

UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA

AESTHETICS OF BILLBOARDS IN ACCRA CITYSCAPE



RICHMOND ADJEI

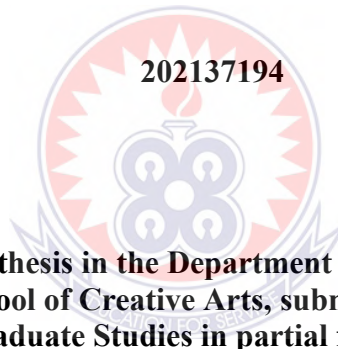
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AESTHETICS OF BILLBOARDS IN ACCRA CITYSCAPE

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**A thesis in the Department of Music
Education, School of Creative Arts, submitted to the School of
Graduate Studies in partial fulfilment**

**of the requirements for the award of the degree of
Master of Philosophy
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DECLARATION

STUDENT'S DECLARATION

I, **Richmond Adjei**, declare that this thesis, with the exception of quotations and references contained in published works which have all been identified and duly acknowledged, is entirely my own original work, and it has not been submitted, either in part or whole, for another degree elsewhere.

Signature:

Date:

SUPERVISOR'S DECLARATION

We hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of this work was supervised in accordance with the guidelines for supervision of thesis as laid down by the University of Education, Winneba.

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Signature:

Date:

Dr Theophilus Mensah (Co-Supervisor)

Signature:

Date:

DEDICATION

Dedicated to my family for their love and support throughout the study.



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ABBREVIATIONS

ADVERTS

ADVERTISEMENT

ET AL

AND OTHERS

FDA

FOOD AND DRUGS AUTHORITY



ABSTRACT

Billboards as an effective outdoor communication channel that promote products and services also add value to their immediate surrounding. Limited were the studies on the aesthetics of billboards. The main aim of this study is to project the aesthetic qualities of billboards at prominent places in Accra. Precisely the study sought to: identify and describe billboards sited in Accra; examine the aesthetic qualities of billboards in Accra; analyse the identified cultural elements of billboards in Accra; and evaluate the contents on billboards in Accra to ascertain their impact on the communication. The descriptive research design under qualitative research approach was used for this study. Observation and interview were the pivotal research instruments used for the study. A total of twenty-seven billboards and forty-five respondents were sampled from road users, advertising agencies, marketing agents, graphic artists, and an officer from the Assembly to establish the population for the research. The purposive and convenience sampling techniques were used to select billboards and individuals for the study. Thematic contents analysis and visual analysis of the various aspects of the billboards with the aid of photographs and field notes grounded the analysis of the study. This technique gave the researcher the opportunity to unearth and project the aesthetic qualities of billboards at prominent places in Accra. The findings of the study show that sited billboards at prominent places in Accra come with two and three interfaces with varied advertisements that make them unavoidable irrespective of where the road user is coming from. The aesthetic qualities of the billboards are embedded in the attractiveness of the illustration, slogan, colour and the main text as well as the lighting system around them, making significant impact on the cityscape. Identifiable Ghanaian cultural elements were encoded in the illustration, the nature of these billboards and their immediate environment. The effectiveness of the billboard to communicate is determined by name of product, illustration, slogan, brand name, and trademark. The prime recommendation for this study is for the advertising agencies and the Assembly with Ghana High Way Authority to replicate the siting of billboards with three interfaces at Tetteh Quarshie Interchange in other interchanges to improve their aesthetic qualities and maximise the ability billboard communicate to a larger audience.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

Over the years, billboards have been of great importance to the production industries as they influence individuals to respond favourably in the interest of the industries. In Ghana, billboard remains one of the top medium, common and most widely used and effective outdoor advertising channel in the cities.

Although in recent times many are the online advertising channels that seem to communicate effectively and make a positive impact on the consumer (Tavor, 2011), billboards are still relevant in this part of the world (West Africa) due to the challenges that come with these media channels that solely rely on internet connectivity. These challenges include unreliable internet connections, unstable power, and the high cost of data in Ghana (Veloutsou & O'Donnell, 2005).

In Ghana, billboards have been among the powerful tools for the promotion of products and services. They are mostly erected on the shoulders of principal streets of Accra and other cities like Tema, Kumasi, Takoradi, Cape-coast, Tamale, just to mention but a few. These billboards are mounted at vantage places where the vehicular traffic flow is heavy like round-about, interchanges, and crossroads with traffic lights that control traffic flow. It is presumed that these billboards have some elements of beauty embedded in them and enhance their surroundings. Their ability to communicate effectively depends on where they are mounted, hence the need for the designer and the client to be conscious of the venue with regards to space, human and vehicular traffic flow. It is against this backdrop that the study seeks to research on billboards at some prominent places in Accra to

ascertain their aesthetic values. Since these billboards interact with huge traffic flow from Madina to 37 Military Hospital Road, Tema Motorway, Spintex Road, and N1 Highway.

Many kinds of research have been done to ascertain the effects and impacts of billboards in Ghana but little or no research has been conducted in Graphic Design to ascertain the aesthetic elements of billboards in Ghana. It is based on this that the researcher intends to unearth and project the aesthetic qualities of these billboards, to educate and enlighten the public to appreciate the beauty of these billboards to respond positively to the message they communicate.

1.2 Theoretical Framework

The study is grounded in Kant's (1987) theory of aesthetics that suggests beauty is subjective, hence does not rely on any empirical standard. He believes that the idea of beauty differs from place to place and may change over time (Allison, 2001; Ginsborg, 2013). The researcher deems this theory appropriate as the framework for the study. It helped appreciate the aesthetic qualities of the billboards for the study from the perspective of the 21st Century Ghanaian. It also aided to unearth the aesthetic qualities of the billboards from the Ghanaian viewpoint.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

Over the past century, billboards have been of great influence in the advertising industry even though other media channels are equally effective in Ghana. Taylor, et al (2003) are of the view that billboard has the widest coverage and communicate to the masses. They do not just communicate but add value to their immediate surroundings (Azu, 2012; Brako-Hiapa, 2006).

In this technological era where visual culture dominates other senses that are used to interact with the environment, a billboard is supposed to play a major role in the mirroring and add value to immediate rounding, since it is more effective as compared to other communication media (Robinson, 2008;). It is in line with this that the study sought to focus on billboards at some prominent places in Accra since the impressions on these billboards may reflect the cityscape. Even though the reflections on these billboards may be endowed with aesthetic elements that add value to the cityscape, little or no study has been done to project their aesthetics and relevance to the Ghanaian and the world at large. It is based on this that a study needs to be conducted to project the aesthetic qualities of these billboards to raise the level of aesthetics among the populace and shed some light on how they affect the cityscape of Accra.

1.4 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to unearth and project the aesthetic qualities of billboards to add up to the body of knowledge in billboard aesthetics.

1.5 Objectives of the Research

The broad objective of this research is to determine and project the aesthetics qualities of billboards in Accra cityscape. The study specifically seeks to:

1. identify and describe billboards sited at prominent places in Accra.
2. examine the aesthetic qualities of billboards in Accra.
3. analyze the identifiable cultural elements on billboards in Accra.
4. evaluate the contents of billboards in Accra to ascertain their impact on the cityscape

1.6 Research Questions

The research seeks to ask the following questions:

1. What are the features of sited billboards at prominent places in Accra?
2. What are the aesthetic qualities of billboards in Accra?
3. What are the identifiable cultural elements on billboards in Accra?
4. What are the contents on billboards in Accra and their impact on the cityscape?

1.7 Significance of the Study

The significance of the study are as follows:

1. The study will shed more light on unique features of sited billboards in Accra.
2. The study will make graphic artists and the public conscious of the aesthetic qualities of billboards in Accra.
3. The study will help the National Commission on Culture to appreciate the cultural relevance of billboards that highlight the products in Accra.
4. The study will create awareness of the impact of the contents on billboards in Accra cityscape.

1.8 Delimitation (Scope) of the Study

The study focuses on giant billboards that project products and services at prominent places in Accra.

1.9 Definition of Terms

Adverts: it is a term used in place of advertisements.

Aesthetic: it is the utmost appearance of an object and its immediate surround.

Consumer: an individual who comes in contact with billboard advertisement/information.

Electronic Billboard: it is a term used to describe billboard that used electric power to switch advertises on the same interface.

Giant Billboards: it is a term used to describe huge billboard.

Mirror: it is a term used to describe the projections of elements on billboards to the public in this study.

Prominent Place: It is a term that was used to describe a well-known place in the city that is significant in the history of Ghana.

Reflection: it is a term that was used in this proposal to refer to impressions on billboards that communicate to the public.

Three-Dimensional Billboard: it is a billboard that has three interfaces that makes it possible to communicate from all angels.



CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1 Overview

This chapter reviews the vital points of current knowledge including the fundamental finding as well as theoretical contributions made to issues relating to aesthetics of billboards. The researcher's focus was on giant billboards at prominent places in Accra. The following sub-topics were reviewed: Location of Erected Billboard, Meaning of Aesthetics, Meaning of Art, What is Aesthetic in Art, The Aesthetic Industry and Products, What is Billboard?, Billboards in Ghana, Billboard – an agent of communication, Billboards and their Qualities, Reflections on Billboards, Aesthetic Significance of Billboards, What is Culture?, Significance of Culture in Ghana, Culture Elements on Billboards, Relevance of Billboards in Ghanaian Cultural Setting, and Billboard: a Tool for Projecting Culture.

2.2 Location of Erected Billboards

Over the years billboards have been displayed in public along the shoulders of roads to communicate to the public. The location of these billboards determines the impact they can make on the consumer to either respond positively or negatively to the information on them (Christine, 2016). These billboards are sited at locations to make them unavoidable by the consumer twenty-four hours per day.

According to Azeema (2013), the location of billboards depends on the number of persons who come in contact with them. Anderson in agreement with Azeema states that for the billboard to get a better return, there is the need for it to reach many eyeballs. Anderson used eyeballs to represent consumers. Both Azeema and Anderson believe that

it is necessary to erect the billboard at a vantage point that will enable it to reach multitude. It is against this backdrop that sited giant billboards are mounted on towers to reach out to passers-by and road users. They make themselves visible from a distance and give the consumer the opportunity to relate to them. These kinds of billboards are common in the cities where a number of tall building are seen. The billboard on the GCB Bank opposite Bank of Ghana is an example of such billboards.

For billboards to cover the numbers, they are mounted along the shoulders of highway and motorways. This gives the billboards the chance to reach out to travellers moving in and out of the city/town. These billboards normally come with a number of the similar or same advertisement to maximise their potential to make an impression on the mind of the consumer/traveller. It also adds value to the highway/motorway as it improves the beauty of the shoulders of the road. These billboards along the shoulders of highways/motorways were identified as one of the effective billboards because of their ability to give convenience to the driver and passenger to get the message (Shimp, 2010).

In the cities billboards are mounted at cross roads where vehicular movement is huge. This location tends to slow traffic during rush hours which help the billboards to communicate to a lot of people. Nyarko (2015) is of the view that the location of the billboard is relevant as it creates room for it to reach a lot of eyeballs. This is in line with the reason why cross roads perhaps happen to be a perfect location for billboards as they accommodate huge traffic flow on daily basis. Billboard(s) at these locations give road users little opportunity or no opportunity to skip the adverts as the billboards stare the road users as he/she approaches it/tem.

Billboard as a platform for visual expression are normally sited at roundabouts in cities/towns with the aim of informing the populace about products and services (Mbadi,

2005). These roundabouts help to slow down movement of vehicles that enable the billboards around/on them to express themselves to the viewer. It is deemed as a good location for billboards because of the heavy flow of traffic from all angles. These billboards are normally mounted to complement the roundabout and beautify their immediate surroundings.

In addition, billboards are also erected along the shoulders of the road where traffic light is normally used to control vehicular movement. The traffic light tends to slow and stop traffic flow which enables the billboards on the shoulders of the road to persuade the consumer. They give the consumer no chance but to respond positively or negatively. That is to say they capture the attention of the viewer as Plumely (2000) puts it. Apart from the attractiveness of the billboard, the traffic lights' ability to slow and eventually stop vehicles, maximise the potential of the billboard to communicate to its target audience.

In recent time, overpasses and interchanges have become one of the important locations for billboards advertisement. This is because of the huge vehicular traffic flow that makes the billboards interact with the numbers. The billboards under study are examples of such billboards. They add value to the interchange or overpass as they make the location colourful.

Just like overpasses, pedestrians' overpasses were also identified as one of the locations for mounting billboards to reach a larger audience. They give drivers and other road users the chance to get the message on the billboards with ease. They also add value to overpasses as they improve their aesthetic qualities.

Like billboards on pedestrian's overpasses, billboards are now mounted across the highways and motorways to communicate to oncoming motorist. Apart from advertising

products and services, some of them give information about the road. They also make the road colourful as they enhance their immediate surroundings.

Billboards as products that add value to its immediate surroundings are used to cord some construction site along the shoulders of the road in cities to inform road users about ongoing construction and the construction company working on the project. Some of these billboards give information about product and service as well. These billboards are sometimes attached to story building under renovation along the shoulders of the road to beautify the surroundings.

Billboards as vehicles that drive products and services to the door step of the consumer are sited at bus terminals, lorry stations and train stations to communicate to passengers and drivers. They are normally mounted at vantage points to make them visible to the viewer, hence making them almost impossible for the viewer to avoid them. Some of these billboards reach out to persons and motorists outside the stations/terminals. Billboards at the Kwame Nkrumah Circle, Accra bus terminal are examples of such billboards. They do not just inform persons in the terminal/station but motorist outside are also beneficiaries of the message on them. These billboards also enhance the aesthetics value of the station/terminal.

It is obvious from the above review of literature that apart from siting billboards with the aim of reaching out to the numbers, the aesthetic quality of the billboard's immediate surrounding cannot be ruled out since billboards add colour to the environment as an environmental art/installation.

2.3 Meaning of Aesthetics

Aesthetics is the study of beauty and all the elements associated with it. The quest for philosophical interpretation dates back to the ancient era when the Greek associated beauty with physical attractiveness. Sartwell (2012) is of the view that Plato associates beauty with love and desire even though he locates beauty in the realms of the forms of a particular object. That is to suggest that Plato sees beauty as noble and admiration that aid to arouse the curiosity of the viewer to see the good things in an object that may not be visible in any other object (Pappas, 2016).

Aristotle agrees with Plato that beauty is objective but rejects Plato's theory of forms as the embodiment of beauty. Aristotle's concept of beauty is said to be in the metaphysical as he juxtaposes good and beauty with having a common root. This is in line with the theory of Mean that establishes proportionality and appropriateness for every right and just action (Aristotle, 1996). This implies that Aristotle sees nature as the standard of beauty since nature is characterized by appropriateness. Nature is said to be the master of artists that helps them to create beautiful objects.

From the above review, one can conclude that the two Greek philosophers view beauty as objective, precise, appropriate, eternal, and fixed; even though they were all looking at it from different perspectives. Moreover, they conceptualized beauty as metaphysical and cosmic. This was contrariwise to the concept of beauty in Greek culture which was primarily physical attractiveness that embedded in an anthropocentric framework that saw nature as merely serving to project the beauty of people. Therefore, the metaphysics of Plato and Aristotle was an effort to encode beauty in a morality which of course had cosmic foundations in their philosophies. This view influenced the philosophies of Plotinus, St. Augustine, and St. Aquinas, Avicenna, Al Ghazzali, and Al Farrabi who

used it to justify their escapist philosophy, whereby heaven was created as a beautiful place where people could escape from the vagaries and elements of the world.

Ginsborg (2013) commenting on Kant's theory of beauty suggested that beauty has a universal language. That is if an object (billboard) is said to be beautiful, it should be universal such that every viewer can relate and experience its pleasure. The universality of aesthetics has no set principles but stems from the universal language of validity. The universalization of aesthetic judgment is purely subjective. Kant (1987) echoes there is no need to tie one's idea of beauty to a particular concept for beauty is not a concept of object. In other words, beauty cannot be determined by predetermined scientific principles. In the same light, one cannot be compelled to judge an object (billboard) as beautiful since universality presupposes that all people have the same subjective conditions of the power of judgment. It is against this backdrop that the study seeks to appreciate the aesthetic of billboards in Accra from the perspective of the ordinary Ghanaian in Accra. This is in line with Allison's (2001) assertion that the universality of beauty emanates from society and may differ from one society to the other.

First, he distinguished aesthetic pleasure from other forms of pleasure. Aesthetic pleasure is not some other type of pleasure in disguise: for example, art is not the sublimation of food, sex, warmth, companionship, or some combination of other existing pleasures. Second, Kant argued that aesthetic emotions are 'disinterested'; when we experience an aesthetic pleasure, there are no utilitarian or ulterior motives underlying this experience. A mother's appreciation of the beauty of her daughter cannot be regarded as a purely aesthetic appreciation, since her experience is apt to be tainted by parental pride. Unlike garden-variety emotions, for Kant, aesthetic emotions serve no practical purpose.

2.4 Meaning of Art

According to Boateng (2004), art is human creative skills. He likens art to the creative skills of humans instead of the resultant of one's creative skill. That can be described as a product that can help solve societal issues. Art is also said to represent an idea or transmission of one's feelings into an object (Tolstoy, 1995; Plato, 1974). This definition is in contrast to that of Boateng as it suggests that a work of art is derived from one's inner feelings. That is to say that art is inspired by one's mode.

For this study, art was viewed from both definitions, hence art is a product or object made from one's creative skills and inspired by his feelings. One's feelings play a major role in his creative skills. To express one's feelings, there is a need for one's creative skills. Art as a product of human activities over the years comes from a particular intuition. It goes through some form of process from brainstorm to idea development and production process. This helps in the making of an artefact to communicate to the public.

Seabolt (2001) suggests that art is anything that can be understood and enjoyed. It implies that art is based on the viewer's opinion about the work. That is an opinion born out of the thoughts provoked by the artwork. It is based on this that art is said to be subjective, hence, it depends on who is appreciating it or labeling it (Fenner, 1994). Fenner believes that is the main reason why it is difficult to define an object as an art form.

Art is therefore a complex word/task to understand. This is because of the varied opinions by many scholars on the meaning of art (Clowney, 2011). Hence, there is no need to try to define art as long as the work can be classified under an art form, it is art (Lopes, 2008). This suggests that art is anything that can be identified under an art form like Graphic Design, Textiles, Painting, Sculpture and the like.

Osborne (2002) describes art as a language, a medium of communication that speaks silently to the viewer. It communicates with a universal language that can be understood by viewers who come in contact with them. In the educational sector, for instance, art is used as a language to improve understanding of complex concepts.

2.5 Aesthetic in Art

Aesthetic is the art of viewing art from the perspective of beauty. Kant is of the view that aesthetics in art is subjective. He asserts that it differs from place to place and may change over time. This suggests that a work of art may be appealing to the eye today but in the future may not, depending on who is looking at it. Imagination is a pivotal part of aesthetics in art (Kant, 1987). That is to say, imagination plays a key role in creation. This assertion is supported by Boateng (2004) in his attempt to slate the qualities of a creative person right from the depiction of images of animals on the walls of the caves in the pre-historic era to the reflections on the billboards in the street of Accra and other cities across the length and breadth of the globe.

Aesthetic in art brings pleasure to the viewer and helps reduce stress. This quality of aesthetic is what aids to sustain the interest of the beholder in the art. It then helps the viewer to get the message the artwork puts across. It is based on this assertion that Osborne (2002) describes art as a language. As a language, art is supposed to communicate to the public pleasantly.

As a medium of communication, art is an agent of contemplation. It leads one to think deeply or brainstorm on the message the artwork is communicating. This allows the viewer to develop his/her own opinion about the work of art. Carroll (2001) is of the view that artworks facilitate the development of one's opinion on it. This experience he describes as an aesthetic experience. It allows the viewer to go into the work and get the

true meaning of the work. In Carroll's attempt to describe an art form, he added that the artist's intention in making the work of art affords the viewer the opportunity to have an aesthetic experience. That is to say that aesthetic experience is perhaps the mind of the artist. This is because every work of art especially billboards are mainly produced to promote products and service. These purposes among others are seen by the viewer in aesthetic experience. Without billboards and other art forms, the aesthetic experience would not be there. Hence, art can be said to be a frame of aesthetic experience.

2.6 The Aesthetic Industry and Products

The aesthetic industry is an old industry that can be traced to the time of creation in Genesis 1 when God made the world and the things in it. He acknowledged that things were all good. The industry was extended to the walls of the caves in the pre-historic era where images of animals with deformities were engraved and painted on the walls out of memory (Akoto, 2004). Imagination was keen in the execution of the animals. Even though the purpose of these images was for hunting with the belief that there is a relationship between an object and its image but today, these images can be described as splendid images of beauty as they enhance the beauty of the caves. The focus of prehistoric man was to represent animals with deformities. This is in line with the representation of the world which happens to be the early approach of the aesthetic industry. As Plato (1974) puts it in the Republic, paintings are merely limited to imitations of the world – objects in nature. To him, irrespective of the art form, the artist should draw inspiration from nature.

Aristotle (1996) in his Poetics states that it is necessary to take pleasure from the study of mimesis. He also agrees with Plato on reflecting nature in art forms but disagrees with the assertion that the form may give false knowledge about nature. For Aristotle, for an

object to be described as aesthetically beautiful, it should mirror the true reflection of form in nature.

It appears from the views of Plato and Aristotle that if an artwork is not realistic or reflects nature, one cannot describe it as beautiful. This implies that nature is used as the basis of beauty or aesthetics. Even though one may draw inspiration from nature and represent it in the abstract form. The question is how will this abstract form be described?

Kant (1987) addresses this concern as he associates beauty with abstract art. He asserts that this form of art does not seek to represent nature realistically. But he believes that artworks can be equated to beauty since nature is beautiful as acknowledged in Genesis 1 by the creator of the universe. He went a step further to suggest that the ability to create something beautiful and pleasing to the eye is based on intuition. This goes a long way to suggest that beautiful creation is based on the artist's imagination and not necessarily nature. However, the artist may get inspiration from nature. From the perspective of Hegel in agreement with Kant, Hegel laments, why create something that is already in existence partially and use it as the standard of beauty (Fink, 2018)? Hence, there is an element of beauty in all forms of art created. It is against this backdrop that this study seeks to examine the aesthetics of the billboard to project its beauty. This is based on the fact that not all billboards are inspired by nature; hence if nature becomes the standard of the aesthetic of these billboards, then they cannot be described as appealing to the eye. However, if billboards can attract the attention of road users and add value to its surrounding, then they can be described as beautiful. This is because their appealing nature make them look beautiful and attractive. (Wilson & Till, 2008)

2.7 What is Billboard?

Billboard is the largest and most reliable outdoor visual communication design that communicates to the masses from a reasonable distance. It is erected along the shoulders of the road to communicate to road users. It is also said to be “very big luminous tableaux based on the high pedestal which is visible from a far distance and installed beside the streets and highways” (Sadeh, Nooraie & Hajikarimi, 2013, p. 2). Sadeh, Nooraie, and Hajikarimi’s portray the billboard as a “brilliant representation”. A quality that enables the billboard to communicate to the public from a distance. It attracts and seems to move towards the viewer which makes their definition appropriate for the study since it happens to be a quality that makes the billboard an influential visual communication design. It draws the attention of the consumer towards a particular product or service that a company is offering (Taylors & Franke, 2003). The design affects the life of the individual consciously or unconsciously.

The billboard is an effective medium of communication that has a solid and significant rate of growth worldwide over the years (Lopez-Pumarejo & Bassell, 2009). As a visual communication design, it provides the most meaningful and efficient exchange of information between the sender and the receiver. Robinson (2008) believes the billboard is more effective than memory. Although the billboard communicates to only road users, it is deemed as the most reliable because of its striking nature on our streets and the extensive number of target audience it can communicate to from a far distance. It can notify a large group of the audience about products and services (Baack and Till, 2016). Besides the creative slogans and unique visuals that make the information on the billboard striking, some billboards come with special lighting and display effects that make them communicate differently to the viewer. Some billboards also communicate different/same message(s) from three angles. These types of billboards is said to be three-dimensional

billboards (Azzaro & Binder, 2008). Azzaro and Binder (2008) believe that three-dimensional billboards leave a lasting impression on the mind of the viewer that makes them more effective than traditional billboards. Technological advancement has made the presentation of three-dimensional billboards interesting and artistically striking due to its ability to electronically present multiple messages from one side. However, a billboard has the language that conveys a specific message to the target audience (drivers), the three-dimensional billboards at times deny the driver of the message, as he may not finish reading and interpret the message before it changes. Hence the need for the artist to be conscious of the main objective of the billboard to use the appropriate medium that will help the billboard to serve its intended purpose. With this in mind, the artist will see the need to compare billboards to the features of written and spoken language to appreciate and gain knowledge on how to use language on billboards to influence the target audience. The billboard as a visual language has an element of culture that influences man greatly in this modern era (Shaughnessy, 2008). This is in line with the view of Lindstrom (2005, p. 85) that suggests that “99% of all brand communication today is focused on two senses: what we hear and see”. Lindstrom’s view is not far from right, however, billboards can only communicate to the viewer through the sense of sight. It does not give the viewer chance to avoid it, since it stares the viewer in the face and the viewer cannot turn it off or close the eye.

In addition, talking about advertisement Taylor et al. (2003) illustrate billboards as the most common type of outdoor advertising. Their illustration is not different from the views of other scholars as discussed earlier, however, they focused on billboards as an advertising medium. The billboard is the media that seeks to promote products, services and increases brand visibility on daily basis (Adjei, 2012). As an outdoor advertising media, it forms part of the environment when installed along the shoulders of the streets

and highways, hence, can be described as environmental graphics (pictures, symbols, and text). As an advertising medium, the billboard is a brilliant and attractive vehicle that comes with striking graphics for an effective perception of the consumer. Since the consumer may lose the message on the billboard due to his/her movement, there is the need to reach the target audience with different stimuli of visually interesting designs, since there are other environmental stimuli that interfere with the perception of the consumer. These stimuli may include light, colour, architecture, designs, and the like.

2.8 Billboard – an Agent of Communication

Billboard has the most common type of outdoor visual communication design that communicates to the multitude on the principal streets of Accra among other streets and high way across the nation. Billboards play a major role in the life of Ghanaians. These roles are as follows:

- ✓ Advertise products and service
- ✓ Announce events
- ✓ Educate the public
- ✓ Inform the public
- ✓ Enhance the aesthetic quality of the environment
- ✓ Shape cultural values



2.8.1 Advertise Products and Service

Billboards as advertising tools that are meant to promote products and services come in different forms, shapes, and sizes with different effects. They sort to convey good messages about products and services to consumers. Their primary aim is to project the company and encourage potential clients that the company's products are the best and highlight the need for the client to exchange money for the product or service (Taylor et

al. 2003). They persuade the consumer to buy products and services of a company that uses the billboard to mirror their products and services as desired.

Companies use the billboard to make consumers aware of products and services they can offer since they produce and provide their service purposely for the consumer. Although other visual communication designs can be used for the same purpose, however, the billboard is the most reliable visual communication design that can communicate to the numbers. So it is not surprising that most companies will opt for the billboard and try to present the message attractively to catch the attention of the consumer.

2.8.2 Announce Events

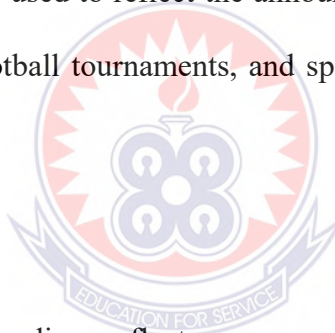
The billboard as a mirror is used to reflect the announcement of events like funerals of important personalities, football tournaments, and speech days. It allows the public to participate in the event.

2.8.3 Educate the Public

Billboard as an educative medium reflects messages regarding family planning, crime prevention, road safety, political tolerance, prevention of diseases, environmental and health issues. These reflections enlighten the viewer to get rich knowledge on the said issues.

2.8.4 Inform the public

As a medium for the dissemination of messages, the billboard conveys information about newly produced products, disease outbreaks, policies of political parties, policies of the government, roads, and the like.

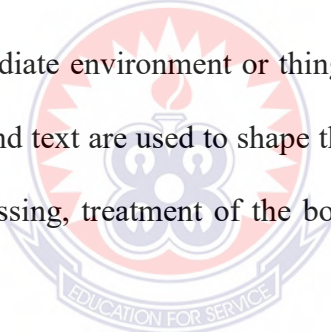


2.8.5 Enhance the Aesthetic Quality of the Environment

As an outdoor communication design, billboard improves the beauty of its immediate surrounding and makes the streets colourful. On skyscrapers, it may form a prominent landmark and attracts tourist to a particular city. In the night, billboards with striking light effects create an interesting outstanding nightscape. This defines the aesthetic quality of the streets of entertainment and shopping centre like Osu Oxford Street.

2.8.6 Shape cultural values

As an agent of change, billboards that assemble sociocultural elements become a vehicle that creates and shape reality and knowledge (Yavuz, 2006). They project the cultural values of the people since it is believed that the designers are influenced and draw inspiration from their immediate environment or things they are preview to. Elements like symbols, illustrations and text are used to shape thought of members of a particular society on their way of dressing, treatment of the body, what they eat, beautification, behaviour, etc.



2.9 Billboards and their Qualities

Billboard as a medium of communication influences the consumer to take action in respect of a company or service (Ryans, 1996; Adjei, 2012). The main purpose is to drive sales of products and services. For this purpose to come to pass, the billboard must reflect certain qualities. These qualities will draw the consumer to the billboard to get the message on the billboard.

Visibility and the ability of the billboard to communicate from a reasonable distance are very important for the billboard to make an impact (Shimp, 2010). This is made possible through the use of fonts that are bold enough and appear to draw closer to the viewer.

This is based on the fact that a font may be bold in terms of point but clumsy in style. Its clumsy nature will render it illegible which will defeat the aim of the billboard to reach the public from a distance.

On the issue of legibility as hinted in the above sentence, it goes beyond the font style and size to include the colour used for the text and its background. The use of colours like black, blue, green, and the like on white or yellow will maximize the legibility of text on a billboard. It will make it possible to project the text that carries the message the design/company/service is putting out there. On the other hand, the use of yellow on white, blue on black will affect legibility; hence rob the viewer of the message on the billboard. Effects like shadows, outlines and noise may also increase the legibility of the font. Its ability to make an impact positively or negatively also depends on the colours used for the text and effect. Adjei (2012) suggested that to maximize legibility in text, fonts in black or dark colour may have white outlines, shadows, or noise; while fonts in white or bright colour may have black outlines, shadows or noise. These effects serve as driving forces that push the text to the consumer to lose the message on the billboard.

The legibility of billboards is not limited to text but includes illustrations on them. The pictorial aspect of the billboards is 'wealth a thousand words' as Singh (2018) puts it in his article entitled Role of Illustration in Advertisement. For the illustration to make such an impact it must be legible – colour, size, and nature of the illustration are relevant. The boldness and striking nature of the picture on billboards make it more effective as far as its legibility is concerned. The use of bright colours on the illustration helps to draw the billboard closer to the consumer.

Illustration as a major component of billboards attracts and sustains the interest of the viewer. They leave a lasting impression on the minds of the consumers and help them to

know products they may not know about (Hill & O'Sullivan, 2004). Its colourful nature makes it loud as it complements the text to communicate well. Wilson & Till (2008) assert that the effectiveness of the billboard lay on the attractiveness of the image(s) on it. It serves as a magnet that attracts the attention of the consumer. The interesting nature of the picture also attracts the viewer and engraves the message on his/her mind.

Brevity and clarity of the message are vital for the success of the billboard since it needs about five to ten seconds for the viewer's attention to receive the message. Therefore for it to make an impact for the viewer to digest the information, the message must be brief, concise, precise, and clear (Achien'g, 2009). This is the mark of a good billboard since it normally communicates to road users who do not have time to absorb lengthy messages. The designer can use less than eight words for the statement of the message to maximize its effectiveness.

The uniqueness of the design and the goodness of the layout also increase the voice of the billboard in an attempt to communicate to the masses that come in contact with it. The uniqueness of the billboard may cause the viewer to take a second look at the billboard to get its communication. The goodness of the layout is in the organization of the information on the billboard. It must be arranged based on the importance of the message. Premium is placed on the most important message, followed by the rest. For instance, emphasis is placed on the main message and illustration that support it. This makes it possible for the billboard to communicate effectively within five seconds.

Apart from the above-discussed qualities that enable the billboards to make a great impact on the street on a timely basis, the location of the billboard is also very relevant as the message it carries. Its location makes it possible to communicate to a larger audience. Adjei (2012) identifies the shoulders of the principal streets in Accra, roundabout,

crossroads, round interchanges as the locations where billboards make a great impact. The lighting systems at these locations also make it possible to inform the public in twenty-four hours on daily basis. The location of the billboard is related to the target consumers (Siddigui et al, 2006).

2.10 Reflections on Billboards

Billboard continues to persuade consumers to respond to brands since 1800 when Jared Bell presented a huge poster in public. It remains one of the top most printed mediums that communicates to the road user (Robinson, 2008).

As a medium of communication, billboards house elements that make them more effective (Ephron, 2004). These elements or reflections as used in this study include text (statement of definite message, slogan, contact details, and the like), illustration (pictures of persons, items, symbols, logo, etc.), and colour.

The information mirrored on the eye of the viewer for him/her to translate into verbal communication about a product or service is in the text. Without the text, the billboard cannot be described as an advertising billboard (Messaris, 1996). The text comes in varied forms and styles to communicate differently. These include:

- **Main Text:** It is the statement of a definite message which happens to be the main message the billboards normally send across. This message is usually concise.
Emphasis ...
- **Slogan:** It is a short memorable and catchy statement that seeks to promote the brand the billboard is projecting. It is in most cases the second most important text on the billboard.

- **Contact Detail:** It comprises information that can lead one to know more about the advert in question. It allows the viewer to get in touch with the company or locate them for business.
 - **Other information** like a list of what a company is into or the services that it renders to clients. Although this kind of text is not common or advisable, as it turns to overload the billboard with a lot of text that the consumer does not have time to read.
 - **Illustration:** The pictorial aspect of the billboard reflects the image in connection with the advert. Their purpose is to complement the text and present it more realistically. It gives the text a voice to communicate pleasingly and brings the products of companies into the limelight. Meurs and Aristoff (2009) are of the view that companies take the cream out of the market share by presenting attractive pictures of their brands/products on their billboard advertisement. The pictures come in the form of images of celebrities, models, products, brand identity (logo), and symbols.
- Suggett (2011) has a contrary view in connection with pictures on an advertisement. He believes that pictures appeal to people differently. Hence the need to know your target group to select the appropriate pictures that can maximize the promotion of the brands and products. That is what can help companies take the lion's share in the market and not any picture. Moreover, pictures to the senses of the viewer and leave a lasting imprint on his/her mind. Themes like fantasy, sex, humour, and a slice of life are used in illustrations on billboards. These themes make the illustration appealing, interesting and unique, maximizing its ability to sustain the interest of the consumer.

Colour is the most fascinating component of billboard adverts that makes it interesting and enhances legibility. It acts as the vehicle that brightens the road and projects all elements on the billboard. It helps to create a pleasing atmosphere on the billboard. In the study of Bhargava et al. (1994) it came to light that among the factors to influence recall of billboard advertisement colour plays a positive role. Without colours on the billboard, the billboard will be boring, unattractive, and illegible.

2.11 Aesthetic Significance of Billboards

The aesthetic relevance of billboards is the driving force that pushes them to communicate effectively to the consumer. This force emanates from the appealing nature of the billboards that help them to increase their frequency of exposure (Cannon & Riordan 1994). This aspect of aesthetic in billboard advertisements results in them making a great impact on the consumer. This is achieved through the use of bright colours, attractive and appealing image, and brand identity. Bhargava et al. (1994) identify this feature of billboards as a powerful tool for recall. This is very important because the potential consumer is exposed to about one million messages every year as reported by Godin (1999). Therefore for a billboard to be part of the messages, one will be selecting from and act on, there is the need for it to be aesthetically appealing.

Apart from the appealing nature of the billboard, the site for mounting the billboard and its immediate surrounding is aesthetically significant for the ability of the billboard to communicate effectively. Bhargava & Donthu (1999) in their attempt to comment on the influential nature of the billboard identifies the location as a keen element that projects it to communicate. The location of the billboard adds value to it since it is believed that the beauty of art is determined by its surrounding. Perhaps it is against this backdrop that the site of the billboard is very significant in its ability to fly. Billboard sited along the

shoulders of the road adds value to the road by making it colourful. It reduces boredom as it allows the driver to appreciate the various forms of billboards in different forms and styles. It also enhances the beauty of round-about and interchanges with its striking pictures, interesting and catchy colour schemes. The lighten systems that illuminate these billboards make it possible for them to communicate at the night and improve the beauty of the location. This increases their ability to catch the attention of the consumer which happens to be the topmost aim of the billboards. It may also lead to one's ability to memorize the message on the billboard and positively affect the advert.

In addition, to maximise recall of the information on billboards, reflections of the culture of the society are relevant. These reflections help the society to relate well with the billboards as they see themselves on the billboards. That is to say the attempt to mirror the way of life of the society on billboards improves the understanding of the message on them (Bengtsson, 1993). Culture serves as a vehicle embedded in aesthetic of billboards that is designed to project and drive the billboards in the public space to the consumer (Maison, 2007). This suggests that for billboards to make great impact, the culture they mirror plays significant role as it triggers recall of the message of the advertisement. Unlike other communication media, the permanent nature of messages on billboards make them communicate to the viewer over and over again twenty-four hours per day. This enables billboards to capture the attention of the road user on the go (Plumely, 2000).

2.12 What is Culture?

National Commission on Culture (2004) recount that

“Culture is the totality of the way of life evolved by people through experience and reflection in our attempt to fashion a harmonious co-existence with our environment. This culture is dynamic and gives order and meaning to the social, political, economic, aesthetic, and religious practices of our people. Our culture also gives us our distinct identity as a people” (p. 9)

The commission’s definition of culture identifies culture as the way of life that mirrors the relations of persons with their environment. It shows the influence of the environment on the totality of the lifestyle of the individual as a societal being (Agyeman, 1986). Culture distinguishes one person from the others since the reflections in their environment may not be the same. That is why the commission stated that culture is dynamic and gives us our distinct identity.

Culture of a group of people appears in their ideal, ideas, beliefs, behaviour, values and material objects that establish their way of life (Macionis, 1997). These elements reflect their lifestyle as they interact with things found in the environment like architecture, sculptural items, visual communication designs, ceramics items, furniture, and the like.

In a similar manner culture is said to include knowledge, belief, arts, morals, law, customs, and any other capabilities and habits assimilated by man as a member of society, particular civilisation and social group (Manser, 1997). This definition projects culture as behaviour and life style of an individual and the society.

Culture distinguishes one person from the other based on their values, perspective and understanding of symbols. People within a particular cultural setting read meaning into symbols, artefacts and behaviours in the same ways (Akoto, 2004). That is to say that people are different in value, ideas and viewpoints, which is related to invisible paint/ink embodied visible materials such as symbols, visual communication design and behaviour.

It is also believed that culture is the “configuration of learned behaviours” that consists of the reflections of members of a particular society (Linton 1945, p. 32). These reflections are as a result of persons in a society responding to the immediate environment. Learned behaviours influence values – “collective conceptions of what is considered good, desirable, proper or bad, undesirable and improper in a culture” (Schaefer 2004, p. 60). With this contributions we can say that values influence people’s behaviour and can serve as benchmarks for evaluating the actions of others.

Ghana has a culture that distinguishes her from others. This culture reflects in her language, dressing, hairdo, artefact, architecture, and beliefs. For her to transfer this culture to her children there is the need to mirror it for them to get a clear picture of what identifies them as a group of people. Though, they may draw inspiration from other cultures.

For the purpose of this study culture is the reflection of the way of life of a group of people in a particular geographical location which is visible in their forms and things around them.

2.13 Significance of Culture in Ghana

Culture as a way of life is significant in the life of the individual Ghanaian and the community as a whole. These significance are as discussed below:

2.13.1 Identify the Individual

It identifies one as a member of a society that distinguishes them from others. This enables the person to fit well into the society in which he/she live. Identity reflects the way the individual sings, talks, dances, dresses, treats the body, and belief. Culture also mirrors how others see one as a member of a particular society. For example, the custom of the Ga chief identifies himself as a Ga chief and not an Ashanti chief.

2.13.2 Shape the Taught of the Individual

Culture is a learned behaviour as discussed above shapes the thought of the individual to enable him to fit well in the society, on the backdrop that culture is an acceptable lifestyle in a particular community.

2.13.3 Empower the Individual

Culture empowers an individual or a group of people and makes them superior to others. This is the resultant factor of what is called popular culture – a way of life accepted by the multitude. For instance, the influx of Christianity across the length and breadth of the globe makes the Christian nations superior and powerful to other nations and cultures in the world.

In an attempt to make the Ghanaian culture superior, there is the need to mirror it on billboards and other visual communication designs that interact with the multitude. Since visual has become the dominant culture.

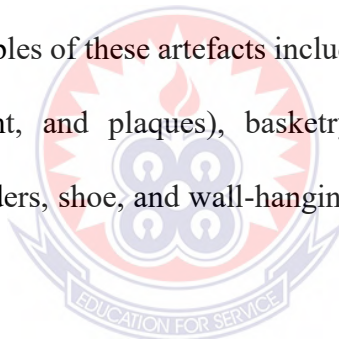
2.13.4 Promote Tourism

Culture draws tourists from different countries to a particular society to see/witness how they live their life. In Ghana, tourists come to visit historical sites, witness festivals, and study to understand how the people live their life. This gives the Ghanaians the

opportunity to transport their culture to other counties through artefacts and lasting impressions in the minds of the tourist since the tourists come from different countries with different cultural values. On the other hand, it gives the Ghanaians the opportunity to learn their culture in order to improve upon theirs. This has been the story for over a century, the result of Christianity, Islamic religion, English language, and other popular culture/multi-national culture. However, care must be taken that we do not end up eroding our cultural values.

2.13.5 Socio-cultural

In addition, it improves the socio-cultural life of the individual in a society, since it enables the individual to get money through the sale of artefacts that mirror the cultural values of the people. Examples of these artefacts include traditional crafts like sculptural (statue, stool, paperweight, and plaques), basketry (furniture, wall hanging, and curtains), leather (belt, sandals, shoe, and wall-hanging), and pottery wares (flower pot, statue, and paperweight).



2.13.6 Conclusion

Culture as a mirror that reflects one's identity, shapes his thought to empower him and make his culture superior to others to attract tourists and enhance his life in the society he lives in.

2.14 Cultural Elements on Billboards

Billboards that form part of the environment, just like any other environmental art form mirror the culture of the society they find themselves in. This is against the backdrop that culture mirrors the way of life of a group of people, how they see themselves, and the world around them (Etuk, 2002). This involves how they organize their lives to survive.

Billboards designs uniquely interact with culture in the society and they share with others in the society.

The billboard as a mirror of culture reflects some cultural traits – language, mode of dressing, hairdo, family ties, food, gender roles, the status of life, age, and life cycle. These traits are not static. They are modified by designers in designing billboards to communicate culture in varied forms and differently from place to place.

These cultural traits are embedded in the text, pictures, symbols, cartoons, and colour on billboards. They form the main components of the billboard which happens to be a monument of aesthetics on the shoulders of the roads.

2.15 Relevance of Billboards in Ghanaian Cultural Setting

The billboard as a powerful visual communication design as discussed earlier in this study also reflects a culture that stems from the main elements- text and illustration. These elements come in different forms and structures to communicate an idea to the public. Apart from the ideas they communicate, they also reflect cultural values like beauty, personal respect, hospitality, honour, national pride, godliness, holiness, hardworking, morality, and parenting through visual images (Gyekye, 2002; Apedoh & Ashie, 2015). The billboard in figure one (1) is a classic example of a billboard that depicts the true values of the Ghanaian culture like respect for kingship, the elderly, national pride, and the aesthetic of the outfit of the southern kingship as well as the elderly and the male in general. It also depicts the wealth of the Ashanti Kingdom and projects the Ashanti King, His Majesty Otumfuo Osei Tutu II.

In contrast to the billboard labelled figure 1, the billboard labelled figure 2 reflects universal beauty that thrives on the attraction of the female body which happens to be the motivation of the contemporary designers to catch the attention of the viewer. It also

mirrors the “Duku” as a crown that enhances the beauty of the true Ghanaian woman. It also defiles the sanctity of the female body by exposing part of the breast and the back which is supposed to be covered in the Ghanaian cultural setting (Akoto, 2004).

From the above discussion, it is obvious those billboards that communicate to viewers on our streets do not only communicate what the client/designer wants them to communicate but communicate other values that the designer may not even be aware of. Little research conducted on the printex billboard reveals that the billboard is supposed to project the printex clothes and the wearing of the “Duku”. According to the marketing department, it is not their intention to defile womanhood but project the new trend in fashion where the body forms part of the costume.

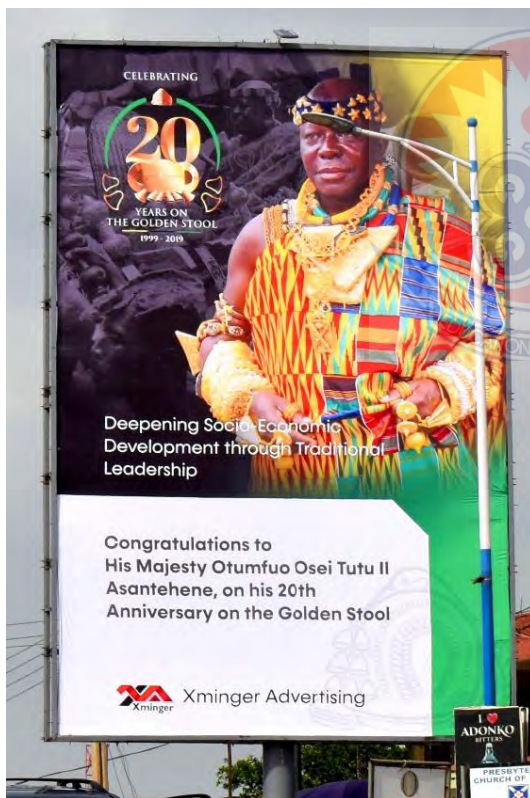


Figure 1: Anniversary Billboard

Source: https://www.pinterest.com/TWDI_Ghana/ashanti-region-ghana/



Figure 2: Printex Billboard

Source: Photograph taken by the researcher at Tantra Hill along the Achimota-Ofankor Road, 2021.

2.16 Billboard: a Tool for Projecting Culture



Figure 3. Maxim Billboard
Source: Photograph taken by the researcher on the Nsawam Road, adjacent to St. John's Grammar School, 2021.

Billboard is an influential visual communication design that thrives on visual culture (Egan, 2007). It adores the female body and other striking images as a powerful tool in the name of attracting the consumer to exchange money for a product or service. Figure 3(above) is a classic example. However, in the process, it may end up influencing the Ghanaian sense of beauty, respect, and dignity for the female body. Since, sight has been essentially the sense that simulates and leaves a lasting effect on the mind (Jonas, 1966). Plato (1974) described the eye as the soul in his attempt to place value on sight as compared to other senses. This complements the belief that the eye is the window of the soul in indigenous Ghanaian culture (Offei, 2004). The eye as the soul or window of the

soul has a great influence on the individual as a social being who feeds on visual communication design – billboard.

Influence as described by Hale and Whitlan (1999, p.2) is the “process of getting other people to accept your views and feel okay about it and for them to remain persuaded and enthusiastic enough to influence other people either positively or negatively.” It serves as a vehicle that carries persons from one cultural value into the other without realizing the negativities in it. Influence drives slowly until it brings positive or negative changes to the individual and the society.

In the name of modernity, individuals dress to show off part of the body such as the breasts, buttocks, thighs, beads, or even the underwear particularly those of the ladies that need to be covered (Egwim, 2010). It is described in the fashion world as any outfit that shows flesh. Indecent dressing has broken the moral fabric of society and endorses prostitution, sexual harassment, rape, and teenage pregnancy, and the like which has been the other of the day, especially among the youth. As Daily Graphic, Saturday, May 20, 2006 edition, captures it under the heading “Dressing to Kill” in the attempt to condemn the indecent dressing on the youth of today. Stating how the western lifestyle in clothing is sinking deep into Ghanaian culture through the media. The billboard above is a classic example of such a medium that influences the Ghanaian sense of dignity and short-chaining womanhood in the name of attracting the consumer. Parts of the body that are regarded as private and the pride of womanhood are now in public for the world to adore. These images reflect the sacred female body. Gone are the days where the female body was treated with respect. Nakedness has become the other of the day. It stares one in the face on the streets of Accra as the youth put on transparent and provocative dresses found around us today. These youth who dress immodestly may not even be aware that it is wrong because the reflections of the right values may not be there to educate them.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Overview

This chapter clarifies in detail the methods that were employed in eliciting and analyzing data for the study. It also describes step by step approach followed in realizing the goal and the objectives of the research. The following were discussed: Research Approach, Research Design, Population, Target Population, Sample Size, Sample Distribution, Sample and Sampling Techniques, Data Collection Instrument, Data Collection Procedure, and Data Analysis Plan.

3.2 Research Approach

The qualitative research approach was used for the study. The researcher deems it appropriate for the study because of its ability to emphasise on careful and detailed descriptions of social practices in an attempt to understand how participants experience and explain their world (Jackson, 1995). Qualitative study focuses on knowledge associated with creativity (Namanji and Ssekyewaa, 2012). The researcher also sees it as an approach that best suits the study because of its ability to relate phenomena to the appearance of things and how they appear in our experience.

This research approach was helpful for the researcher to observe billboards in the study in a comprehensive manner and interview some experts in the field of study to discover what the study seeks to uncover as far as the aesthetic of billboards is concerned. In addition, the primary aim of using this approach is to understand the aesthetic qualities of these billboards.

Zahrabi (2013) is of the view that qualitative research uses interviews and observations to obtain analyze and interpret data, the data content analysis of visual and textual materials. This assertion is the driving force behind the selection of this approach for the study. It gives the researcher the opportunity to described and systematically interpret issues from the perspective of the population under study. On the contrary, Leedy, and Ormrod (2001) claim that qualitative research is less formal in the description as it formulates and builds new theories. It is labelled as an effective model that appears in a natural setting that helps the researchers to develop a level of detail from being highly involved in the actual experiences (Creswell, 2003).

Qualitative research approach is characterized by providing meaning, creating a concept, defining metaphors, symbols, and a description of things (Berg and Haward, 2012). It contains all the vital instruments that can ignite recall that helps in problem-solving. Instruments like observation and interview are keen in qualitative research approach like this one. Therefore one can conclude that it provides the researcher with a lot of data about the study (De Vaus, 2014).

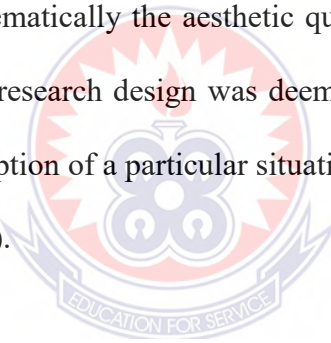
3.2 Research Design

Research design is the overall plan that provides specific direction for procedures in a research (Creswell, 2014). It is said to be the structure that holds the elements in a study. It involves a step by step procedure employed before data collection and analysis process which is geared towards the achievement of the objectives of the study. The appropriate research design helps to get the desired result since it determines the kind of analysis to be used in the study.

The descriptive research design was employed for this study as it provides a clear picture of the situation, event and depicts how things are related to one another and as it appears

in its natural setting without influencing it (Blumberg et al., 2005). The researcher used this research design in an attempt to describe the situation systematically and provide information about the study (Ritchie *et al.*, 2013). According to Dr. Aggarwal (2008) (cited by Salaria (2012)), descriptive research is dedicated to the gathering of data about prevailing conditions or situations for description and interpretation.

Descriptive research is not free from challenges like other research designs. Thygesen *et al.* (2011) are of the view that this method lacks accuracy since the method is based on the theoretical approach of the researcher. Nevertheless, it was appropriate for this study as it allows the researcher to analyze, interpret, and identify the aesthetic and cultural significance of billboards in the Ghanaian setting. This research design was employed in an attempt to describe systematically the aesthetic qualities of the billboards and their cultural significance. This research design was deemed appropriate for the study as it emphasizes a holistic description of a particular situation (Fraenkel and Wallen, 2000 as cited in Letcher-Teye, 2014).



3.3 Population

Population is a term that is used to describe a group of individuals with one or more characteristics in common that are significant to the researcher (Best, 1981). The population of a study is characterized by specific features the study seeks to shed light on for the public to understand. In this study, the billboards that form part and add value to prominent places in Accra were considered as part of the population because of the significance of their reflections for the study. Graphic design artists who are into billboards advertisement, advertising agencies, marketing agents, consumers were considered for the study and an officer from the Assembly. The researcher decided to

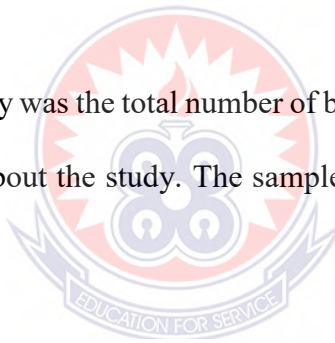
focus on this population since they possess characteristics that can help explain and draw meaning from the phenomena under study.

3.4 Target Population

The target population include giant billboards, consumers/road users who come in contact with the billboards understudy, advertising agencies who are into billboards designing and mounting, marketing agents from production companies, graphic design artists who have been into billboards designing over the past five years, and an officer from one of the assemblies where the billboards are sited who is in charge of supervision of the mounting of billboards in the area.

3.5 Sample Size

The sample size for the study was the total number of billboards and individuals the study relied on for information about the study. The sample size for the study is seventy-two (72).



3.6. Sample Distribution

The target population included twenty-seven (27) giant billboards, thirty-five (35) consumers/road users, three (3) advertising agencies, three (3) marketing agents, three (3) graphic design artists who are into billboards advertisement and one (1) officer of the La-Dade-Kotopon Municipal Assembly

3.7 Sample and Sampling Techniques/Procedure

Sampling is the process of selecting a statistically representative sample of individuals and items from the population of interest. Sampling is vital in research since the population of interest may consist of a lot of persons/items for the study to project or

include as participants (Brown, 2006). Robert (2004) is of the view that sampling also enables the researcher to collect data faster and at a low cost.

Purposive sampling technique involves selecting persons or items deliberately based on their relevance in terms of the information or knowledge of the phenomena under study. This information, one cannot obtain from other sources (Maxwell, 1996). Even though this sampling technique does not allow one to generalize findings because of its subjective nature, the researcher deems it appropriate for the study. This is because of the information required which can only be obtain from persons with the expertise in discovering the aesthetics and cultural significance of billboards under study.

Purposeful sampling is a technique broadly employed in qualitative research for the identification and choosing a person or group of persons or item(s) with rich knowledge and experience in the phenomenon of interest (Patton, 2002). In addition to knowledge and experience, Bernard (2002) noted the significance of accessibility and readiness to participate and the ability to communicate experiences and opinions in an articulate, expressive, and reflective manner. In contrast, probabilistic or random sampling is used to ensure the generalizability of findings by minimizing the potential for bias in selection and to control the potential influence of known and unknown confounders.

The researcher employed the expert purposive sampling technique to select the sample that provides the data needed for the study. This involves identifying billboards and selecting individuals with knowledge about the phenomenon of the study (Cresswell & Plano, 2011). This sampling method was employed because of the importance of the ability of the selected billboards to speak for themselves and the availability and willingness of the individuals to participate by communicating their experiences and views in a reflective manner (Bernard, 2002).

The convenience sampling technique was used to sample consumers/road users for this study. This sampling technique was employed for the selection of these participants because it gave the researcher an opportunity to sample individuals who were readily available and willing to contribute in the study. Convenience sampling helped to overcome the possibility of sampling road users who may not be willing to comment on the displayed billboards under study and other matters in connection to the research. This is in line with Zikmund (1997) view that suggests that convenience sampling is a process of gathering the appropriate data from the sample that are suitably accessible.

3.8 Data Collection Instruments

Data collection instruments are instruments that allow the researcher to collect information about the study. The researcher used observation and interviews to collect data for the study.

3.8.1 Observation

Observational schemes are seen as brilliant research techniques to be utilized in gathering data. Observation as a data collection method gives the trained person the opportunity to observe the subject or phenomenon and records data about appearances of the phenomenon. The observation instrument brings the researcher into contact with the phenomenon being studied (Kumekpor, 2002:65). This instrument allowed the researcher to carefully observe and examine the various giant billboards at prominent places in Accra and the traffic situation around them.

Pictures of the billboards were taken for descriptive analysis. This helped in the analytical observation and evaluation of the billboards ascertain the identifiable cultural elements on them from the Ghanaian cultural setting. This research instrument created room for the researcher to see, evaluate photographs of billboards and aid in documentation. The

observation instrument was also used to observe the attitudes of road users towards the billboards in perspective and photographs of the billboards taken for further studies.

A digital camera was used to take still pictures of displayed billboards for the study. This allowed the researcher to carefully analyse to ascertain the aesthetic relevance of billboards and their cultural significance. This observation tool made it possible to move the billboards from the prominent places in Accra to create room for descriptive analysis. It was also useful for the validation of the data collected for the study as it gave the expert a clear picture of what transpired on the field to give an objective comment on the findings. Photograph of billboards were critical and used for questioning to get detailed information about the study since a picture is worth a thousand words (Collier and Collier, 1986).

3.8.2 Interview

Interview is a face-to-face meeting between the questioner and the respondent, or an oral presentation of an opinion often used in collecting data for descriptive studies (Agydu et al., 2011 as cited by Letcher-Teye, 2014). It has several advantages that stem from personal contact. Response rate is high and issues can be clarified. The interviewer is key on this study as it allowed the researcher to probe for the specific meaning of response (Gray, 2004). That is why the interview schedule was the main research instrument for the study. The interview schedule was administered to respondents during working hours when they were somehow free to prevent them from avoiding the exercise. However, for those who could not be present for the interview face-to-face, cell phone was used.

3.9 Data Collection Procedure

For this study, two sources of data were used - primary data and secondary data. Primary data is information collected through primary research purposely for the topic under study. It is said to be data collected as a result of direct outcomes of events or records of eyewitnesses (Ary, Cheser & Asghar, 2001). For this study, photographs were the main primary data used. Other primary data that were used include interviews and observations designed by the researcher.

Secondary data is data that had been collected by someone else for different purposes at a point in time. Although the information to some extent might be out of context, it is relatively low cost and time-saving. This data has been fashioned and treated before receiving the attention of the researcher (McNeill, 1990). For this particular research, secondary data were obtained through books, newspapers, internet search engines and other relevant documents from organizations.

3.10 Data Analysis Plan

The analysis of data for this study were hinged on thematic content analysis and visual analysis. The researcher used these methods due to their ability to allow the billboards understudy to speak through aesthetics. These methods helped understand the aesthetic reflections of these billboards to project their aesthetic qualities at prominent places in the cityscape (Mitchell et al. 2016).

The billboards were observed closely taking into consideration their immediate surroundings. The images of the billboards were taken, coded and critically analysed with the help of the experts and other relevant stakeholders slated for this study to unearth the cultural elements embedded in the billboards through aesthetics. The codes helped view the billboards independently and to find links among them to establish for further studies

(Liamputhong, 2013). Themes were drawn from the aesthetics of the billboards under study for analysis. The field notes from observation and interviews were also coded for thematic analysis of the various sections of the billboards to understand readily the aesthetics qualities of these billboards. The researcher found this appropriate since thematic analysis of findings from words and pictures are more powerful than numbers (Harding, 2013).



CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS, AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Overview

A major factor needed is to fully understand and appreciate the aesthetics qualities of billboards to add up to the body of knowledge in billboard aesthetics to have comprehensive knowledge about their reflections and organizational structure. It is based on this backdrop that the study examine twenty-seven (27) billboards at prominent places in Accra.

The study was structured to ascertain the:

1. description of sited billboards at prominent places in Accra;
2. aesthetic qualities of billboards;
3. identifiable cultural elements on billboards; and
4. contents on billboards and their impact on the cityscape.

These formed the bases for the analysis which were done based on the research questions for the study. These questions are as follows:

1. What are the features of sited billboards at prominent places in Accra?
2. What are the aesthetic qualities of billboards in Accra?
3. What are the identifiable cultural elements on billboards in Accra?
4. What are the contents on billboards in Accra and their impact on the cityscape?

4.2 Data Presentation

The data was presented based on the photographs of giant billboards at prominent places in Accra.

4.2.1 Description of sited billboards at prominent places in Accra

Billboards that are sited at prominent places in Accra in this study are billboards that have been mounted or displayed at places that are well known, attract huge traffic or close to important national installations or asserts. These billboards apart from communicating to the viewer, they add value to the place to improve their aesthetic qualities. Some of these places slated for this study include Tetteh Quarshie Interchange, Jubilee House T – Junction, Dzorwulu Junction and Airport Junction.

Tetteh Quarshie Interchange is situated at Spanner Junction opposite the Accra Mall where Tetteh Quarshie Roundabout used to be. With the interchange, the roundabout has been split into four different roundabouts attached to the interchange to ease traffic flow to and from the interchange. This interchange attracts traffic from Tema Motorway, George W. Bush Highway (N1), Spintex Road, Liberation Road and Legon East Road.

Jubilee House T-junction is a T-junction that links the Presidential Drive Street on the right side of the Jubilee House (the seat of the Government of Ghana) to the Liberation Road. It is a junction that attracts traffic to and from Ako Adjei Interchange, 37 Military Hospital Roundabout, Cantonment and Kanda Estate.

Dzorwulu Junction is the junction that connects vehicular traffic flow from Dzorwulu, Airport residential and Achimota to the N1. The traffic flow at this junction is controlled by traffic lights. The junction is close to the only forest cover in the cityscape of Accra.

Kotoka International Airport Junction is a junction on the Liberation Road that links traffic from Airport residential, Tetteh Quarshie Interchange, and 37 Military Hospital roundabout to the Airport. It is the only international airport in the city of Accra that attracts all the air traffic in the city. This junction is important as it takes most of the human and vehicular traffic from the airport to their various destination in the city of Accra.

4.2.1.1 *Tetteh Quarshie Interchange*

The giant billboards at Tetteh Quarshie Interchange for this study were described as three-dimensional billboards because of their ability to communicate to the viewer from three different angles with three interfaces. These billboards are four in number and erected in the four roundabouts attached to the interchange that makes it possible for vehicles to use the interchange or go under it towards the Liberation Road or Legon East Road as indicated in figure 4. The red arrow depicts traffic flow from Liberation Road to Legon East Road while the green arrow shows traffic flow from Legon East Road towards the Liberation Road. The image below is the sky view of Tetteh Quarshie Interchange.

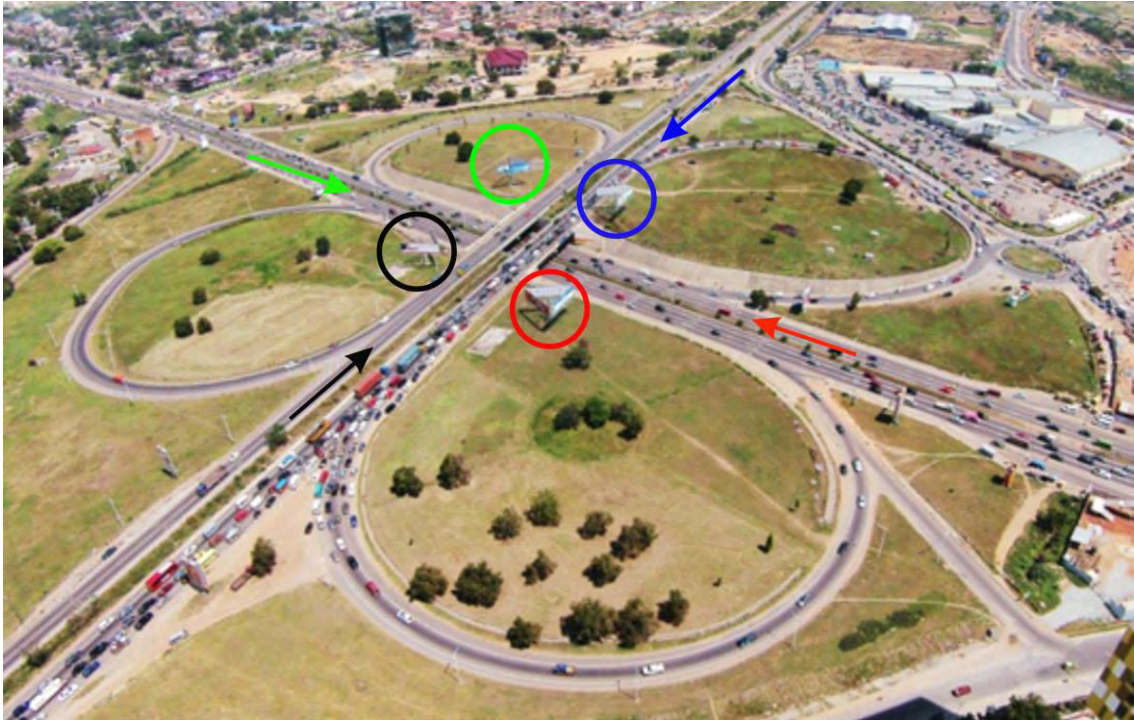


Figure 4. Tetteh Quarshie Interchange
Source: Google search engine, 2021

These billboards are sited before and just after the interchange on both sides of the road as indicated in the figure 4 with four different colour circles. The positions of these billboards make it almost impossible for the road user to pass without noticing their presence. Some of them have a digital interface that makes it possible for them to display varied advertisements. For instance, the first giant billboard on the left before the interchange that interacts with road users from the Tema Motorway (as depicted in figure 4 with a blue arrow) heading to George W. Bush Highway (the black arrow in Figure 4 depicts traffic flow from George W. Bush Highway) and those from the Liberation Road or Spintex Road to George W. Bush Highway (N1), advertises Pepsodent, Club beer, and Sunon Asogli Power Development.

These billboards communicate to the road user from all angles irrespective of where the road user is coming from or going, as long as the user is heading towards the interchange or moving, these billboards are ready to communicate to viewers twenty-four hours a day

and seven days within the week. These billboards come with lighting systems that make it possible for them to communicate at night.

Based on the interview with an officer at La-Dade-Kotopon Municipal Assembly in Accra, it came to light that these billboards are about 20 feet from the ground and measure 10.6 feet by 36 feet. According to him, this is to prevent the billboards from blocking the view of oncoming vehicles as well as make these billboards visible from a reasonable distance. This is the reason why the Assembly demand:

1. copies of the architectural designs and structural drawings of proposed billboards endorsed by a certified architect or an engineer,
2. evidence of insurance cover,
3. geotechnical studies/investigation and
4. clearance from the owner of the property or site.

The Assembly demand the above from applicants who intend to mount billboards to ensure that the land is fit for the construction and mounting of the billboards. The Assembly also supervises the construction and mounting of the billboards to ensure safety of the road user. This suggests that the Assembly has the safety of the public at heart as they work together with applicants who have the intention of promoting their product and services.

From observation, it came to light that out of fifteen (15) giant billboards at Tetteh Quarshie Interchange, one (1) is an event billboard representing 6.7%. One out of the fifteen also promotes service. This suggests that giant billboards are normally not used to promote events and services. The remaining thirteen out of the fifteen (15) billboards advertise products, representing 93.3% of the billboards for the study. This implies that most giant billboards promote manufactured products.

It is interesting to note that two (2) of these billboards promote the same product – Tasty Tom. These make it possible for them to communicate to the road user from different directions, even though these billboards are on the same location with just about 100 meters apart.

The billboards of Pepsodent toothpaste (Figure 5 and Figure 6) are also two among the billboards. This also makes them reach the road user coming from different directions. Just like Tasty Tom, Pepsodent billboards make it almost impossible for the road user to notice their presence whether coming from Tema Motorway to George W. Bush Highway (N1) or N1 to Tema Motorway. However, unlike Tasty Tom billboards (Figure 9) that project the same product, Pepsodent billboards promote different brands of Pepsodent Toothpaste to the public.



Figure 5. Pepsodent Billboard

Source: Photograph was taken by the researcher at Tetteh Quarshie Interchange, 2021



Figure 6. Pepsodent Billboard

Source: Photograph was taken by the researcher at Tetteh Quarshie Interchange, 2021

Illustration as a powerful tool that speaks louder than one thousand words places a major role in the billboards sampled for the study. They come in varied forms to complement the text on the billboard. From observation, it came to light that four out of the fifteen billboards project only products the billboards are marketing. This represents 26.66% of the billboards for the study. It is interesting to note that one celebrity – Nana Ama McBrown (Actress) is on two of the billboards, marketing two different products – Tasty Tom and Royal Aroma Rice. Human images seem to play a significant role in billboard advertisement, out of the fifteen (15) billboards for the study; eight (8) of them come with human figures, representing 53.33%. Seven out of the fifteen billboards come with a combination of products and humans. This suggests that 46.66% of these billboards promote advertisements with products and human forms. Most of these human forms are celebrities and models. One of the billboards displays scenes of places to complement the text, representing 6.66% of the billboards in this study. One of the billboards also comes with a cartoon and a product to project its sale.



Figure 7. Empowerment Billboard

Source: Photograph was taken by the researcher at Tetteh Quarshie Interchange, 2021

These illustrations maximize the attractiveness of the billboard to catch the attention of the viewer. However, this accession does not apply to the event billboard (Figure 7) under this study, as nineteen out of the twenty road users who came in contact with this billboard say it is unattractive because of the nature of the illustration – monochromatic. This suggests that monochromatic images on billboards do not attract the attention of the viewer. On the contrary, the composition of the human form plays a major role in billboards advertisement. Out of the fifteen (15) billboards for the study, five of them come with an interesting composition of man (as in mankind). It was established through interviews of road users that these billboards create an interesting effect that one cannot pass unnoticed. Nineteen (19) viewers out of the twenty, representing 95% of the total road users (consumers) for this study are of the view that billboards with human composition make it interesting that one cannot take their eyes off them. It is interesting to note that except for the Club beer billboard that comes with the composition of men, all the other billboards that come with human figures have female figures on them. It also came to light that the female figures turn to attract attention and persuade the consumer more than the male figures.



Figure 8. Club Billboard

Source: Photograph was taken by the researcher at Tetteh Quarshie Interchange, 2021

From observation, it is obvious that slogans are projected on billboards to promote products and services. Apart from the Empowerment billboard (Figure 7), in all the billboards for the study, slogans of the products and services have been projected making them possible to reach the viewer from a reasonable distance. The use of san-serif typestyle plays a major role in the projecting of the slogans of the products and services. Except for “Chale!” on the Club beer’s billboard which is in free-hand lettering style, all the text that accompanies it to form the slogan is in the san-serif lettering style as stated earlier. This suggests that san-serif typestyle are more legible as compared to other lettering styles. It makes the viewers run with the slogan as the production companies expect viewers to do. The legibility of “Chale!’ on the Club beer billboard (Figure 8) opens the window of opportunity to graphic artist who want to break monotony in the designing of billboards. That is, it is possible to use a different typestyle instead of san-serif to achieve the same purpose.



Figure 9. Tasty Tom Billboard

Source: Photograph was taken by the researcher at Tetteh Quarshie Interchange, 2021

It also came to light that billboards that have an element of three-dimensionality in them turn to communicate louder from a distance through observation. The Kerrygold billboard (Figure 19) communicates to road users from Liberation Road to Legon East Road, Spintex, or N1 to Legon East Road on the right as indicated with the blue circle in Figure 4. It is obvious from observation that for a billboard to communicate from a distance there is the need for the colour of the text to be contrasting to the background colour. Just like the billboard labelled figure 9, when red is used on a white background, it communicates well on a yellow background as used on the “Tasty Tom”.

Eight out of the fifteen billboards for this study come with a white background that is contrasting to the colours of the text on them. Red text with a white outline turns to communicate well on a yellow background as demonstrated on the Tasty Tom billboard (Figure 9).

The traffic situation around the billboards for the study is normally slow and heavy in the mornings and evenings. This allows the billboards to communicate to the road user. From Tema Motorway to the N1, the road user gets the opportunity to interact with the Kaiser Billboard (Figure 23) and Tasty Tom Billboard on the left before and after the interchange

respectively (as depicted in figure 4 with blue and red circles). On the right from the same direction are Pepsodent/Club Beer/Suson Asogli Power Development Billboard and Coca-Cola Billboard before and after the interchange respectively (as shown in Figure 4 with green and black circles). The road user from the N1 to the Tema Motorway also gets the opportunity to interact with the Billboard of Smirnoff and Tasty Tom/Kellogg's/Pepsodent Billboard on the right before and after the interchange respectively (as demonstrated on figure 4 with red and blue circles). From the same direction are Royal Aroma Billboard and Kleanz Billboard on the right before and after the interchange respectively (as mirrored in figure 4 with black and green circles).

Road users on Liberation Road to the Legon East Road get the message from Kerrygold Milk Powder Billboard (Figure 19) on the right and Empowerment Billboard (Figure 7) on the left just before the interchange (as indicated in figure 4 with blue and red circles respectively). Those from the opposite end of the road (that is from Legon East road to the Liberation road) interact with London Digestive Billboard (Figure 16) on the right and NutriSnax (Figure 22) on the left side of the road respectively (as depicted in figure 4 with black and green circles).

The erection of these billboards make them almost impossible to avoid. As the driver or viewer approaches the overpass the billboards start making themselves visible one after the other.

4.2.1.2 Jubilee House T-junction

The giant billboards at the Jubilee House T-junction comes in two forms, namely billboards that communicate to the viewers from only one angle and digital billboard with two interfaces. The two interfaces make it possible for the digital billboard to

communicate from two different directions on the Liberation Road. These billboards are all sited at the right side of the T-junction that head towards the Ako Adjei Interchange.



Figure 10. Vlisco Billboard

Source: Photograph was taken by the researcher at Jubilee House T-junction, 2021

The Vlisco Billboard makes itself visible and ready to communicate to vehicular traffic from 37 Military Hospital roundabout and Presidential Drive street towards Ako Adjei Interchange on the right side of the shoulder of the road. The Vlisco billboard projects one of the timeless cloth designs in two different colours – cyan and sky blue with white

wax-like pattern, with floral patterns on both of them. The cloth with the cyan background with repetitive wavy lines in blue takes about one-third of the height of the billboard's interface with Vilsco in serif typestyle just above the salvage of the fabric in white. The other cloth is just below the one at the top taking about two-third of the size of the advert.



Figure 11. Indomie Billboard

Source: Photograph was taken by the researcher at Jubilee House T-junction, 2021

The Indomie advert also communicates from one side of the digital billboard as the sole advert for human and vehicular traffic from 37 Military Hospital roundabout. The other side of the digital billboard displayed five different adverts with an average of five to ten seconds for each advert to communicate to viewers from Ako Adjei Inerchange. The GCB back advert and Closeup advert were sampled among the five adverts on the digital billboard. These adverts appear louder as compared to the other adverts on that interface of the billboard.

All the billboards at this junction are in the portrait format as compared to all the sampled billboards in this study from other prominent places in the city of Accra. This make them stand out in the study. With the exception of the Indomie billboard that the slogan is in script typestyle and dominate all the elements on the billboard, the rest have the illustration dominating.

The GBC Bank and Close-up adverts come with slogans in san-serif typestyle that complement the illustration to present their service and product respectively to the consumer for him/her to respond positively. Each advert has the possibility of being displayed once within one minute. This possibility denies some motorist from getting all the contents of the adverts.

4.2.1.3 Dzorwulu Junction

The giant billboards sampled for this study at Dzorwulu Junction came with two interfaces which make it possible for them to reach out to the consumer from two different directions. These billboards are two in number with four different advertisements. These billboards are sited at the left and right side of the road from Dzorwulu, joining the N1. They make themselves visible mainly for traffic flow from Tetteh Quarshie interchange and Achimota roundabout.

From observation, it was obvious vehicle traffic flow tend to slow as they approach the traffic light at the junction especially during peak hours (in the morning and evening from Monday to Saturday). This phenomena create the opportunity for the Indomie Billboard to communicate to the road user while the Pizza Hut Billboard does same as the traffic move from the junction towards Tetteh Quarshie Interchange. Road users were of the view that from the Dzorwulu traffic light, the Pizza Hut Billboard communicates strongly as it projects itself to the consumer. The Pizza Hut Billboard also projects itself to vehiclular traffic flow from Dzorwulu and Legon Bypass to Tetteh Quarshie Interchnge. The Polytank Billboard also communicates to vehicular traffic from Tetteh Quarshie Interchange as they approach Dzorwulu Junction traffic light while Heineken Billboard takes over and makes itself visible to the road user at Dzorwulu Junction.

All the billboards sampled for this study at this junction promote products. They presents these products in an interesting and attractive manner to force the consumer to respond positively.

Illustration played a key role on these billboards as all of them displayed the products they are promoting for the consumer to have a clear picture of the product in question. The Pizza Hut billboard projected what appears to be different flavours of pizza in a three-dimensional effect. This effect used on the billboard makes the billboard powerful as compared to the Indomie Billboard that communicates from the same direction.



Figure 12. Pizza Hut Billboard

Source: Photograph was taken by the researcher at Dzorwulu Junction, 2021

Just like billboards at Tetteh Quarshie Interchange, slogans played a significant role in the promotion of the products as they dominate all the text on the billboards to support the illustration on these billboards to reach out to the target group. With the exception of the Indomie Billboard whose slogan is in script typestyle, all the other billboards come with slogans in san-serif typestyle, aerial to be precise. These font style makes the text visible from a distance. The Big Boss on the Pizza Hut appears to be more visible than all the slogans on the other billboards that come with the san-serif typestyles. The Indomie Billboard in spite of using script typestyle for the slogan, the “... Indomie Beef Flavor” in white is well projected as all the road users sampled for the study acknowledge that. However, “the Beef it Up with ...” that comes in two lines in gold which comes before the “Indomie Beef Flavor” which is also in two lines to make the slogan complete is not visible enough as the brownish background complement with it. This suggests that irrespective of the typestyle used, the background of the text plays a significant role in the projection of the text for the viewer to get the message at a glance. See the Indomie Billboard below.



Figure 13. Indomie Billboard

Source: Photograph was taken by the researcher at Dzorwulu Junction, 2021



Figure 14. Heineken Billboard

Source: Photograph was taken by the researcher at Dzorwulu Junction, 2021

Special effect of dark colours in varied shades also played a relevant role in the projection of elements on the billboards sampled for this study at Dzorwulu Junction. Out of the four billboards, three come with this effect. The tints of the dark colours were used in the middle to project text as in the Indomie Billboard and illustration as in the Polytank Billboard. However, in the Heineken Billboard, the dark shade was used below the Heineken bottle to detach it from the green background in order to create an impression of the bottle rolling out of the billboard to the viewer. The only billboard in this part of the cityscape that comes with a bright colour, red as its background that projects all the

elements on the Pizza Hut Billboard. It also comes with an amount of 169 as the cost of the pizza with the assurance of free delivery to the consumer.

4.2.1.4 *Kotoka International Airport Junction*

The giant billboards at Kotoka International Airport Junction were in two forms. That is billboards with two interfaces and smart/digital billboard that display multiple advertisement in a form of video. One of the billboards with two interfaces, NSIA Insurance billboard communicates to vehicular traffic flow from 37 Military Hospital roundabout and Airport residential area. The adverts on the digital billboard are also visible to human and vehicular traffic flow from 37 Military Hospital roundabout and Airport residential area. However, the adverts on the digital billboard make themselves more prominent to the traffic flow from 37 Military Hospital roundabout especially.

The Isoroma Billboard also projects itself to the human and vehicular traffic flow from Tetteh Quarshie Interchange heading towards the Airport Junction traffic light. It came to light that as the vehicle approaches the Airport Junction's traffic light, one loses sight of the Isoroma Billboards.

The digital billboard displays five different video adverts from five companies. These adverts projects products like Peak Milk, Kilit Insecticide, Suzuki Car, The Bantree and the absa bank. However, for the purpose of this study, Peak Milk and Kilit Insecticide were sampled for the study because of its striking nature. The adverts have an average of five to ten minutes to reach out to the consumer at a time. Road users sampled for the study were of the view that it is difficult to get the full complement of the adverts because of the way the adverts keep changing within some few seconds. In spite of this change, this billboard adds colour to the junction as it continues to display different adverts on

the left shoulder of the Liberation Road when heading to 37 Military Hospital roundabout.

In all the billboards at this junction, illustrations seem to dominate all the elements on them in an attempt to present the products and serve in a fascinating manner. Just like the other billboards at other locations in the city of Accra, billboards at this location also showcase slogans as key in billboards advertisement as they appear in san-serif typestyle. This typestyle makes them more visible to the road users as the billboard is in the direction of the road user. Apart from the typestyle, the billboards at Airport Junction demonstrate how neutral colours especially white help in the projection of text and other elements on the billboard. Out of the four adverts, in two of the adverts white was used as the background of the main text (slogan) in dull colours to repel it from the board for the consumer to get the message on it. This suggest that dull or darker colours do well on white although some bright colours like red may also do well on the white like in the Suzuki advert in the study. In the NSIA Insurance billboard for instance, the slogan in blue was projected on a white background.



Figure 15. NSIA Insurance Billboard

Source: Photograph was taken by the researcher at Kotoka International Airport Junction, 2021

4.2.2 Aesthetic qualities of billboards

The aesthetic qualities of billboards are the features that make the billboards stand out. These qualities make it possible for billboards to be appealing to the consumer and maximise their ability to reach out to a larger audience. Without these qualities, there wouldn't be anything like billboards or visual communication design since these qualities emanate from the basic elements of design. These qualities come together with the aid of the principles of design to create a pleasant effect on the eye of the viewer. In billboard designing as revealed by this study from the designer's point of view, aesthetic qualities of a billboard are embedded in the illustration, text, and colours used on the billboard. All the three (3) graphic artists sampled for the study agree with this accession. The advertising companies also agree with it but one of the marketing agents of a manufacturing company is of the view that aesthetic qualities are in the illustration and colour only.

The consumers of the sited billboards for the study are of the view that the beauty of the billboards is in the colours and the illustration. Out of the thirty-five, thirty-one are of the view that aesthetics is in both colours and illustration; and the rest are of the view that the aesthetics are in the illustration of the billboards only. As one of them puts the “striking nature of the image makes the billboard attractive” regarding London Oat Digestive Billboard (Figure 16).

4.2.2.1 *Attractiveness of illustrations on billboards*



Figure 16. London Oat Digestive Billboard

Source: Photograph was taken by the researcher at Tetteh Quarshie Interchange, 2021

The striking nature of the illustration on this billboard and the other billboards for this study makes them stand out. It is against this backdrop that perhaps, that is why the entire billboards sample for this study is illustrative. Out of the twenty-seven billboards, only one seems to be unattractive from observation and was confirmed by nineteen out of the twenty respondents for the study. That is the event billboard, Empowerment (Figure 7). The respondents perceive the event billboard as unattractive because of the nature of the illustration. After a careful examination of the billboard, it was realised that not that the illustration is unappealing but the text is not legible to communicate from a distance. That allows the other billboards around it to overshadow it. For instance, it is expected that it will communicate to road users on the left side of the road from Liberation Road to Legon East Road at Tetteh Quarshie Interchange. But from observation, it appears that the Coca-Cola Billboard after the interchange on the left interacts with road users before they lose their vision as they pass under the interchange.

4.2.2.2 *Illustration, the Embodiment of Message on Billboards*

The illustration is seen as a powerful tool by marketing agents as the key that encodes the message the company wants to put across. The study reveals that illustrations on billboards come in different forms. Out of the twenty-seven (27) billboards, ten (10) come with images of products only, and the rest come with products and humans except for the event billboard that comes with the portrait of a person only. The image of a cartoon is used on one of the billboards with a product (Figure 17). This billboard is said to be interesting as road users' claim. Nineteen (19) of the consumers for this study find the billboard with the cartoon interesting and amusing. It is said to reduce stress and tension on the road. It does not only reduce stress but helps the consumer to remember the advertisement as a designer and advertising agency made me understand that it takes a creative mind to be able to come out with a concept like that to make a great impact on the consumer.

This implies that even though illustration is a powerful tool that pushes the product and service to the consumer, the idea behind it is key to the success of the billboard. That is if the billboard will communicate effectively or not, it may depend of on the illustration that complement the text on the billboard.



Figure 17. Kellogg's Billboard

Source: Photograph was taken by the researcher at Tetteh Quarshie Interchange, 2021

4.2.2.3 *Relation of illustration on billboards to the viewer*

The illustration must relate to the consumer to make a great impact. From the client's perspective, the image on the billboard should be something the consumer can relate to. The marketing agents from the three production companies under this study are of the view that if the consumer cannot associate themselves with the illustration, it will be difficult for the billboard to make an impact. The advertising industries and the designers also affirmed this fact. A veteran artist who is into billboard designing put it this way, 'the consumer should see themselves in the illustration'. That is to say, the illustration must mirror society. It is obvious from the sampled billboards that the illustration takes the centre stage in the billboards as they dominate all other elements that complement them to send the message they intend to put out there.

4.2.2.4 *Persuasiveness of illustration on billboards*

As a major element on the billboard, illustration whets the appetite of the consumer and persuades them to exchange money for the product without planning for it. Fifteen out of the twenty consumers confess that they have exchanged money for a product they saw on a billboard. Talking about the billboards for this study, Tasty Tom Billboard (Figure 9), Royal Aroma Billboard (Figure 20), Club Beer Billboard (Figure 8), NutriSnax Billboard (Figure 22), and Pepsodent Tooth Paste Billboard (Figure 6) came up as some of the products they have paid for without planning for it. This suggests that perhaps these billboards are doing well out there. The display of biscuits makes you feel like eating some as a respondent puts it, looking at the NutriSnax Billboard.

4.2.2.5 *Dramatic illustration on billboards*



Figure 18. Coca-Cola Billboard

Source: Photograph was taken by the researcher at Tetteh Quarshie Interchange, 2021

The dramatic nature of the illustration is also an important fact that makes the billboard stand out as the artists put it. Regarding the Club Beer Billboard under this study, a consumer said, “The composition/illustration makes me feel like going in for a club beer”. Road users’ claim you cannot drive past the interchange without noticing the Club Beer Billboard if it is on display. It helps reduce the stress in the traffic and whets ones’ appetite for the drink. The Coca-Cola Billboard (Figure 18) was also cited by one out of every two consumers as one of the dramatic billboards one cannot afford but catch a glimpse of. The love and laughter appear to be infectious and put a smile on the face of the consumer. Through interviews, eighteen out of the twenty of the consumers agree with this perception. All the artists and the advertising agencies put weight on this perception but added that they may not only leave a smile but a lasting impression in the mind of the consumer that helps him/her to recall the adverts to act on it positively. This is said to be the primary aim of the billboards on the shoulders of the road.

4.2.2.6 *Three-dimension effect on billboards*



Figure 19. Kerrygold Billboard

Source: Photograph was taken by the researcher at Tetteh Quarshie Interchange, 2021

The three-dimensional effects on the illustration also make it effective as it tends to imprint in the mind of the consumer. The Kerrygold Billboard (Figure 19) stands out of the sampled billboard due to the three-dimensional effect of the illustration of the product among other elements. This makes it almost impossible for the road user to pass by it without appreciating it. One cannot just keep his/her eyes off it as a consumer puts it. Out of the thirty-five (35) consumers, all of them see it to be the most outstanding billboard among the billboards for this study. One cannot use the interchange without noticing it. From observation, it came to light that from the pedestrians' overpass, one can still get a message from this billboard. The Kerrygold Billboard brings the product to the consumer on the overpass in an attractive manner. The advertising agencies and the artists are of the view that this special effect is employed to present the product appealingly. They believe that is why this billboard makes it impossible for the consumer not to notice it.

4.2.2.7 *Cartoon images on billboards*

The use of humorous images turns to help the consumer to recall the advertisement. It makes consumers respond positively to the advertisement. Although the billboards sampled for this study have just one billboard with a cartoon image but consumers/viewers find it interesting and an agent for stress release. Thirty out of the thirty-five viewers claim they cannot take it out of their minds and will love to watch it over and over again. A respondent said, ‘it puts a smile on my face after a hard day’s work’.

4.2.2.8 *Images celebrities on billboards*



Figure 21. Royal Aroma Billboard

Source: Photograph was taken by the researcher at Tetteh Quarshie Interchange, 2021

It is obvious from the study that the uses of celebrities on billboards also help to project the product or service they are promoting. These celebrities have followers hence, it is believed that the followers will also associate themselves with the product or service in question. These celebrities are presented as lovers of the product they are marketing. In this study, the billboard of Royal Aroma (Figure 20) was identified as one of the billboards that present a celebrity in the person of Nana Ama McBrown, a lover of rice. She was projected with a big smile starring at a happy young girl who appears to be her

daughter. She has a bag of Royal Aroma Rice in hand, held closely to the body that suggests how she is in love with the rice. Perhaps, the daughter is happy because of the information about the rice. Twenty-nine (29) out of the thirty-five (35) respondents confirm that they consume this rice because of the celebrity behind it. Three out of them went ahead to say that the products she advertises are good and they have never regretted buying products associated with her.

Tasty Tom was also identified as one of the products among the sampled billboards for this study that have Nana Ama McBrown on it (Figure 9). It also depicts her in the apron with tasty tom in hand. She wears a broad smile that cannot go unnoticed. From observation, it came to light that she seems to have direct contact with the viewer and moves with it till the viewer loses it by bypassing it. The advertising agencies are of the view that the image of the celebrity in question must be catchy to attract the attention of the consumer. It is based on this that is why they work on the images to get it right. However, they cannot rule out the fact that followers of celebrities can also play a significant role in the advert.

4.2.2.9 *Appearance of products on billboards*

The appearances of the products that come along on the billboards for the study reveal that these products are interestingly presented to the consumer. The billboard of NutriSnax (Figure 22) came up as one of the billboards that appear to attract most of the consumers for this study. Out of the thirty-five (35) consumers, thirty (30) of them see this billboard as attractive. The biscuit was presented in its yellow box with the name written boldly on it. Four of the biscuits were packed on top of each other beside the box on the left side with the raw material for the biscuit on the right side of the box. It seems like the scene of the composition of the biscuit was taken from the top on a table mat

designed in a wood-like form to project the biscuit to the consumer. It is obvious that the colour of the table mat is contrasting to the colour of the biscuits and other elements/items on table mat as it brings them closer to the consumer. This makes it possible for the table mat to push the items to the viewer. It also suggests that the background enhances the appearance of billboards in an attempt to present products in an interesting manner.

The billboards of Pepsodent in this study also project the products and their raw materials interestingly although most consumers did not find it interesting as compared to that of NutriSnax (Figure 6 and figure 22 respectively).



Figure 21. Smirnoff Billboard

Source: Photography was taken by the researcher at Tetteh Quarshie Interchange, 2021

The Smirnoff billboard was also identified as the second most interesting billboard under the study that comes with only the product. One out of every two viewers who come in contact with it finds it interesting. This billboard projects the Smirnoff in the horizontal form against a white-like background to compliment the image of the drink. The outline of the drink makes it stand out from the background rolling itself to the target audience. The cover, neck, and label of the drink play a significant role in the detachment of the drink from the background that compliments the bottle of the drink. The designers agree with this assertion and point to the fact that even though the drink is supposed to be

colourless but one cannot see the effect on the background through the bottle. One of the artists said, he believes that the designer decided to apply an effect like that to prevent the background from swallowing the image of the drink.

This assertion shows that for an illustration to make a great impact there is the need to apply effects that will detach it from the background and push it to the consumer. This is evident in the Smirnoff Billboard (Figure 21) in the opacity of the transparent bottle and its strong outline.

4.2.2.10 *Fonts on billboards*



Figure 22. NutriSnax Billboard

Source: Photograph was taken by the researcher at Tetteh Quarshie Interchange, 2021

The nature of the font plays a significant role in the aesthetic of the billboard. For the billboard to be aesthetically beautiful, its ability to communicate and make an impact on the shoulders of the road relies on the text. A careful study of the billboards at the prominent places in Accra shows that the boldness of the font showcases it to the consumer from a distance or driving at a reasonable speed. The inscription on “Tasty Goodness”, on the NutriSnax Billboard is a classic example. The text ‘High Fibre’ meets Great Taste’ on the London Digestive Billboard cannot be overlooked as far as the

boldness of the text is concerned. From the observation, it was established that these texts are normally in Arial black or san-serif typestyle looking at it with the lens of a family of the font. Designers and the advertising agencies for the study have this to say: ‘sans-serif typestyle tends to communicate from a wider range and is simple to enable the consumer to read. They are of the view that the size of the font also counts as far as communication is concerned.

4.2.2.11 *Size, colour and effect on text on billboards*

Apart from the font style and size, the colour of the text and effect also make it legible. It also came to light from scrutiny of the sampled billboards for the study that red is used to fill text on six out of the fifteen billboards. Out of these six billboards, two of them came with a yellow background. The remaining four also came with a white background. The colour of the text and its background helped to make the billboard legible enough to communicate from a distance. On the Tasty Tom billboard for instance a white outline was used to detach the text ‘Enriched with Vitamins A, D, E, K and fibre from the yellow background.

It was also established that violet tends to be legible and was used to fill the text on white background as used on the Smirnoff billboard. Aside from the violet, cool colours tend to peel themselves away from a white background and project it to the viewer. White-filled text tends to do well on black or dull colours. The background projects the text to the target audience to get the information on the billboard. The designers are of the view that even though on the Kaiser billboard the effect on the white text - ‘the newest & coolest fridge is here!’ does not make it legible but the ‘Coolest’ is visible.

This suggests that even though white text turn to do well on dull colours but the background effect can affect the visibility of the text. On the other hand, the size of the

text may defy this assertion as depicted in the Kaiser billboard (Figure 23) under this study.

4.2.2.12 *Text layouts on billboards*

The layout of the text also helps to move the eye of the viewer to be focused on the text. Through observation, it came to light that ten out of the twenty-seven billboards, the texts are centred, nine are left-aligned and one has texts arranged haphazardly. The rest have one line of sentence or word. Even though the texts may not be mechanically centred on the billboard, but centred are on the lines of sentences. A classic example is the Heineken billboard (Figure 14).

Layout of texts on billboards do not only control the movement of the eye on them but present the message in an interesting manner for easy consumption as it renders the text communication ready. It is against this backdrop that perhaps most for the text on the sampled billboards for this study were either centred or aligned left.

4.2.2.13 *Legibility of fonts on billboards*

White also tends to do well on the red background. This is evident in the red background of the billboard that makes it aesthetically beautiful and enhances the projection of the illustration and the text. The Kerrygold Milk Powder billboard's background was identified as the most interesting background that attracts the attention of the viewer to the billboard. It projects the illustration and text to reach out to the viewer from a distance (Figure 19). The effect on the Smirnoff billboard's background helps to push the text and illustration to the consumer. The background that makes a great impact apart from the special effects is those that are contrasting to the colour of the text. Four out of the fifteen billboards come with special effects. These effects make the billboard attractive and appealing to the eye. They do not just make the billboard attractive but make the text

legible to make it possible to communicate to the consumer. The NutriSnax billboard (Figure 23) is a classic example of such a billboard under this study.

4.2.2.14 *Simplicity of design*

The simplicity of the design – layout makes the billboard a good one. From the designers' point of view, it came to light that simplicity of design is always the best and tends to make the design effective. It was established that all the billboards under this study are simple in style and layout. The advertising agents made it clear that simplicity of layout is the landmark of good designs that make it great. From the consumer's point of view, it came to light that the Empowerment billboard (Figure 7) is the only one not making that impact on the consumer even though it is said to be simple in style.

This demonstrates that the ability of the simplicity of the designed billboard to make an influence may not depend on only the simplicity but the nature of the billboard plays a central role.

4.2.2.15 *Uniqueness of design*

The uniqueness of the design also makes it stand out and reach out to a larger audience. Designers and advertising agencies acknowledge that the uniqueness of the design is important in a billboard advertisement. However, they are of the view that if care is not taken in an attempt to achieve this quality, one may render the billboard illegible. A designer identifies the 'Milk Powder' on the Kerrygold billboard (Figure 19) as an example. He said if not because the upper part of the text makes it visible, the white effect on the lower part of the text makes it difficult to read the text. Although, he agrees that the uniqueness of the billboard is what makes it interesting and attractive to the masses. The background of NutriSnax billboard (Figure 22) is unique, making it interesting and projecting the elements on it to make it possible for the consumer to get the message on

it. The consumers for the study acknowledge this billboard as unique. Thirty-three (33) out of the thirty-five (20) consumers described it as interesting. The background makes the billboard attractive to consumers. It makes the billboard interesting and appealing to the consumer which help it to communicate effectively as the primary aim of the billboard.

4.2.2.16 *Brevity of the message on billboards*

The brevity of the message on the billboard was identified as the key that helps the billboard to reach out to the masses. The marketing agencies were of the view that it helps the consumer to get the message with ease. The designers and advertising agencies also believe that the brevity of the message on the billboard is vital because of the limited time one has to get the message. They are of the view that if the message is not brief, it loses its value. The NutriSnax billboard was identified together with the London Oats Digestive billboard (Figure 16) as the billboards under this study that came with brief message hence making it just impossible for the consumers to pass by without getting the message on the billboard. Thirty-four (34) out of thirty-five (35) consumers identified the NutriSnax billboard as a billboard that communicates well as compared to the other billboards because of how brief the information on it is.

This is so perhaps because it does not waste the time of the consumer in an attempt to get the message, hence making it one of the vital qualities of a good billboard. Apart from that, brevity also makes it easier to remember the advertisement since the text involved is short. It also creates room to project the illustration which is worth more than thousand words.

4.2.2.17 *Lighting system around billboards*

The lighting system around the billboards also makes them communicate well at night and enhance cityscape. As a communication design, a billboard communicates to the consumers twenty-four hours within seven days a week. For this to be possible there is the need to have a good lighting system around the billboards to make it possible to reach out to the viewer at night. It was established from the study that out of the fifteen billboards, two were not able to communicate effectively due to the poor lighting system around them. Out of the thirty-five (35) consumers, twenty-five (25) acknowledged that the Coca-Cola billboard (Figure 18) and the Tasty Tom billboard (Figure 9) are not doing well in terms of communicating in the night as compared to the other billboards around them. The ten were not too sure because they had not used the interchange in the night, hence cannot speak on it. This suggests that irrespective of how good a billboard may be, poor lighting system around it renders its ability to make an impact in the night a mirage. Hence, the need for advertising agencies to work with the Assemblies, Electricity Company of Ghana and other stakeholders to ensure that streets and around billboards are lit to keep billboards awake in the night. This will maximise their ability to make an impact in the night.

The nature and the immediate surrounding of the billboards also play a significant role in the aesthetic quality of the billboards as the officer at the Assembly puts it. For the Assembly, the beauty of the billboard is in the safety of the road users around the billboard. This is evident in the siting of the billboards at Tetteh Quarshie Interchange, Dzorwulu Junction, Kotoka International Airport Junction and Jubilee House T-junction which were under study, as they make themselves visible from two and three angles but do not obstruct the view of drivers on the road. Perhaps, this quality is what makes these billboards unique. It is against this backdrop that the Assembly always inspects the site

an applicant intends to mount the billboard before approval is given to ensure that the size of the proposed billboard will not obstruct vehicular movement or endanger the life of the road user.

From the Assembly's perspective, the aesthetic qualities of the billboards are not limited to the appearance of the billboard but the message on it as well. As the officer of the Assembly slated for this study puts it "what is the beauty in a billboard with deceitful message?" This assertion clearly explains the brain behind some of the requirement for applicant's who want to mount billboards in the area as stated below:

1. applicant must have company's certificate of cooperation/commencement of business; and
2. business operating permit.

This is to ensure that the message on the billboard would have to be a message that will promote the business and their products or services. This is evident in the billboards sampled for this study as they all promote a product/service. Without these messages, the billboard cannot be described as a billboard.

4.2.3 Identifiable cultural elements on billboards

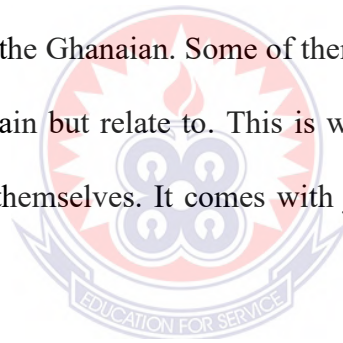
4.2.3.1 *Attraction*

Based on observation, a scrutiny of the billboards, and in-depth interview with designers, advertising agencies, and consumers, it was established that billboards thrive on popular culture that stems from the attraction. It happens to be the primary aim of the designer to reach out to the masses with the billboard. However, the designers are of the view that even though the primary aim of the billboard is not to project culture but have some elements of Ghanaian in them. These Ghanaian elements of culture can be seen in the illustration, symbols, some text, and colour on the billboard. It was established that these

elements of Ghanaian culture are embedded in the billboards that make the Ghanaian consumer relate positively on the streets of Accra and other cities in the country. Out of the twenty-seven billboards for the study, twenty were identified to have some elements that can be associated with Ghanaian culture. Some Ghanaian culture traces like joy, hospitality, love, happiness, family life, togetherness/unity among others are the features identified by respondents as in the study.

4.2.3.2 Joy

The joy that comes with family life and its affection can be seen in the illustration of Royal Aroma billboard (Figure 20). Fifteen of the consumers who came in contact with this billboard affirmed the relation of the Royal Aroma's illustration to love and affection that can be associated with the Ghanaian. Some of them were of the view that this joy is something one cannot explain but relate to. This is what sets the Ghanaian apart from others wherever they find themselves. It comes with joy that is beyond explanation as affirmed in this study.



4.2.3.3 Love

On the Coca-Cola billboard (Figure 18) also, it was established through in-depth interviews of designers and advertising agencies that the love that comes free from the Ghanaian during occasions like a naming ceremony, marriage ceremony, and festival can be seen in the image on the billboard. The smile on the faces is one thing you cannot miss during these ceremonies and festivals that brings Ghanaians together to share the joy. The caption 'Together Taste Better' also reinforce the fact that when Ghanaians meet together to celebrate during these occasions, it makes it joyous. The tile-like nature of the illustration also echoes that fact since without the three tile-like images coming together to form the illustration, it may not communicate the message it is given.

4.2.3.4 *Hospitality*



Figure 23. Kaiser Billboard

Source: Photograph was taken by the researcher at Tetteh Quarshie Interchange, 2021

The Kaiser billboard was identified as the billboard that can be associated with hospitality that is linked to the Ghanaian. This was also seen in the illustration of the billboard that depicts a lady inviting the viewer into the picture to offer him/her something from the fridge. This image can be associated with the contemporary Ghanaian trying to offer her visitor(s) something of their choice. The entire consumers who came in contact with this billboard were able to relate it to the twenty-first-century Ghanaian lady trying to entertain their visitors to enjoy the visit to her home. The smile on the face also affirms how welcoming the contemporary Ghana woman is as she receives her visitors. Most of the consumers described the smile as infectious as it puts a smile on their faces. Ten (10) out of the twelve (20) consumers who had direct contact with the Kaiser billboard described the smile on the face of the woman on the billboard as infectious as it puts a smile on their faces (Figure 23).

4.2.3.5 *Dark Skin*

This suggests that the mood created in a picture on a billboard may affect the mood of the viewer and create an enabling environment to relate with him/her. It also serves as a drive that influences the consumer to respond to the promotion positively.



Figure 24. Kleanz Billboard

Source: Photograph was taken by the researcher at Tetteh Quarshie Interchange, 2021

The love for the Ghanaian dark skin was also projected in the Kleanz billboard (Figure 24). In this, the lady in the picture has exposed the arm and some parts of the upper part of the body to show her lovely even-toned dark skin that glows. It projects the true Ghanaian skin. It inspires the consumer to go in for these products with the hope of getting a similar skin.

4.2.3.6 *Unity*

The billboard of Club Beer (Figure 8) showcases the Ghanaian sense of unity in working together to achieve a common goal. This was demonstrated in the dramatic nature of the illustration where the persons in the illustration are all working together to make sure that they do not drop any drop of the club beer. The text also echoes the same assertion. It enables the consumer to relate to it in order to get the message on the billboard. This demonstrates the relevance of images on billboards complementing texts to communicate effectively. The Polytank billboard was also identified as one of the billboards that could be associated with unity. This is visible in the way the five polytanks in different colours have been projected on the billboards. This is in line with the Ghanaian sense of unity embedded in the symbol that depicts three heads together, which symbolises wisdom in sharing of ideas or one head does not give counsel.



Figure 26. Polytank Billboard

Source: Photograph was taken by the researcher at Dzorwulu Junction, 2021

4.2.3.7 *Symbolism*

The nature of these billboards can also be associated with the Ghanaian adage – three heads are better than one. The billboards come with three interfaces that communicate different messages yet have one stand and a common goal to reach out to the consumer from all angles. A designer pinpointed out that looking at the interchange and the four roundabouts attached to it, one can associate it to the “Adinkra” symbol “Dwennimen” (rams horn) which symbolises humility together with strength. As vehicles move out and join the interchange, they slow down which allows the billboards to sell the products and services on them.

This enforces the fact that, the ability of the roundabouts to slow the vehicular movement makes the billboards more effective as it communicates to the drivers. This can also be linked to the symbolism of the “Adinkra” symbol as suggested by the designer.

In connection with the erection of the billboards, it was also noticed that it can be associated with perfection in the Ghanaian cultural setting as it forms a rectangle. In the Ghanaian cultural setting, a rectangle is related to perfection and the just nature of God to mankind. The advertising agencies, although do not agree with this perception but feel the billboards were sited at those vantage spots to maximize their ability to make a great impact irrespective of where the road user is coming from or going. To them, culture does not come in as far as siting of billboards is concerned. From the designers’ point of view, their ability to make it almost impossible for the viewer to run away from them can be associated with the just nature of God. This is about God giving mankind the opportunity to know him. Even though the main reason for siting these billboards is to maximise its ability to communicate but one cannot rule out the fact that the erection of these billboards

are unique. Hence, the reason why one can link it to perfection and just nature of God in Ghanaian cultural setting.

4.2.4 Contents on billboards and their impact on the cityscape

The table below depicts the contents on billboards sampled for this study.

Table 1, Contents on Billboards at prominent places in Accra.

INFORMATION	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE %
Illustration of Product(s)	23	85
Name of Product(s)	22	81
Slogan	21	77
Brand Name	19	70
Trade Mark	16	59
Approval Notice	15	56
Contact Details	11	40
Caution Notice	3	11
Service/Event	3	11
Cost of Product	2	7
Image of Places	2	7
Date	1	4

Source: Researcher's field study, 2021

Contents on billboards are information the billboards seek to communicate to the consumer with the aim that the consumer will respond positively to them. From the table above, it is obvious that contents on billboards are varied in form and style. They are so to meet every viewer's need as a designer puts it. He is of the view that this makes the billboards influential on the shoulders of the road. These billboards do not just influence the viewer but they add value to the beauty of the cityscape as they make the prominent places in the cityscape colourful. The billboards complement their immediate surrounding to enhance the cityscape as a designer puts it. Although some of the

consumers agree with the designer, some of them were of the view that some of the billboards affect the cityscape negatively with reference to the Empowerment Billboard (Figure 7) and the NSIA Insurance Billboard (Figure 15). With reference to the Empowerment Billboard, the consumers were of the view that it does not add to the beauty of the cityscape as it ‘tones down’ the colour of its immediate surround. This is the result of the use of shades of red on the images on the billboard. In the case of the NSIA Insurance Billboard, eighty percent (80%) of the viewers who came in contact with this billboard were of the view that the nature and siting of the billboard does not add to the aesthetic beauty of the Kotoka International Airport Junction in the Accra cityscape.

4.2.4.1 *Electric Energy*

Electricity was identified as a components of the digital billboards in this study as it makes it possible for the adverts on these billboards to communicate within twenty-four hours. Apart from the digital billboards, electric power makes it possible for the other billboards in the study to stay awake in the night as it powers the lighting systems around these billboards. The lighting system as a component of the billboard also enhance the beauty of the prominent places in Accra cityscape as evident in this study through observation.

In spite of lighting helping to illuminate billboards adverts at night, it came to light that electric energy needed to power the billboard at night is higher than the one required in the traditional lighting in the home. It also came to light from the advertising agencies that the electric energy required to power one digital billboards within twenty-four hours is almost equivalent to the electric energy required in about fifteen (15) homes. This suggest that for a billboard to be visible in the night or twenty-four hour in the case of digital adverts required a higher energy that puts pressure on the national grade of

electrical power for the homes and other industries in the city and other parts of the country.

4.2.4.2 *Arrangement, Sizes and Format of Billboards*

It was observed that orderly arrangement, uniformity in the sizes and format of sited billboards at Tetteh Quarshie Interchange make them stand out in the study as they enhance the beauty of the scenery of the interchange in the cityscape. It was also obvious from observation that the nature of the billboards at this interchange helps improve the effectiveness of the billboards as they make themselves visible to the viewer from all angles to disseminate the message on them.

The study also projected billboards at Kotoka International Airport Junction as billboards that come in varied forms and sizes. The variation of these billboards and disorder in the mounting of the billboards at the junction affected the beauty of the scenery of the junction negatively and “leads to overload of information” as a viewer puts it. This assertion was supported by all the viewers who came in contact with these billboards in the study. This suggests that the arrangement and sizes of billboards in the cityscape plays a significant role in the aesthetic beauty of the place.

Variation of billboards were also identified in this study as an agent that helps to break monotony in the scenery of the cityscape. It gives the viewer the opportunity to see different billboards in terms of shape, format and size. The billboards in the study at the Jubilee House Junction was identified as billboards that varied in size and format to complement their immediate surrounding and add value to the scenery.

4.2.4.3 *Products' name*

The table one (1) showcases the products' names as vital information on the billboard since out of the twenty-seven billboards; twenty-two of them were having the product's name on them. The product's name enables the consumer to know the product by name and perhaps exchange money for the product or recommend the product to a friend.

4.2.4.4 *Brand name*

Just like the name of the product, the brand name was also identified as one of the most important pieces of information on the sampled billboards. They help the consumer to know the brand behind the product. The marketing agents for the study see this information as vital since they know other companies produce similar products. Hence, in the absence of the brand name on the billboard advertisement, one will end up marketing the product of their competitors. It was also established that without the brand name on the billboard, the consumer will be confused since one cannot tell where the product is coming from, hence making it difficult for the consumer to respond to the advertisement. This assertion was affirmed by the consumer as they confirmed through an interview – nineteen out of the twenty consumers were of the view that the brand name on advertising billboards is very important to them since it helps them to know the companies behind them.

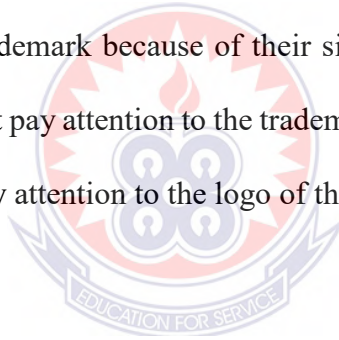
4.2.4.5 *Illustration of products*

The illustration of the products was also identified as one of the key pieces of information that draw the attention of the consumer. They do not only catch the attention of the viewer but sustain their interest on the billboards. They also serve as mental pictures that help in recalling the advertisement which happens to be a great driving element on the advertisement. The advertising agencies, designers, and marketing agents of production

companies see illustration of products as a powerful tool that sells the products on the billboards and enhance the aesthetic beauty of the cityscape. They help push the product to the consumer and try to make it almost impossible for the consumer to refuse it as they beautify the city.

4.2.4.6 Trademark

The trademark of production companies also comes up as one of the information that appears in almost all the billboards sampled for the study. From careful observation, it was not the most projected information on the billboards but vital as they associate the billboards to a particular company. Therefore, it helps the consumer to know more about the products. However, from the consumers' perception, it became obvious that they do not pay attention to the trademark because of their sizes on the billboard. As in every three consumers, two do not pay attention to the trademark. This suggests that about 72% of the consumers do not pay attention to the logo of the companies' advertisements.



4.2.4.7 Slogan

The table 1 project slogan (short memorable phrase) is the most projected information on the sampled billboards for the study. These statements dominate to communicate from a reasonable distance. The statements help to project the products they come with and create a lasting impression in the mind of the consumer about the product. The consumers for the study affirm the assertion from the observation as out of the thirty-five consumers thirty- two were of the view that the slogan that accompanies the illustration makes them remember the advertisement. Speaking about Kaiser Billboard, a consumer claims that the text '... Coolest ...' reminded her of the advertisement.

4.2.4.8 *Approval notice*

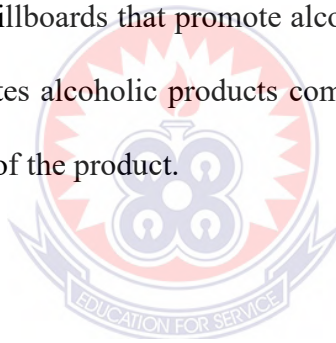
The statement that seeks to let consumers be aware that the advert has been approved by the Food and Drugs Authority (FDA) appears on fifteen out of the twenty-seven billboards for the study as indicated in table 1. It implies that it is vital information considering the number of billboards that have that information on them. The marketing agents were of the view that this information helps consumers to know that the product on the billboard has been approved by the organisation mandated to certify the product for the consumer. The designers and marketing agencies do not see the message as vital; hence do not emphasize them. Even though the marketing agents agree with the designers and advertising agencies, they want them to be there to ignite confidence in the consumer in the product. A consumer who happens to be an official from the FDA made me understand that it is not a mandate to approve adverts on the billboard.

4.2.4.9 *Contact details*

The contact details of the company that owns a particular advertisement on a billboard happen to be one of the information on some of the billboards for the study. This helps the consumer to contact the manufacturing company or service provider. Eleven out of the twenty-seven billboards come with the contact of the companies for more information and possible supply. Although not relevant in terms of numbers as far as the billboards for the study is concerned, this data also suggest that out of an average of every two billboards of this study, one has contact details on it. Eighteen out of the thirty-five consumers claim that they picked numbers from the billboards to get more information about the advert and possibly place orders. This also implies that out of every two of the consumers sampled for the study one has picked a contact from a billboard advert.

4.2.4.10 *Caution Notice*

The billboards for the study also reveal caution as one of the information on the billboards. This information comes in the form of text and symbols/images. This caution alerts the consumer on the usage of the product based on the age and condition of the consumer. Three out of the twenty-seven billboards were identified as billboards that caution the consumer on the usage of the product. Billboards of alcoholic drinks were identified as billboards that come with this caution. This information helps to caution the viewer on the group of people who can use the product. The cautions include ‘not good for pregnant women, ‘lactating mothers’, and ‘not good for persons below 18 years. Although the number is not significant as far as this study is concerned, it can be described as 100% of the billboards that promote alcoholic products. This suggests that every billboard that promotes alcoholic products comes with information that cautions the consumer on the usage of the product.



4.2.4.11 *Cost of Item*

From observation, the cost was also noticed as one of the information on the billboards for this study. Although the number is not significant but relevant as it helps the consumer to know the cost of the product. The designers and the advertising agencies were of the view that this information is normally put on promotional products and new products to penetrate through the market. To them, it helps the consumer/viewer to know how much it will cost him/her to get the product in question.

4.3 Analysis

The analyses were based on the research questions formulated to guide the study and the research instruments used.

4.3.1 What are the features of sited billboards at prominent places in Accra?

The study showcases billboards at prominent places in Accra as billboards that add value to the aesthetic beauty of well-known places in the city. These locations attract huge traffic perhaps because of the national assert, relevant installations and the roads that link to them. That is the reason interchanges, roundabouts and traffic lights are used in some of these places to control movements of vehicles and other road users to ease the traffic flow. In an attempt to control traffic flow with the aid of the traffic lights, the billboards get the opportunity to maximize their chances to communicate to the road user.

About the data presented earlier in this study, billboards at prominent places in Accra are depicted as unique billboards that make themselves visible from more than one angles. These make them reach out to the consumer easily, hence maximising their effectiveness, comparing them to other billboards on the street of Accra that communicate to road users from one direction. The billboards at Tetteh Quarshie Interchange to be specific were deem to be more effective as compare to the other prominent place in Accra because of the ability to communicate from all angles of the interchange. Just like other billboards, the billboards slated for this study comes with lighting systems that light them for them to be effective in the night. The lighting system makes it possible for the billboards to communicate at night and add value to the billboard as it enhances the beauty of the billboards and their surroundings. It also makes it possible for the billboard to stay on and reach out to the consumer within the day, week, month, and year without resting. The digital billboards in this study stay awake to present their advertisement to the road user

with or without a lighting system around them. This suggests that unlike the other billboards in the study that may fail to communicate to the consumer in the night when the lighting system is poor, the digital billboards stand out as they light their surrounding and improve their beauty of the cityscape at night.

The study projected billboards as illustrative. That is they come with illustrations. The illustrations turn to dominate all other elements on the billboards and draw attention to them. They make themselves prominent that the consumer may not be in the position to avoid them. It is not surprising that out of the twenty-seven billboards, twenty-three came with attractive images. These images reflect the products the billboards are promoting. The attractive nature of the illustration tends to whet the appetite of the consumer. It is interesting to note that the only event billboard that shed light on monochromatic portraits of persons was not attractive to the consumer. This implies that it is not about the projecting of the illustration on the billboard that matters but its attractive nature and its ability to get to the viewer. The Heineken billboard (Figure 14) in this study for instance presents the Heineken beer in a sweaty chilled bottle which appears to move out of the billboard towards the viewer, making it almost impossible for the viewer to avoid it.

The images of persons in attractive and interesting poses were also identified as features that enhance the effectiveness of the billboard. Perhaps, that is the reason images of celebrities are used on some billboards. This study identifies Nana Ama McBrown on two different billboards. This suggests how important it is for the production companies to associate their brand with the person of the actress. Apart from the actress, most of the billboards depict images of celebrities. This enables their followers to associate themselves with the product. This is in line with the view that people rely on advertisements with celebrities rather than a recommendation from families and friends (Bashir & Malik, 2009). They tend to sustain and remind the consumer of the

advertisement on the billboard. They are seen as a powerful tool in the promotion that does not only remind but reassures and influences the decision of the consumer (Abiodun, 2011). This is in contrast to the study of Yelbert about the effect of advertising of hair products on students purchasing that disclose that consumers were of the view that images on advertisement were made attractive to deceive them to exchange money for them (Yelbert, 2010).

The attractive nature of the product on the billboard was also seen as a powerful tool that draws the attention of the consumer to the advertisement. Twenty-three of the billboards out of the twenty-seven for the study highlight a product. This suggests that for a billboard to be catchy and make an impact, the nature of the illustration or how the product is presented on it counts. This is in line with the perception of the 95% of the consumers who confirmed that because of the interesting nature of the illustration on five of the billboards in this study, one cannot take his eye off it till you pass it. This perception is strange since it is dangerous for the driver to take the eye off the road when driving. It is not surprising that some drivers lose concentration during peak hours in traffic at prominent places in Accra which sometimes result in minor accident or some drivers honking on them. Perhaps, they lose concentration because of the interesting nature of the illustration(s) on a billboard they have sighted. The lady on the Kaiser billboard is said to have eye contact with the consumer as her eyes move in the direction of the viewer. This can be associated with the assertion that seventy percent of road users in vehicles often look at the messages on billboards (Williams, 2009). This result was expected to increase from that time based on the traffic situation. Hence it is not surprising that this study discovered that 95% of consumers' eyes are glued on the billboards for the study.

The study also showcased the slogan as one of the relevant features on the billboards. They serve as vehicles that lead to the remainder of the advertisement. This element is

very vital in advertisement and leads to positive responses to the advertisement. For this to happen, the font style is very important as it will help the viewer to get the information from a reasonable distance. The study projected san-serif as the type style for these slogans. These make them maximise their legibility and reach out to a larger audience from a distance. The size of the text and colours were also identified as components of the billboard that enhance legibility. This suggests that for the billboard to communicate well the colour of the text should be contrasting to the background. As projected in the study red text turn to do well on white backgrounds and yellow backgrounds. Outline of text was also identified as an important feature of text that maximise its readability from a distance. Even though the study projected white outlines on a red text, white outlines turn to do well on a cool coloured text like blue text. For the driver to get the information on the billboard driving at a normal speed, he/she has an average of six seconds to read the text, hence colour, boldness, and fewer words are better (Suggett, 2011). This assertion is in line with the findings of this study as the size and colour of that text play a significant role in its ability to reach out to the consumer. It is evident that few words on billboards make it easy for the consumer to run with the message, especially if they are catchy in nature. However, if the billboard comes with few words that are not bold and clear in style, the text may not communicate well, since the road user may not have the time to read smaller and illegible font style. In a similar fashion, the text may be few and bold but if the colour of the text is not contrasting to the background colour or an effect created on the background to push the text away from it, the text will lose its ability to communicate effectively. Hence, there is the need to blend these three factors to make the billboard an effective one.

4.3.2 What are the aesthetic qualities of billboards in Accra?

About the data presented for this study earlier, it shows that the aesthetic qualities of billboards are encoded in the illustrations, text, and colours used. These implied that the beauty of the billboard is largely dependent on the major elements used. These elements make the billboard appeal to the eye, hence helping it to communicate to the consumer from a wider range. The consumer strongly believes that the attractive nature of the illustration makes the billboards catchy and aesthetically beautiful.

4.3.2.1 *Attractive images*

Considering the appealing nature of the images on the billboards as the feature(s) that make them stand out, it is obvious that the quality may not be achieved without striking colours. This was evident in this study where one of the billboards sampled for the study came with monochromatic images. This billboard was described as unattractive even though it came with images.

Regarding the London Oat Digestive billboard as presented earlier, it suggests that the pose and action of the persons on the billboard sampled for the study make it interesting. The way the products are composed on the billboards makes them attractive.

The marketing agents for this research see the illustration as the embodiment of the message the billboard is carrying. This implies that the marketing agents' who happen to be the person behind the message on the billboards see the illustration as the summary of the message. As the summary of the message, it makes it possible for the billboard to reach the consumers within six (6) seconds when there is free traffic flow (Suggett, 2011).

4.3.2.2 *Illustrative cartoons*

Cartoons as a form of illustration on billboards do not only convey a message about a product or service but reduce stress. It puts a smile on the face of the consumer. The smile illustrative cartoons leave on the face of the consumer is what leads to the reduction of stress and finally, heal him/her from stress-related illness. For the cartoon to be able to promote the message, special skill is required. That is why perhaps billboards that come with cartoons are limited on the street of Accra. The study reflects this accession as only one out of the fifteen billboards has advertising cartoons.

4.3.2.3 *Illustration mirrors the society*

Illustration as a tool for recall of the advertisement must mirror the society for consumers to be able to relate to it. This suggests that the illustration must be done with the society or the target group in mind for it to make a great impact. This could also mean that when the illustration falls flat, the billboard may not be effective in terms of recall and persuasion.

It also came to light that the dramatic nature of the illustration on the billboard also draws one attention to the billboard and persuades the consumer. It makes it almost impossible to drive past the billboard without noticing it. Concerning the Coca-Cola billboard, it suggests that billboards that have dramatic images catch the attention of the consumer.

4.3.2.4 *Three-dimension effects on billboards*

The art of creating a perception of three-dimensionality on a billboard makes it stand out and communicate effectively. Although in this study only two billboards were identified as billboards that come with three-dimensional image or creates an impression of three-dimensionality, their impacts cannot be overlooked as they communicate from a wide

range. They make themselves visible to the consumer and pushes the product they are advertising to the consumer. This effect makes the products on these billboards more attractive.

4.3.2.5 *Cartoon on billboards*

Recall is also an important part of an advertisement that can also be achieved through the use of humorous images on billboards. These images leave a lasting impression on the mind of the consumer that makes him remember the advertisement. This accession was affirmed by most of the viewers under this study. It also helps children to associate themselves with the production. About the Kellogg's billboard that came with the image of a cartoon, the product can be associated with children hence, the use of an image they can be related to.

4.3.2.6 *Celebrities on billboards*

The use of popular figures in society has proven to help project products on billboards and other outdoor communication designs. The study supported this claim as 15 out of the 20 consumers were influenced by Nana Ama McBrown to exchange money for Royal Aroma or Tasty Tom tomato paste because they believe every product associated with her name is good. This implies that responding to an advertisement may not be because of the quality of the product but the name behind the product. For the image of a celebrity to make an impact on a billboard, it could be the influence of the person in public space and his/her credibility.

4.3.2.7 *Products on billboards*

The appearance of the product on the billboard plays a significant role in the projecting of products in an attractive manner and enhances in whetting the appetite of the consumer

as echoed in consumers responses on the NutriSnix billboards were sixteen consumers for the study out of the twenty identified it as attractive because of the illustration. For the illustration to appear attractively, the background or the effect created around the illustration is vital. The Smirnoff billboard was labelled as interesting due to the effect around the image that makes it seem to move out of the billboard to the consumer. This effect makes it helped the consumer to get the message from a distance.

4.3.2.8 *Fonts on billboards*

The font as projected in this study and other studies over the years was vital in the overall beauty of the billboard. It aids the other elements to communicate to the consumer at a glance in a range. The boldness of the font and font style was identified as important elements of the beauty of the billboard. “Tasty Goodness” on the NutriSnax billboard for instance was deemed appropriate as it catches the attention of the viewer as the primary aim of the billboard that suggests that the billboard should be able to communicate from a distance. The font style that turns to communicate effectively as evident in this study is sans-serif typestyle. These typestyles tend to do well on the billboards because of their fullness and boldness in nature. An example of these typestyles is Ariel Black.

4.3.2.9 *Size of text on billboards*

Apart from the typestyle, the size of the text is also relevant in communication. The size of the font helped consumers to read the message on the billboard. It is based on this that the text on the billboards does not have the same font sizes. This study projected slogan as the information that has the largest font size. This makes them reach the consumer first from a distance before any other text.

4.3.2.10 *Colours on billboards*

The colour of the text also enhances the legibility of the text and makes the billboard visually appealing to the eye. The red text seems to be projected on a yellow or white background. Just like red, violet is also legible on white background. These principles may apply to all cool colours. Visual semantics of text on billboards does not make the text “the newness ...” on the Kaiser billboard legible because of the effect created on its background hence making it difficult for it to communicate from a distance. There is the need to be careful in the choice of colours and effects on the background of the text so that the text will not lose its value.

4.3.2.11 *Text layout on billboards*

The arrangement of the text also helps in the communication and movement of the eye from one section of the design to the other. The study reveals that most of the texts on the billboards were in one line. The ones that were in two to three lines were left-aligned and centred. This makes the eye of the viewer focus on the left and centre of the text respectively. These layouts enable the text to communicate well if all the other qualities that enhance the legibility of the text are in place.

4.3.2.12 *Brevity of message on billboards*

The aesthetic qualities of the billboard will not be complete without a bit of brevity of the message. The study projected billboards that have brief information as effective. These billboards tend to communicate well within some split seconds. This is based on the fact that the consumer has no time to read lengthy text. At least three to five words can do the magic. This is in line with the views of consumers in this study as they all identified NutriSnax billboard as one of the billboards with a brief message. The brevity of the

message on it makes it one of the billboards in the study that is making a great impact on the consumer.

4.3.2.13 *Simplicity of design*

The simplicity of the design of the billboard also makes it aesthetically beautiful. The beauty of the billboard depends on its effectiveness. Simplicity they say is the key to any good billboard. This applies to every item that comes together to form the design. The layout in general must be simple for the billboard to communicate well. This is based on the fact that complex designs tend to confuse the reader. NutriSnax billboard came with a simple design – two words and a striking illustration in a line but seems to make a great impact on the consumer as stated earlier.

4.3.2.14 *Uniqueness of design*

Billboard as a product born out of creativity is always unique in style. That is why you cannot have two different billboards promoting different items to be the same in design. This study had given us a clue that in an attempt to achieve uniqueness in billboard designing, one may compromise the major aim of the billboard to give information. The use of special effects on the background tends to conflict with the text that carries the message for the consumer. The Kerrygold Milk Powder billboard and the Kaiser billboard were identified as billboards that some parts of the texts appear to be illegible because of the effect that was used on the background of the billboards. As a result, there is the need to be careful in the choice of colours and effects to apply in the designing of the billboard to improve its aesthetic qualities.

4.3.2.15 *Lighting system around billboards*

The study projected the lighting system around the billboards as one of the powerful tools that keep the billboard awake for twenty-four hours and seven days within a week to communicate to the road user and add value to the scenery of the cityscape. Without these systems in place, the billboard will go to sleep at the night, hence making them ineffective at night. This is different from the view of Iveson (2011) that suggests that billboard is mounted out there on the shoulder of the road makes it communicate throughout the day and night. Consumers of the study affirmed this when they all identified the Coca-Cola billboard as ineffective at the night due to the poor lighting system around it. For the lighting system to be effective, all the lights around the billboard must be on to brighten the surface of the billboard for it to communicate well at night. The street lights around will also help to keep consumers safe, hence maximise the chance of the billboard sending its message across to the consumer. This is because if it is not safe to be out there because of the poor lighting system, it does not matter how the billboard is lit the consumer will not be out there to get the message in the night.

4.3.2.16 *Location of sited billboards*

The nature, siting and location of billboards, apart from guaranteeing the safety of the road user, also improve the aesthetic quality of the billboard. This suggests that location and surrounding of the billboard is vital to its utmost appearance or beauty.

The location of the billboard also determines the kind of impact the billboard would make depending on the traffic situation. This implies that irrespective of how good a billboard may be in terms of design, if it is not sited at allocation that will give it the opportunity to maximize its ability to communicate to the viewer, it would not make any impact. This

is because the ability of the billboard to communicate effectively is dependent on the elements that make it aesthetically beautiful.

4.3.2.17 *Message on billboards*

The study also showcases the message on the billboard as a tool that enhances the aesthetic quality of the billboard in the process of promoting products and services of a business. This implies that aesthetic of the billboard cannot be complete without mentioning the message it communicates.

4.3.3 What are the identifiable cultural elements on billboards in Accra?

4.3.3.1 *Attraction*

The study projected billboards as a communication design that dwells on a popular culture emanating from the attraction. This culture enables the billboard to reach out to a large group from a wide range. This view was expressed by those behind the reflection on the billboards on the shoulders of the road. They were of the view that although Ghanaian culture has never been the drive in the making of billboards their billboards may have some Ghanaian cultural elements in them. This is based on the fact that designers are normally influenced by their immediate environment. This study revealed that 93% of the billboards have some elements of Ghanaian culture in them. These elements help the billboards to communicate effectively as consumers were able to relate to them well.

4.3.3.2 *Joy*

The Royal Aroma billboard was identified as a billboard that depicts the joy that comes with family life and affection by 75% of the consumers for the study. The consumers were able to relate with the billboard well because of the Ghanaian way of life that was

showcased in the illustration of the billboard although the primary aim of the billboard was to catch the attention of the viewer to get the message on the product in an attractive manner.

4.3.3.3 *Love*

The love that comes with occasions like a naming ceremony, marriage, and festivals in the Ghanaian cultural setting was seen in the Coca-Cola billboard. It is the love that enables people to share food and drinks like Coca-Cola – the product the billboard was promoting. The image sustains the interest of the consumer and whets his/her appetites to go in for the product to share with loved ones. Even though the concept of love was used on the billboard, it helps to promote the advertisement as consumers can relate to it well. Since love is deposited in every man (mankind).

4.3.3.4 *Hospitality*

The Kaiser billboard was also linked to hospitality which is associated with the ordinary Ghanaian. This reflection helps the consumer to walk through the picture on the billboard to get the message on it. Eighty-three percent (83%) of the consumers who came in contact with this billboard were able to associate themselves with the billboard, hence getting the message on them. This suggests that they may act on the message they have received from the billboard, which makes the billboard a good one.

4.3.3.5 *Dark skin*

The Kleanz billboard attracts the consumer with the display of various brands of Kleanz lotions and a good-looking dark skin lady with a white towel wrapped around her bust and on her head. The dark skin lady also mirrors the Ghanaian dark skin to develop the love for the products to get such lovely skin like that of the lady. This is in line with the

primary aim of a billboard to influence the consumer to exchange money for the product or service being promoted. Kotler and Armstrong (2008) were of the view that these make the billboard inform, persuade and re-enforce potential consumers to respond favourably to the advertisement.

4.3.3.6 Unity

The Ghanaian sense of unity or togetherness to achieve a common goal can be seen in the dramatic composition of the Club Beer billboard's illustration. This impression created in the picture presents the Club Beer as a precious product that one cannot afford to lose a drop of it. It also presents Club Beer as an important product wealth working together to protect it. This illustration helps to attract and sustain the interest of the consumer on the billboard to get the message. It also helps to remind and influence the decision of the consumer on the billboard (Abiodun, 2011).

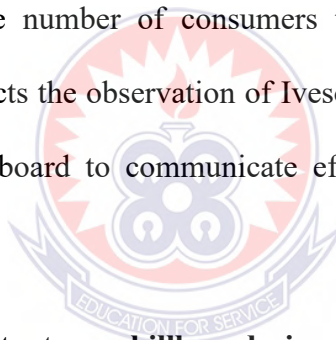
4.3.3.7 Symbolism

Beyond the features of the billboards for the study, the nature of the billboards also came up as a tool that projects Ghanaian culture. The three interfaces of the billboards were likened to the Ghanaian proverb – three heads are better than one. This suggests that the billboards with the three interfaces are better than the ones with only one interface. This is so because of the ability of the ones with the three interfaces to communicate from all angles/sides. The three-dimensional billboards as described in this study, communicate varied information or advertisement on three interfaces.

The roundabout attached to the interchange serves as a vehicle that moves the consumer around the billboards to get the full complement of the various interfaces of the three-dimensional billboards. These roundabouts together with the interchange when viewed

from above can be associated with the Adinkra symbol – Dwennimen that symbolise humility together with strength. This can be associated with the function of the billboards as silent sale persons. Although the billboards do not talk but make a great impact at Tetteh Quarshie Interchange as they make themselves visible from all angles.

The billboards for this study were identified as the only billboards in the four roundabouts attached to the interchange. They also happened to be the only billboards that came with three interfaces that make them create an imaginary rectangular shape that can be associated with the perfection and just nature of God in the Ghanaian cultural setting. However, the advertising agents for this study were of the view that billboards are sited to maximise their ability to reach out to the multitude. This suggests that the siting of billboards is based on the number of consumers the billboards would be able to communicate to. This reflects the observation of Iveson (2011) in his study as he noted that the ability of the billboard to communicate effectively depends largely on the location.



4.3.4 What are the contents on billboards in Accra and their impact on the cityscape?

The study projected the contents on billboards in different forms and styles that suits the consumers' taste. These enable the billboards to make an impact on the shoulders of the road. These contents come in varied colour schemes that add colour to the cityscape and enhance its beauty. Some viewers suggested that the contents of these billboards make it interesting, driving in the city as they reduce boredom which is associated with driving in outskirts of Accra cityscape. This suggests that colour plays a significant role in the projection on the elements that constitute the contents of billboards.

4.3.4.1 *Electric energy*

Electric energy and lighting systems were identified as components of the billboards in this study that keep the billboards awake in the night. These systems also enhance the beauty of the prominent places in the Accra cityscape and render these locations appealing to the eye. This suggests that lighting plays a significant role in the beauty and attractive nature of the Accra cityscape. In spite of the positive impact of the ability to illuminate billboards for them to be visible at night, it also puts pressure on the national electricity grid since the power required to power the billboards is more than what is needed in the traditional home.

Information like name of the product, illustration of the product, slogan, brand name, approver's notice, contact details, caution notice, cost of the product, service/event, date, and image of places are the contents of billboards in this study.

4.3.4.2 *Arrangement, size and format of sited billboards*

The study mirrors the arrangement, uniformity in the size and format of mounted billboards as factors that influence the beauty of the scenery of some prominent places in the cityscape. They also affect the effectiveness of the billboards positively or negatively. This suggests that for billboards to add value to their immediate surroundings, the nature and mounting of the billboards play a significant role. It is based on this backdrop that the billboards at Tetteh Quarshie Interchange were identified as unique in this study as they beautify the interchange. On the other hand, variation in size, type and format of billboards affect the appearance of the scenery of the cityscape negatively.

Variation of billboards were projected as a tool that can be used to break monotony and present the message on the billboards in an attractive manner. It also helps to improve the aesthetic qualities of the cityscape. This imply that although variation can be an agent for

visual distortion of the beauty of the cityscape, it can also be used as an agent for the outstanding presentation of the message on the billboard and add value to the appearance of the cityscape.

4.3.4.3 *Name of product*

The names of products were seen as a useful tool on the billboards sampled for the study. Out of the fifteen billboards, only one came without the name of the product. Even the name of the event is on the event billboard that does not come with the product's name. This suggests that almost all the billboards project the product name to make the product known to the public. The consumer knowing the product on the billboard by name may influence him/her to respond positively to the advertisement. It also helps the consumer to run with the name of the product that may also translate into the projection of the product to a potential consumer who might not have come in contact with the billboard.

4.3.4.4 *Brand name*

The brand name was also identified in this study as one of the most common and relevant information on the billboards. This information enables the consumer to get more information on the product on the promotion. It helps the audience to know the company behind the product in question. This implies that perhaps without the brand, it will be difficult for the consumer to know the company behind the product on the billboards. For instance, Kerrygold Milk Powder billboard without the brand name one cannot tell the product since there are many milk powder products out there.

4.3.4.5 *Illustration*

Illustrations were identified as powerful tools that catch the attention of the consumers to get the opportunity to communicate to them. Illustrations serve as a pictorial summary of

the advertisement, hence presenting the product briefly and clearly. Some scholars describe illustration as an effective element that is worth more than a thousand words. The products are projected attractively for it to make a massive impact on the consumer. It is based on this that thirteen of the billboards in the research were designed with colourful images of products that make them almost impossible for the consumers to take their eyes off them.

4.3.4.6 Trademark

The trademark of the companies behind the products and services were observed to be on all the billboards except the Empowerment billboard. However, prominence was not placed on them which resulted in most consumers not noticing them. This suggests that although the logo is important to the companies but less significant when it comes to the promotion of products and services since they may not be that powerful to draw the attention of the consumer to the billboard, as an illustration of a product will do. However, it is on almost all the billboards because it provides legal backing for the company it is linked to.

4.3.4.7 Slogan

The slogan as stated early in the study happens to be the most projected information on the billboards. As a memorable phrase of the advertisements, emphases were laid on them to communicate to the road user effectively to leave a lasting impression on the mind of the consumer. Consumers were of the view that it makes them recall the advertisement, hence, the need for the slogan to be catchy to attract and sustain the interest of the viewer on the billboard to get the full complement of the advertisement.

4.3.4.8 Notice

The notice that suggests that the products on the sampled billboards for the study have been approved by the Food and Drugs Authority appears on thirteen out of the fifteen billboards. This observation makes the information seem very important as it gives the consumer who intends to respond positively to the advertisement the confidence that the product is safe for use. The designers and advertising agencies do not emphasize this information because it deems not important as far as promotion is concerned. Even though the marketing agents of the companies share the same opinion but want it to be there to assure consumers of the safety and authenticity of the products in question. It also came to light that this statement that is on almost all the billboards is not a requirement of the Food and Drugs Authority of it to be on the advertisement, hence, designers can do without it. This will create more room for other information to be projected that could add more value to the billboard.

4.3.4.9 Contact details

The contact details of the companies behind the advertisements on the billboards for the study were identified on five of them. This information allows the consumer to get in touch with the company to get more information about the advertisement. 50% of the consumers for the study have picked contact on billboards to make enquire about a product or service. This implied that even though this information is not relevant in terms of numbers involved but useful as it helps the consumer to get more information about the product or service. This will possibly lead to positive responses to the promotion in question, since one may get more information that may not be on the advertisement.

4.3.4.10 *Caution*

Cautions that give the consumer information on the usage of the product were seen on two of the billboards sampled for the study. These cautions came in the form of symbols that were easily recognised by the consumer. These make it possible for the consumer to know if the product is good for him/her or not. Considering the number of the billboards in the study, it is obvious that it is not relevant but considering the product on the billboards that came with this information, it is clear that it is worth noting even though they were just two since these billboards promote alcoholic drinks. This suggests that maybe further studies on billboards that promote alcoholic products may reveal that all of them come with cautions for the consumer.

4.3.4.11 *Cost of items*

Again information that did not appear on most of the billboards for the study was the cost of the item as identified in the data presented. But it is significant as it helps the consumer to know the price of the item in the advertisement. It only appeared on one of the billboards. However, in this era of price inflation, it is not advisable to put price of the item on the billboard as suggested by one of the marketing agents of a production company. In fact, all the marketing agents were in agreement with that assertion. Advertising agencies and designers were of the view that the cost of the promotion billboards helps the product to penetrate the market.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Overview

This chapter shares light on the summary of the study; conclusion drawn from vivid analysis of the sampled billboards displayed at prominent places in Accra, observation and interview of road users (consumers), graphic designers, marketing agents, advertising agencies, and the District Assembly. These analyses were done to ascertain the features, aesthetic qualities, cultural elements, and contents on the billboards. Recommendations and suggestions were finally made for future studies.

5.2 Summary

The core objective of the study was to project the aesthetic qualities of billboards at prominent places in Accra. The research was grounded in Kant's theory of aesthetics.

The study mirrors giant billboards as effective billboards since they communicate with the road user from two and three angles. They make it difficult for the consumer to ignore them irrespective of where the consumer is going to or coming from.

The lighting system was also projected as a major factor that kept the billboards awake on the shoulders of the road, making them ever ready to reach out to the consumer at all times within the day, month, and year. This system makes it almost impossible to switch off or flip the advertisement on the billboards as we do with other communication designs like television commercials and magazines. It also helps to improve aesthetic beauty of night scenes of prominent places in Accra cityscape. Digital billboards were identified as billboards that stay awake with or without any lighting system around them to disseminate information about products and services in this study. This make them

standout in this study since they do not need any lighting system around them to communicate in the night like the other giant billboards in the study.

The study also projected illustration as a powerful tool that attracts, sustains interest, persuades, reminds, and re-enforces the advertisement to the consumer. The attractive and dominant nature of the illustration on the billboards makes them very vital as a communication tool that draws the message closer to the consumer. It also makes it difficult for consumers to take their eyes off the billboards in Accra cityscape.

The study identified slogans important vehicles that drove the message on the billboards in the cityscape to the mind of the consumer. This leads to a recall of the promotion. It was also noted that for the slogan to get to the consumer, the typestyle, size, colour, and effect of the text are relevant, since these factors help to make the slogan legible enough to reach the consumer from a wide range.

The study also showcased aesthetic qualities of billboards embedded in the major elements on the billboards – illustrations, text, and colours. These elements work together to catch the eye of consumers to imprint the message in their brains which leads to recall.

The attractive and striking nature of the illustration enhances the beauty of the billboard and makes it appeal to the eye. This enables the billboard to arrest the attention of the consumer to get the message on it. Illustrations were also projected in the study as the meat to the text. That is to say, they add flesh to the text and make them more meaningful.

Colours were also highlighted as one of the major elements in this study that enhances the aesthetic quality of the billboards. They also make the billboards attractive and project the other elements to the viewer. They are said to be the embodiment of beauty because without them the billboard cannot be said to be aesthetically beautiful since the aesthetic

of the billboard is mostly associated with striking colours. Colours brighten the billboard and its immediate surroundings.

The illustrative cartoon was also identified as a tool that enhances the beauty of the billboard and adds value to it. It serves as a channel for releasing stress in the dissemination of messages in a relaxed and stress-free manner. Illustrative cartoons create humour that leaves a lasting impression on the mind of the consumer.

The aesthetic of the billboard as a tool for recall thrives on the reflection of the society in the illustration for the viewer to get a better understanding of the information on the billboard since the illustration on the billboard is the embodiment of information on it.

The study also projected a three-dimension effect on the billboard as a perception that adds value and improves the aesthetic quality of the billboard. It makes it stand out among other billboards on the shoulders of the road to reach out to a multitude.

The brevity of the message and arrangement of the message was also noted to be keen in the aesthetics of the billboard. They help the consumer to focus on the message and get it timely. It was established that the consumer needs about six (6) seconds to get the message. It was based on this that the brevity and legibility of the message were deemed important for the billboard to communicate effectively.

Again simplicity and uniqueness of design were also mirrored as qualities that enhance the beauty of the billboard and project it to the world. They helped to summarise the advertisement creatively and make it almost impossible for the billboard to be avoided by the consumer.

The lighting system was also identified as an agent of aesthetics as it enhances the beauty of the billboard and its surroundings apart from keeping the billboard awake. It brings the

colour in the billboards out for the admiration of the viewer. It helped increase the possibility of the billboard appealingly reaching the consumer.

The study highlights the nature and immediate surrounding of billboards as vital components of aesthetic that thrive on the safety of the road user and maximise the use of space. These components enhance the appearance of the billboard and render it safe on the shoulders of the road for the consumer.

In addition, the study also projected popular culture that thrived on attraction to persuade the consumer and trigger recall of the message on the billboard. Although they did not mirror Ghanaian cultural elements as a source of inspiration for the designing of the billboards, Ghanaian cultural elements can be seen in the illustration and colours used. Ghanaian culture traits like family life, hospitality, unity, love, among others were identified in the study.

The surroundings and the nature of the billboards were identified as features that can be associated with Ghanaian culture. They make them unique and help Ghanaians to associate themselves with these adverts. This enables the Ghanaians to respond positively to the advertisement on the billboards.

The study projected contents on billboards in various forms to meet the demand of the consumer and maximise the possibility of the message to get to the consumer. Information like the name of the product, illustration on the product, slogan, trademark, and brand name were projected as the major messages. The name of the product was identified as information that helped the consumer to identify the product by name while the illustration complements the name of the product to promote its sale. This implies that they work together to push the product to the consumer. The trademark gives the product legal backing and relates the product to a brand (company). The slogan on the

other hand presents the product in an attractive manner and triggers recall of the advertisement on the billboard, hence the need to use catchy slogans. The contents of the billboards under the study enhances the beauty of Accra cityscape as they make the street of prominent place in the city colourful and help reduce boredom on the street. It also help keep the street awake with the aid of electric powered digital billboards and billboards with lighting system round them. This complements the lighting of the cityscape to improve the beauty of the night scene in prominent places in Accra and put pressure on the national grid of electricity due to the high power required to power the billboards in the night.

The study projected uniformity in sizes of billboards and the orderly arrangement of billboards at some prominent places in Accra as a content that help to enhance the scenery of the cityscape in terms of aesthetics and their effectiveness in communicating to the consumer.

The statement 'This advertisement is approved by FDA' was also noted in the study as one of the major information but not relevant to the value of the billboard. However, it cautions that the usage of a product. This was deemed relevant even though it was on only one billboard in the study. This billboard happened to be the only billboard promoting the sale of the alcoholic product.

5.3 Conclusions

The study was to determine the aesthetic and cultural significance of billboards. The conclusions drawn from the findings of the study are as follows:

First and foremost, billboards with two and three interfaces communicate to consumers from all angles making them more effective than billboards that inform from only one

angle. These billboards with two and three interfaces were unavoidable because of their nature.

Secondly, the lighting system makes billboards aesthetically beautiful and keeps them awake to communicate to the consumer twenty-four hours on daily basis and add value to beauty of the night in the cityscape. This also makes the billboards unavoidable even at night where most communication designs go off or sleep. Unlike other billboards in the study, digital billboards do not need any lighting system to stay awake to inform the public and beauties the cityscape scenery.

Thirdly, the attractiveness of the illustration makes it powerful to sustain the interest of the consumer and push the product to him or her. It also renders the billboard unavoidable as it drives the product to the viewer and makes the message more meaningful.

Fourthly, the catchy nature of the slogan and its dominance on the billboard leads to the recall of advertisement. The boldness and brevity of the slogan enable the consumer to run with it. Ariel black was identified as the font style that projected text on billboards.

In addition, illustration, text, and colours were the main elements that unearth the aesthetic beauty of billboards. The beauty of billboards was in the appealing nature of the illustration and its ability to catch the attention of the consumer. It makes the advertisement more meaningful to the consumer as it gives a pictorial summary of the entire message.

Illustrated cartoons present the advertisement funnily and help reduce stress as it puts a smile on the face of the consumer. It also helps in remembering the advertisement which is vital to manufacturing companies and service providers.

Illustrations linked to the society can connect to the consumer to get the message without struggling. This makes the message more valuable and understandable to the Ghanaian consumer.

Special effects like the three-dimension effect on the billboard enhance its utmost beauty aesthetically and add value to the billboard. It makes the billboard more appealing to the consumer hence sustaining the interest of the consumer.

Additionally, colours play a significant role in the aesthetic of the billboard as it makes the billboard stand out and project it to the consumer. Colour was the element behind the appealing nature of the billboard as it catches the attention of the consumer. It also helps to bring the billboard closer to the viewer as it projects the elements – text, and illustration on it.

In addition, the aesthetic of the billboard was also in the brevity of the message and layout of the message. Fewer words that were left-aligned and centred text were identified as tools for enhancing the billboard and making it more effective.

The simplicity and uniqueness of the design of a billboard also project the qualities that promote the aesthetics of the billboard. These qualities helped present advertisements creatively and briefly. At most five words in a line or two can do the magic to get the message to the consumer.

The lighting system improves the beauty of the billboard and its immediate surrounding making the message on it appealing to the eye. It makes the environment safe for the consumer to be out there to get the information from the billboard from a wide range. It also allows the billboard to communicate at all times in the week. The lighting system is created to brighten the surface of the billboard and enhance the appearance of the Accra cityscape scenery as it put pressure on the national electricity grade.

The nature and immediate surrounding of the billboard also add value to the billboard, hence making it aesthetically beautiful and safe for the consumer. This makes the billboard an environmental friendly product that communicates to the consumer on the shoulder of the road.

Although billboards at prominent places in Accra stem from a popular culture that dwells on attraction to persuade and re-enforce the advertisements to the consumer, it has some elements of Ghanaian culture embedded in them. This Ghanaian cultural elements were encoded in the illustration and the nature of the billboards. The site and immediate surroundings of the billboard can also be associated with some Ghanaian cultures and belief systems. This creates some form of bond between the consumer and the illustrations on the billboards unconsciously and leads to favourably responding to the advertisements.

For a billboard to communicate effectively, illustration, slogan, brand name, trademark, and the name of the product are vital. How this information is presented determines if the billboard will fly or not. Illustration complements the text on the billboard to push the product the billboard is advertising to the viewer attractively. The name of the product also helps the consumer to identify the product with a name while the brand name and trademark linked the advertisements to companies. The slogan dominates all the text on the billboard to re-enforce the recall of the advertisement which happens to be an important factor in a billboard advertisement. The contents on the billboards work together to improve the beauty of Accra cityscape and they make their surrounding colourful and appealing to the eye.

The uniformity of the sizes of billboards and their orderly arrangement at a particular place along the shoulders of the road help to improve the aesthetic beauty of the place and make the billboards effective in the dissemination of the message they carry.

Last but not the least, caution on the usage of the alcoholic product is very important as it helps the consumer to use the product with caution. The statement “this advertisement is approved by FDA” is not relevant even though it is seen on most billboards on the shoulders of the road.

5.3 Recommendations

From the conclusions drawn from the study, the following recommendations were made to advertising agencies, graphic designers, billboard clients, and future researchers.

Firstly, advertising agencies and the Assembly in collaboration with the Ghana Highway Authority should replicate the billboards with three interfaces at Tetteh Quarshie Interchange in other interchanges in Accra and other cities to maximise the use of space to beautify the cityscape. It will also help advertisements to make a great impact on the life of the consumer.

Secondly, advertising agencies and the Assemblies should make sure that the lighting systems around their billboards are always functioning well to beautify the billboards and their immediate surroundings to enhance the cityscape scenery. This is very important as it also keeps the billboards awake making them effective throughout the day and night.

Thirdly, designers should use striking and interesting illustrations to attract and sustain the interest of the viewer. Dramatic images and images of celebrities in a varied pose may be used to achieve this purpose.

Fourthly, designers and advertising agencies need to minimise the words used on billboards for them to reach out to a larger audience. Emphasis should be placed on the slogan for it to communicate from a wide range.

In addition, designers and advertising agencies should use bright and colourful illustrations to improve the aesthetic qualities of the billboard to make them catchy. The three-dimension effect can also be employed in the illustration to make the billboard aesthetically beautiful.

Designers should be careful in their quest to make the billboard unique without compromising on the simplicity of the designed billboard, hence the need to put simplicity of the first in their creative potential.

Advertising agencies and marketing agents should encourage designers to incorporate Ghanaian cultural in their billboard design. This will enable the consumer to relate well with the advertisement on the billboard.

Designers should make sure that the illustration complements the text to send the message on the billboard. This will help the literate get a better understanding of the advertisement while the illiterate gets the message through the illustration.

Advertising agencies should work hand-in-hand with the Assembly, Ghana Highway Authority and Ministry of Energy to find ways of illuminating billboards for night visibility without putting too much pressure on the national electricity grid.

The Assembly and Ghana Highway Authority should work with the Advertising agencies to plan and construct frame works for the mounting of billboards on the streets of Accra in an orderly manner to improve the beauty of the streets scape and keep the consumer safe.

5.4.1 *Suggestion for further studies*

The researcher recommends to future researchers to study the impact of aesthetics of billboards on the consumer.



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APPENDICES

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SCHOOL OF CREATIVE ARTS

OBSERVATION GUIDE

1. Watch the billboard from the shoulders of the road with the vehicles moving towards the billboard.
 - a. Observe the billboard from a distance.
 - b. Observe the billboard from a close range.
2. Observe the immediate surroundings of the billboard.
3. Observe the traffic situation around the billboard.
4. Observe pedestrians' body language or demeanour towards the billboard.
5. Observe the relationships between the sited billboards.
6. Observe and note the qualities that makes the billboard stand out or attractive.
7. Observe and note the cultural elements on the billboard.
8. Observe and note the information on the billboards.

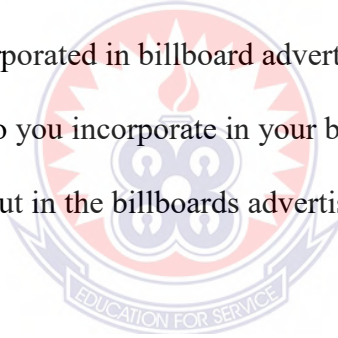
NB: Photographs will be taking for further analysis.

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INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR ADVERTISING AGENCIES

1. How will you describe a billboard?
2. What makes a billboard a good one?
3. Do you consider the aesthetics of the billboard when working on it?
 - a. If yes, what aesthetic qualities do you consider and how do they affect the advertisement.
 - b. If no, what do you consider and how do they affect the advertisement.
4. What significant role does culture play in billboard advertisement?
5. How is culture incorporated in billboard advertisements?
6. What information do you incorporate in your billboards advertisement?
7. Do you make an input in the billboards advertisements you work on and why (if no)/how (if yes)

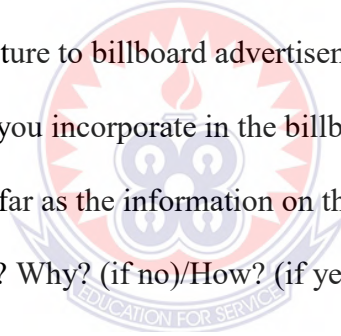


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INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR GRAPHIC DESIGN ARTISTS

1. How will you describe billboard?
2. What will make a billboard a good one?
3. Do you consider the aesthetic of the billboard when designing it?
 - a. If yes, what qualities do you consider as far as aesthetic is concerned?
 - b. If no, what do you consider and how does it affect the billboard advertisement?
4. Does culture play a role in your designing and how?
5. How significant is culture to billboard advertisement?
6. What information do you incorporate in the billboards you work on?
7. Do you have a say as far as the information on the billboard advertisement you work on is concerned? Why? (if no)/How? (if yes)



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**INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR MARKETING AGENTS OF PRODUCTION AND
SERVICE COMPANIES/CLIENTS OF BILLBOARD ADVERTISEMENT**

1. How will you describe billboard as an advertising tool?
2. What makes a billboard a good one?
3. Do you consider the aesthetic of the billboard for your company/establishment when commissioning an advertising agency or designing firm or designer?
 - a. If yes, what qualities or elements do you consider as far as aesthetic is concerned?
 - b. If no, what do you consider and how does it affect the billboard advertisement.
4. Does culture play a role in your design brief to the designer or advertising agency?
5. How significant is culture in your (company/firm) billboard advertisement out there.
6. What information do you incorporate in your billboard advertisement brief?
7. Kindly comment on the information on these billboards?

NB: Samples of billboards under study.

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INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR THE ASSEMBLY

1. How will you describe a billboard?
2. What makes a billboard a good one?
3. What went in the siting of the billboards at Tetteh Quarshie Interchange?
4. What role does the Assembly play in the siting of billboards in the area?
5. Does the Assembly consider aesthetics in the siting of billboards?
 - a. If yes, what aesthetic qualities do you consider and how do they affect the advertisement?
 - b. If no, what do you consider and how do they affect the advertisement?
6. What significant role does culture play in the approval of billboards sited at Tetteh Quarshie Interchange?
7. How is culture incorporated in these billboards?
8. Did the Assembly make any input in the information on the billboards at Tetteh Quarshie Interchange?
 - a. What input did you make and why? (If Yes)
 - b. Why (If No)

