial for perceived trustworthiness.

6.4 Limitations and suggestions for future research

This research has some limitations that might have influenced the results. Generalization is an important limitation as we do not know what the educational level is of the respondents. In addition, buying products from a marketing communication agency is usually done by companies that need help with their marketing strategy. We do not know how many of the respondents were business owners in this study. Therefore this study would produce different results if all respondents were business owners in need of help with their marketing strategy because this study might be too far removed from the respondents own personal lives.

Another factor to take into consideration is the fact that this research might not be applicable to all sorts of organizations. This study mainly focused on a marketing communication agency and the effects spacious images in advertisements have on perceived creativity of the agency. Other organizations, for example lawyers, do not necessarily want to be associated with the perception of creativity. Instead, a trustworthy

appearance is much more desired. In this study both creativity and trustworthiness are enhanced by a spacious advertisement. Hence, more research is needed to prevent that spacious advertisements give mixed signals.

Another point to take into consideration in future research is the selection criteria of respondents. In this study no criteria were set and therefore everyone could participate. Some participants will never have to consider working together with a marketing communication agency. Therefore this research might not be relevant for them. The marketing communication field of work is usually a business-to-business market so it would be interesting to see if the results would differ if only business owners would participate. For them it would be a consideration they would have to make at one point in their career.

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8 Appendices

8.1 Appendix A: Stimulus materials pre-study



Image 1



Image 2



Image 3



Image 4



Image 5



Image 6



Image 7



Image 8



Image 9



Image 10



Image 11

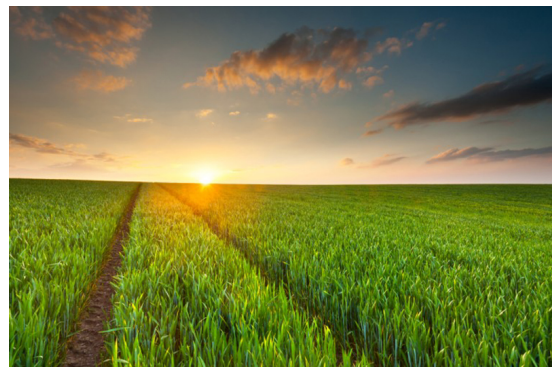


Image 12



Image 13



Image 14



Image 15



Image 16

8.2 Appendix B: Conditions second pre-study



Spacious with road



Spacious without road



Non-spacious with road



Non-spacious without road

8.3 Appendix C: Survey questions per construct

Perceived organizational effectiveness

In hoeverre vind u de volgende woorden bij Vargas passen?

1. Efficient
2. Zakelijk
3. Rechttoe - rechtaan
4. Doelgericht
5. Praktisch
6. Gestructureerd

Trustworthiness

Geeft u alstublieft aan in hoeverre u het eens bent met de volgende stellingen:

1. Ik geloof dat Vargas te vertrouwen is
2. Vargas staat met beide benen op de grond
3. Vargas komt zijn verwachtingen na
4. Vargas komt zijn beloftes na

Perceived organizational creativity

De organisatie Vargas is:

1. Conventioneel
2. Creatief
3. Gewoon
4. Uniek
5. Voorspelbaar
6. Nieuw
7. Origineel

Vargas is een organisatie die:

1. Originele ideeën heeft
2. Nieuwe perspectieven heeft op oude problemen
3. Altijd een oplossing bedenkt als het tegen problemen aanloopt

Overall attitude toward the brand

Mijn algehele impressie van Vargas is:

1. Goed
2. Gunstig
3. Negatief

Beantwoord de volgende stellingen over Vargas:

1. Ik denk dat Vargas een goed merk is
2. Mijn mening over Vargas is gunstig

Purchase intention

Geef u alstublieft aan in hoeverre het u eens bent met de volgende stellingen:

1. Ik ben geneigd diensten van Vargas af te nemen
2. Ik zou meer informatie willen hebben van de diensten
3. Ik ben geïnteresseerd in de diensten van Vargas
4. Als ik op zoek zou zijn naar vergelijkbare diensten zou ik deze dienst waarschijnlijk afnemen.

