

## Application of Negative Space Concept in Logo Design

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### Abstract:

This paper discussed the concept of negative space and how the advertising designer was able to benefit from this concept in creating logos for many companies and institutions that were distinctive and different. The idea of using negative space in a positive way is since the space left in the design occupies the same importance as the space used in the design. Sometimes the empty space in the design is as powerful as the design itself by employing the space in a positive way to complete the meaning of the design. The present study mainly tried to answer the subsequent **question**: Q1: How beneficial is it to use negative space positively in logo design? Q2: How can negative space be adapted to provide innovative visual formulations in logo design? **The research aims** to shed light on the concept of negative space and benefit from its applications in designing innovative visual compositions that help clarify the meanings and messages contained in advertising, especially the logo, to achieve communication goals and contribute to influencing the recipient. **The research found** that exploiting the negative space in a positive way creates a kind of motivation for the recipient to interact with the advertisement to explain the ambiguity of the advertising idea or the graphic treatment of it to satisfy his instinct of curiosity. Also, Applying Gestalt principles in logo design creates a relationship between the individual and the design through the process of logo perception, which gives the design a creative, aesthetic, and functional character. Finally, the designer was able to employ the law of form and space to create a new design formulation for the visual language that addresses a recipient who has the perceptual awareness and mental energy that qualifies him to comprehend the formulations of that visual language.

### Keywords:

Negative space- Gestalt theory- Contemporary advertising

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### Introduction:

The concept of emptiness is one of the main topics in design. The designer does not look at empty spaces as an absence, but rather invests in them until the meaning of the design is complete.

Negative space is the space around and between the subject of an image. The negative space helps to define a subject, helps emphasizing a message. This basic and often overlooked principle of design gives the eye a "place to rest", increasing the appeal of a composition through subtle means.

The designer was able to take advantage of the space surrounding the main element that is the subject of the advertisement (whether it is an image, shape, or writing...) and employ it positively in designing the advertisement, by making use of theories of visual perception as well as modern technological techniques in designing an advertisement directed to a contemporary audience that departs from familiar, attracts the recipient's attention and achieves persuasion.

But at the same time, the designer must employ negative space in a thoughtful manner so that it is not difficult for the recipient to understand the advertising message and is far removed from it. He must also consider the laws of Gestalt theory, the exchange between figure and ground, and present visual elements in the space that the eye can complete according to the recipient's visual

experience, so that it does not It is difficult to understand and realize.

Advertising is an intelligently formulated idea that is executed with intelligence and graphic processing that is appropriate for an audience that is exposed daily to thousands of advertising messages that are almost devoid of endless visual effects. In the current era, there is no alternative for the advertising designer but to create design ideas that go outside the ordinary, attract attention and arouse interest with the aim of convince the recipient of the content of the advertising messages surrounding him in various advertising media.

### Theoretical Framework:

#### 1- Negative space:

Negative space is the open or empty area inside or around the main shape in design that determines what this shape is and helps facilitate the movement of the receptionist eye within the design. (Heba, 2021)

It is the space created around or between the shape or element that is the subject of the advertisement. Negative space may be more apparent when it forms the space around a subject and not the subject itself. It helps in defining the subject as well as emphasizing the advertising message. (Omnia 2020)

Negative space helps define a subject, so subjectively speaking, negative space works when there's a balance between the positive and negative

spaces. Negative space also works when it draws the viewer's eye into the subject at hand. (Jacob, 2009)

When composing a piece of artwork, we generally work with three elements: the frame, the positive space, and the negative space (also called white space). The frame is the bounding size of the artwork, the positive space is the subject, and the negative space is the empty space around the subject.

Negative space isn't the absence of space but rather the space that defines the positive space. These shapes are even easier to see when you turn the negative space upside down. (Jacob, 2009)

Negative space gives the design more clarity and ensures that the eye stays and continues to move within the design. Designs are often very simple until the space appears clearly.

The idea of using negative space in a positive way is since the space left in the design occupies the same importance as the space used in the design, whether it is a logo, a magazine page, or a website. Sometimes the empty space in the design is as powerful as the design itself by employing the space in a positive way to complete the meaning of the design. (Glenn, 2000)



Figure (1) represents the NBC Peacock logo, which is an example of applying the principle of negative space in design. The colored shapes form the peacock's feathers, and the space forms the body and head of the peacock which enables us to see the complete shape of the peacock.

## 2- Characteristics of negative spaces

- Emphasizes the innovation in shapes and space visual processing.
- Directs the recipient's eye to the exact area that carries the advertising message.
- A tool of attraction in the design through indirect hidden messages.
- Increases the advertising design layout's appeal.
- Create a balanced and harmonious layout.
- Gives focus and emphasis to the shape and space.

- Represent quality, solitude, a feeling of something missing, cleanliness and calmness.
- Creates Professional, Sophisticated and Elegant Designs. (Heba, 2021)

## 3- Gestalt theory:

Gestalt is a concept that indicates that the characteristics of the whole or formula affect the way in which the parts are perceived, and that the work of perception is based mainly on collecting stimuli, information, and sensory data, and organizing them together in an integrated and harmonious form called form or gestalt. (Pat, 2023) Gestalt psychology was founded in 1910 by three German psychologists, Max Wertheimer, Kurt Koffka and Wolfgang Köhler. Gestalt in perception suggests that the simpler the visual form, the easier it is to perceive. The theory states that the parts of the visual image can be considered, analyzed, and evaluated as separate, distinct components, and that the entire visual image is different from and greater than the sum of its parts. (Dong, 2007)

Gestalt psychology agrees with the idea that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts, or that an idea is understood outside of context. There are many concepts that represent this term such as formula - form - model - structure or organized whole. Gestalt can be defined as every artistic work in which its parts are connected to each other with consistency and regularity in an aesthetic arrangement, or it is every system in which its component parts are interconnected with each other, and between them and the whole itself. (Esraa, 2022)

Gestalt theory was based on the mechanism of operating the perceptual process of the individual, in order to transcend what can be sensed, to become fully aware, It explained that perception is a regulatory process for the inputs of sensory stimuli arising as a result of the interaction between the different senses and their interpretation to perceive the meaning, and by combining the Perception of the psychological process, sensation and the physiological process. (Esraa, 2022)

In the field of visual arts, combining complexity and simplicity is the basis of design, so the designer can use arrangement factors or Gestalt principles to help him produce a unified or diverse integrated design. Negative space uses the laws of Gestalt theory that determine how we perceive different ways of processing design. One of these laws is called the law of closure in the place where the image information may not be present or defined by lines, but our eyes complete the shapes.

### 3.1. Figure and background Law:

During the process of perception, a person transforms the perceived whole into a form and a space so that he can perceive it easily. This is because a person naturally tends to organize his visual perceptions that he sees into shapes and space, and this is because all sound perception is based primarily on seeing clear shapes that are distinct from the space around them.

The distinction between the figure and the space is determined based on the principle of contrast. The figure differs from the space, and this difference is represented in the characteristics that distinguish it and give it its characteristics as a form. The figure stands out slightly in the visual space and the background appears underneath it as a homogeneous space. Likewise, the form carries within it dynamic forces that stimulate the process of perception, and these forces diminish on the space. (Omnia 2020)

### 3.2. Closure Law

Items are grouped together if they tend to complete some larger entity. The recipient perceives objects and shapes on the basis that they do not contain spaces, but rather are integrated with each other and closely related as an integrated audio-visual unit, and there are no separations between shapes or sounds based on previous experiences.



Figure (2) represents a logo for The USA Network logo, redesigned in 2005, makes use of white space for the letter S. The principle of closure in gestalt theory helps our eyes complete the shapes based on their prior mental image, which enables us to see the letter S.9

### 4- Concept of perception:

It is the individual's ability to interpret what he sees and determine its size, shape, color, arrangement, and relationship with others, that is, determining his identity and knowing the similarities between him and the things that are related to him, and seeing the total image of this thing and knowing its component parts. It is a basic process in linking meanings and connotations in visual variables. Coming to the eye from outside.

During the process of perception, the individual is affected by the experiences, information, perceptions, and impressions he has. Intellectual and cognitive differences between individuals have

a direct and influential impact on the process of perception.

One of the important facts in the perception process that designers must take into consideration is that perception is an optional process. We are aware of a limited amount of all the influences on which we are exposed. Among the important factors that encourage the recipient to perceive the advertisement is the nature of the influence itself and the extent to which it attracts the recipient's attention.

There is an important rule in psychology that says that the rate at which a person remembers something that is accompanied by mental effort is higher than that of something that passes in front of him without exerting any mental effort. That is, an advertisement that contains an idea or visual processing by employing the concept of negative space will ensure that it remains in the recipient's memory and easily. Recovering it and realizing it if he sees it again.

The recipient sees the design as a whole at first and then begins to analyze it subconsciously as an attempt to reach the meaning required of it, and the relative strangeness element is the incentive to bring the recipient into this intellectual circle to deliver the desired form to the recipient. (Omnia, 2020)

### 5- Negative space in logo design:

The logo designer has been creative in exploiting the void in a positive way and has a role in designing the logo and completing the advertising message, so that the logo appears in an innovative and unusual way.

The use of negative space in logo designs can also give logos a subtle third dimension, creating a layered look. (Jacob, 2009)

### Analytical study:



Figure (3) represents a logo for Mega Ice Cream from Nestle Company. The space inside the letter M was used to give the shape of the ice cream so that the recipient can easily connect the logo to the product.10



Figure (4) represents a logo for Snooty Peacock, a jewelry boutique in Texas. The space inside the woman face was used to give the shape of the peacock So that the logo is associated in the recipient’s mind with the store’s activity.11

**Applied Study**

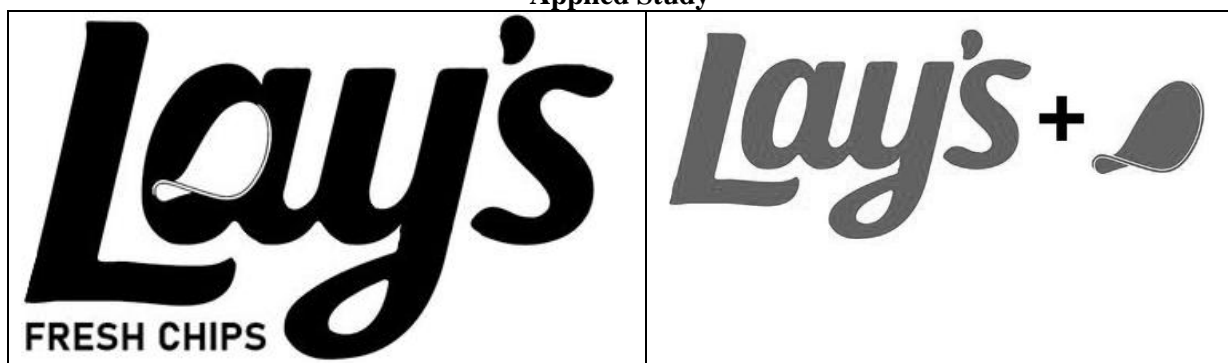


Figure (5) represents unofficial logo for Lay’s Chips. The space inside the letter “a” was used to give the shape of the potato chips so that the recipient can easily connect the logo with the product.

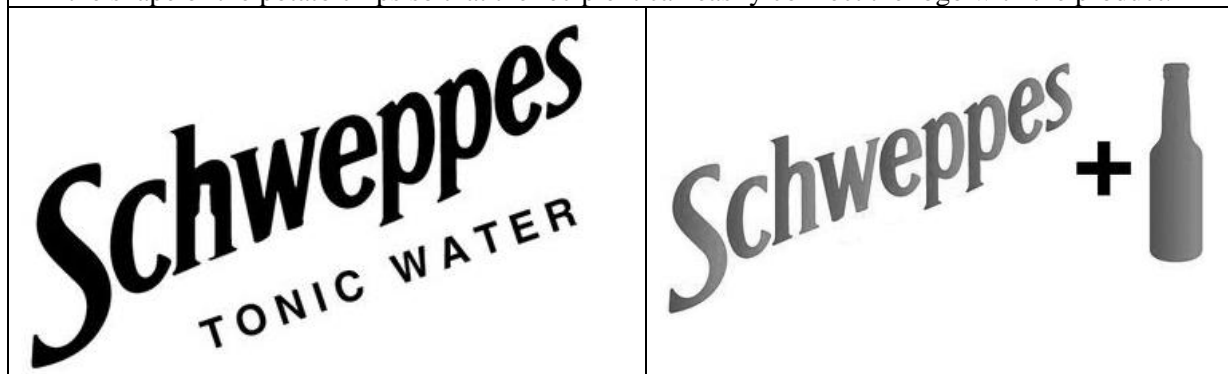


Figure (6) represents unofficial logo for Schweppes. The space inside the letter “h” was used to give the shape of the Schweppes bottle so that the recipient can easily connect the logo with the product.



Figure (7) represents unofficial logo for kisses chocolate. The space inside the letter “e” was used to give the shape of the chocolate so that the recipient can easily connect the logo with the product.

**Results:**

1- Exploiting the negative space in a positive way creates a kind of motivation for the recipient to interact with the advertisement to explain the ambiguity of the advertising idea or the graphic treatment of it to satisfy his instinct of curiosity.

2- Applying Gestalt principles in logo design creates a relationship between the individual and the design through the process of logo perception, which gives the design a creative, aesthetic, and functional character.  
3- The designer was able to employ the law of form and space to create a new design





formulation for the visual language that addresses a recipient who has the perceptual awareness and mental energy that qualifies him to comprehend the formulations of that visual language.

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