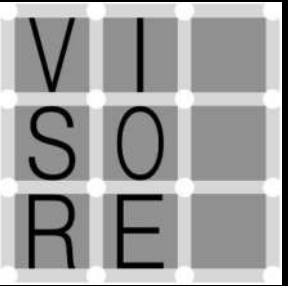




The Effects of Different Design Elements on the Perceived Effectiveness of Visual Advertisements



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INTRODUCTION

Any advertisement is created with a specific goal in mind:

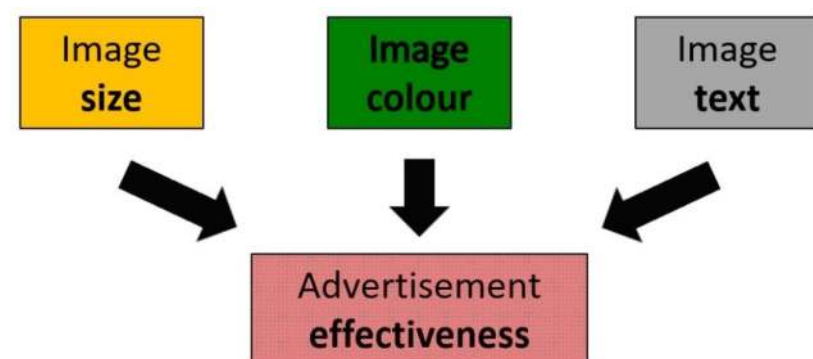


- to attract attention;
- to evoke emotional reaction;
- to change attitudes;
- to encourage specific behaviour (or at least an intention to behave)

An effective ad is usually successful in achieving at least several of these goals.

While creating visual advertisements designers use a variety of design elements: manipulate the size of objects, choose specific colours, spatial location, etc. Psychologists agree that these image characteristics are important not only for artistic purposes, but also for the graspable effects on observer. For example, larger image size can increase emotional arousal (Codispoti, & De Cesarei, 2007), color images also elicit more positive and arousing emotions compared to greyscale ones (Detenber, Simons, & Reiss, 2000). Although sometimes, depending on the specific type of content, black and white versions of images can be evaluated as more pleasant than color (Polzella, Hammar, & Hinkle, 2005). Another problem is that most previous studies researched design elements individually and only in the context of simple images or photos. This makes it difficult to apply such results in the practical context, where several elements are combined. Moreover, another important tool for achieving ad effectiveness is text. While there is data about the importance of specific text, there is little research about the interaction of text and visual design elements. Even though there is information that effectiveness of text can be influenced by such variables as emotional arousal (Kallgren, Reno, & Cialdini, 2000), which is related with design decisions.

So a study was conducted, to assess the combined effects of different design elements in the context of advertisements.



METHOD

Participants

70 students (mean age - 20.67, SD - 5.1, 46 females)

Stimuli

48 ads constructed from different images [40 based on *Geneva Affective Picture Database – GAPED* photos (Dan-Glauser & Scherer, 2010) and 8 – on images of commercial products from free stock images databases]. 5 variables:



- **Size** - 24 small and 24 large;
- **Colour** - 24 color and 24 monochrome;
- **Content** - 16 commercial (object depicted), 16 social (animal), 16 political (human);
- **Emotion** - 16 neutral, 16 negative, 16 positive;
- **Text** - 24 images with no text and 24 images with text (“Buy!”, “Take care!” or “Vote!”).

All images were selected to be as equivalent as possible in both content and visual characteristics.

2 more ads were shown to hide the goal of the study and maintain participant attention for a total of 50 stimuli.

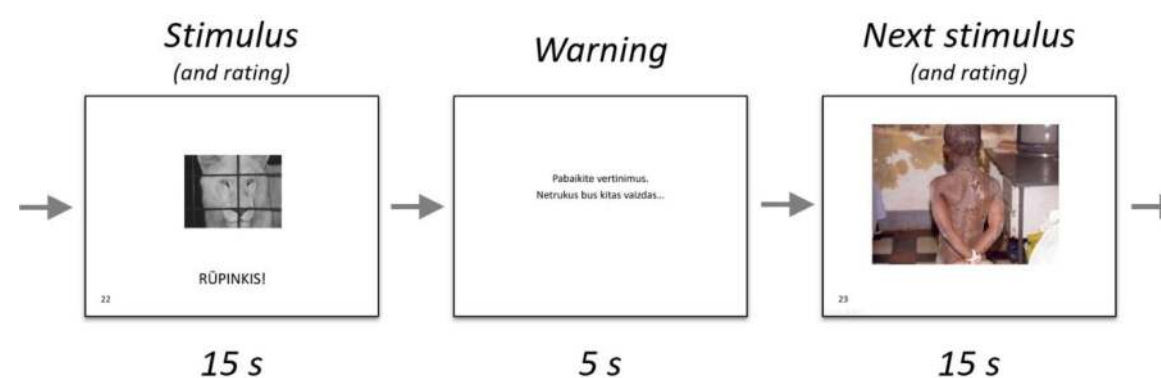
Measures

10-point self-report rating scales. 5 single items:

- **Attention** - doesn't attract / attracts attention;
- **Emotional arousal** - evokes weak/strong emotions;
- **Emotional valence** - evokes unpleasant/pleasant emotions;
- **Intentions** - doesn't encourage / encourages to take action;
- **Attitudes** - it is unacceptable/acceptable what is shown.

	Nepatraukia dėmesio	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	Patraukia dėmesį
22	Sukelia silpnas emocijas	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	Sukelia stiprias emocijas
	Sukelia nemalonias emocijas	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	Sukelia malonias emocijas
	Neskatina veikti	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	Skatina veikti
	Man nepriimtina tai, kas rodoma	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	Man priimtina tai, kas rodoma

Procedure



FINDINGS

Results have revealed that individual design elements have significant effects on the effectiveness of ads.

Size – bigger is better. Advertisements constructed from large photos were rated as:

- attracting more attention;
- evoking more intensive emotions;
- more encouraging to act;
- more acceptable.

Colour – grey can be better than colour. Full colour advertisements were rated as evoking less positive emotions compared to greyscale ones despite equivalent content.

Text – the mere fact of text existence is advantageous. Advertisements with text in addition to photos were evaluated as more positive and more encouraging to act than photos only. Even though the text was very simplistic.

Emotional valence of content also influences attention and behaviour. Positive advertisements were rated as more effective in attracting attention compared to neutral or negative ads. At the same time both positive and negative advertisements had stronger effect in promoting behaviour compared to neutral ones.

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