

Content Analysis of Common Billboard Advertisements in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia: Gaps, Weaknesses and Strengths of Billboard Advertisements

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Abstract

This study analyzed the contents of some common commercial billboard advertisements in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The contents analyzed include; photographs, messages, color and appeal strategy .As the demand to advertise products and services through billboards tend to grow the question over effective communication becomes a serious issue. This study thus, conducted to answer such questions raised in billboard advertisements. The gaps, weaknesses and strengths of billboard advertisements were deeply examined and findings were presented. Qualitative content analysis and deep interview have been used to analyze the contents .According to the analysis made , billboard ads those planted alongside major roads in Addis Ababa ,mostly used human photographs, particularly women's photograph and this was done without any connection women's had to the product/service being advertised. Apart from this, most billboard ads had been overlooked by the target consumers. This was observed as a key weakness and gap among the businesses those used billboard ads and ad agencies engaged in designing billboard ads. The study showed that, there were billboard ads those achieved best communication through their messages, pictures and designs. Furthermore, the study indicated as there was ad agencies deficiency in designing, writing proper product and service messages. Significant weaknesses and gaps were found from the data collected, this includes, poor message structure, erroneous color choice and stumpy creativity. Concerning the documentary photographs, the findings indicated, there were mismatches found in those billboard ads selected for analysis. Beyond this, appeal strategies used on the billboard ads selected for analysis were weak ,thus , couldn't able to catch viewer's attention .The messages accompanied with the product /services were also detailed, straightforward and embraced each information about the product. In association to the appeal strategy used most billboards used, an ornate design which means over decoration. This caused inconveniences over the billboards ads those selected for analysis. The result revealed that, Billboards those deployed in the city of Addis Ababa were unable to communicate the right information about the product /service being advertised.

Keywords: Billboards, Products, services, Advertisements, Customers, Photographs, Messages, Communication and Commercials.

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CHAPTER ONE

1. Background of the Study.

A billboard is a large outdoor advertising structure typically found in high traffic areas such as alongside busy roads .Billboards present large advertisement to passing pedestrians and drivers. Typically large ostensibly witty slogans and distinctive visuals; billboards are highly visible in the top designated market areas .Bulletins are the largest most impact standard size billboards located primarily on major highways express ways or principal arterials they command high density consumer exposure (mostly vehicular traffic) bulletins afford greatest visibility due not only their size because, they allow creative “customizing” through extensions and embellishments . Billboards are a event place to advertise because rather than you having to find your consumers ,consumers will find your advertising located chiefly in commercial and industrial areas on primary and secondary arterial roads .Posters are a smaller format than bulletins and are viewed principally by residents and commuter traffic with some pedestrian exposure (en.Wikipedia.org).

The basic poster (Highway Billboard) sizes are 24- and 30 sheet posters and bleed posters .The standard poster panel is built to accommodate all three sizes therefore in the major markets an advertiser should be able to use one of them. The 30- sheet poster is the most widely used size and has replaced the 24 sheet as the standard unit. There is no difference in advertising costs although production costs are greater for the larger types (Russell and Verril : 1988).

Out door advertising becoming a popular choice with a number of advertisers seeking increased brand awareness and means of differentiating themselves from traditional media messages in an environment where people are bombarded by hundreds of messages everyday, outdoor is means of gaining high attention level to a

mass audience. Out door components enhances other media advertising by providing high levels of reach and frequency at a lower cost than other media .Research shows that out door creates synergistic affect when combined with most other media in particular at home offers advertiser at last chance to create brand awareness among potential prospects. The influx of product categories such as ,packages ,goods ,dot .coms ,retailers, and high profile fashion brands have been given the out door industry much needed diversification (Russell and Lane 2002;331).

According to Russell and Verril outdoor advertising produces the largest and most colorful display for an advertiser’s trademark product and slogan .It offers the most spectacular use of lights to attract attention and has shown effectiveness in getting name known It also has I constant presence that is seen twenty four hours a day .It is a continuation reminder of your product without being intrusive like broadcast commercial break.

The new production technologies offer the opportunity to create something bigger than life .Here you can create disruption from the ordinary .A giant peach sitting in a field will attract attention because it is a thousand times bigger than a peach should be .The Richards’s group in Dallas had cows painting an outdoor poster for their client chick –Fil –A. We all know that cows don’t paint or climb, but when they do, we look. Just a few thought on outdoor .First ,you have a responsibility to create something wonderful, because most people dislike them cluttering up the environment .You should ask ,as with any medium ,how the ad will be ,integrated into the other kinds of communications .Concerning messages appear in billboards ,generally there should be ,no more than seven words in the main head. No, we’re not saying it won’t communicate with more than seven, but the more you have the harder it is to grasp quickly. This is truly a medium where simple is better .Reduce all the elements if possible. The point is to reduce the visual and the verbal elements down to their simplest form (Russell and Lane: 2002:441).

Out door offers creative impact with size, color and short bold messages, the messages for outdoor also may provide the last reminder to customers in the market for in particular product or service. Outdoor can be used with equal efficiency by national advertiser buying several thousand sites throughout the country or a small retailer buying in individual location in a single community .Advertisers can also select posters designed to reach high concentrations of certain demographic segments.(Russell and Verril 1986:277 & 278).

This giant advertising medium increased with many numbers in Addis Ababa, at the Ethiopian capital. Studying its content, inside content, how messages chosed and painted, color combination and color value, visuals appearance and design will help to generate a new insight and look for advertisers and ad agencies to produce effective ads that can sell products and even build brand images.

1.1 Statement of the problem

“Advertising is a form of mass communications that transmitted different types of market information to buyers and sellers in the market place .Advertising both informs and transforms the product by creating as image that goes beyond straight forward facts (Wells,et ,al 2000:). As Wells and his colleagues noted out advertising is built on creative concept that can be understood instantly, because viewers are traveling past the billboards .Out door billboard must deliver the message with “quick impact” .If people are moving then the advertiser has a captive audience and the poster can present more complicated message.

Advertising through billboards would be a recent phenomenon for the Ethiopian advertising industry; although growing rapidly and it has been considered as the main outlet to advertise products and services by many businesses. While the desire to advertise through billboards grown it raises a serious question in how to acquire effective communication via billboards. One of the big questions raised is clarity; which would make the billboard easily consumed by target consumers. So as to achieve clarity on the contents of billboard ads, this research study tries to look at the problems related to billboard advertisements.

1.2 Research Questions

Any research conducted needed to answer at least some questions and fill the gaps observed .Thus, this study has the following questions to answer:-

- How are billboard ads, messages, texts, and designed?
- What kind of appeal mechanisms are used and employed?
- What kinds of photographs are effective in billboards?
- How can we make the billboard ads effective?
- What are the gaps in designing the billboard ads?

1.3 Objectives of the study

This study has the following general and specific objectives.

1.3.1. General Objective

This study intended to enhance understanding of ad agencies designers and educators on how billboard messages designed, appeal strategy used, visuals presented . Furthermore, it attempts to examine major

strategies employed to advertise products and services while advertising through billboards.

1.3.2 Specific Objectives.

This research has the following specific objectives.

- Attempts to examine the contents of billboard ads, texts, messages, font sizes, photographs and designing elements.
- To develop a strategy on designing effective billboard ads.
- To devise a mechanism to promote best billboard ads which would easily win consumers' attention and plant brand image.

1.3 Significance of the Study

This Research will try to answer questions and would potentially provide immense significance for researchers, educators and consumers. It could be also used as the form stepping board to conduct further studies. Moreover, it would make tangible impact in producing billboard ads in the future. Indeed there were limited number of research papers conducted in this area especially, on billboard advertisements, therefore this research paper would provide significant support and contribution on the following areas:-

- Views how billboard ads appeal strategies were used to catch consumers attention
- Enable to show how advertising strategy used on billboard ads
- Offers a new insight and understanding for ad agencies for examining their future career and designing effective billboard ads.
- Helps to decide content of billboard ads particularly on how they should look like.
- Develops ad agencies and businesses understanding on what kind of mechanism to be used to win over the competitive market.
- Because of unavailability of other researches conducted on billboard advertisements, this research serves as a resource input for researchers, educators and business people.
- Helps to add perception to ad agencies and different genres of businesses in designing billboard ads those able to catch consumer's attention.
- Signposts which kinds of photographs are more effective when they appear in billboards.
- Indicates which types of illustrations were used and useful to advertise products and services.
- Develops perception of ad agency designers on how to combine contents of billboards including photographs, messages ...etc.

1.4 Scope of the study

Billboard advertisements sized 24-sheet and located alongside major roads in Addis Ababa, Africa Avenue (Bole Road), Piazza (around Cinema Empire), Churchill Avenue, Haya Hulet to Meganagna, CMC and Mexico roundabouts. This study does not embrace billboard ads those hindered, damaged and ad agencies had to change. Furthermore, descriptive content analysis has been used to determine the presence of certain words, concepts, themes, phrases, character and sentences with in texts and sets of texts. Billboard pictures of Beer advertisement, food complex, real state, soap, tyre as well as billboard ads of social services like condom Advertising and birth control pills selected for the analysis. The study is limited to Addis Ababa city.

1.5 Limitation of the Study

Understanding consumer's perception towards a particular ad/s with in few months could be unattainable goal because, it is very difficult to calculate emotions of individuals with measurable figures. Because of lack of other studies conducted on billboard ad/s this study suffer from referring well documented materials those serve as baseline and fill knowledge gap that may happen in the course of the study. For this matter, most of the literature review come from western media studies as well as trusted websites. Financial shortage is also another limitation which is worth to mention.

CHAPTER TWO

2. Review of Related Literature

2.1 Out Door advertising as a Visual medium

Out door is a visual medium with creative elements playing a much greater role than in most other advertising vehicles? The creative options available for outdoor and out-of-home advertisers are almost limitless with dozens of shapes and sizes offered to carry persuasive messages. As Out of home Advertising Association of America (OAAA) pointed out, "out door advertising is visual story telling. The expression of an idea can surprise viewers with words or excite them with pictures. Designing for the out door medium is a challenging communication task that requires the expression of a concept with clarity and focus" (Russel and Lane 2002:325).

In effective advertising, its not just the words that need to communicate – it is the visuals too. And they

must work together to present the creative concept. Words and pictures accomplish different message effect. In most advertising the power lies with the visual, and its primary function is to get attention. In general, designers have found that a picture in a print ad captures more than twice as many readers as a headline does. Ads with pictures also tend to pull more readers in to the body copy: initial attention more likely to turn to interest to turn to interest with a strong visual. People notice ads and remember those with pictures more than those composed mostly of the type. Furthermore the bigger the illustration, the more the advertisement grab consumers' attention (Wells: et: al, 2003:364)

Visualizing takes a thought and illustrates it. Layout takes that illustration together with the other elements to be utilized and composes into an advertisement. The purpose of an illustration is to convey an idea. The only ideas eligible for use in an advertisement are those that help to express the message the advertisement trying to convey. When designer decides where the picture is to go in the advertisement in relation to the reading matter and the other elements of the advertisement, he is said to be laying out the advertisement (Otto Kleppeners Advertising Procedure 1966:113)

In practice, it is probable that visuals are more important as attention-grabbers than words, especially for print ads, it is the ability of the advertiser to create fascinating, compelling, unusual-but relevant pictures that will often make the difference. We are psychologically more responsive to pictures than words and we can take them in much more quickly. (Advertising, Roderick White 2000:92).

Pictures can speak to us more quickly and powerfully than words, so, if we can produce a powerful, relevant picture, we may have started to crack the problem. Much press good advertising relies very heavily on imaginative or evocative or quirky pictures for its effect. If you use pictures as the key, they should reveal something about the brand and the story you want to tell, but, ideally, not all of it – you do want people to read the words (however few) as well. (A possible exception here is fashion advertising, where the picture can usually say all that is needed) (Roderick White 2000,99).

The simplest form of visualization is to picture the product by itself. Such an illustration tells the reader that this is the article he is being asked to buy. Illustrating the product alone is often effective if the product is bought because of its style, or design-for example, dresses, silverware, furniture, lamps. If the essence of interest in a product is its appearance, then to show it alone as clearly as possible may be the best technique (Otto Kleppeners Advertising Procedure 1966:113)

2.2 Advertising in Ethiopia

As cited by Hawariat, (2008,20), in ancient times traders in Ethiopia advertised products by cutting or drawing symbols in stones and public criers, walking up and down streets, shouted information about their wares (Muna, 1996). This historical development of advertising in Ethiopia is closely linked to development of society at large in the country. Understanding the need for advertising goes back to generations in Ethiopia. With the use of words like, “_____ is found here,” Ethiopians have been selling food items and local beverages (Daniel, 2007:22). Advertisement also evolved with the establishment of the Ethiopian printing press.

The first press ad, for washing soap, appeared in the first Ethiopian newspaper, *Aimero* on August 2, 1914. Advertisements appeared in *Addis Zemen*, an Amharic newspaper, at the end of the 1950s and start of the 1960s. According to Yosef, the demand for items from local people and foreigners drove competitions during the Italian occupation and helped develop Ethiopia's advertising industry. The trend continued to the early 1970s. The national lottery started to use public criers in market places and continued commercial advertising after the Ethiopian Revolution in 1974. Few advertising agencies existed before the revolution. Anbessa, opened by advertising pioneer Wubshet, was among the country's first advertising agencies (Yosef Girmay, 2005).

Electronic advertising followed. Though Ethiopian Radio started transmission in September 1936, it did not accept advertisements until 1953 (Daniel, 2007). Ethiopian Television started service on Emperor Haile Selassie I's coronation day in October 1965. Four years later, the Ministry of Information and Tourism founded the Advertising and Distribution Agency “to promote the advertising industry and to promote trade.” Two years later, Ethio marketing, a private enterprise, took over (ibid).

After the Emperors fall in 1974, the Dergue military government nationalize most companies and all advertising agencies. Almost all commercial advertisements, except public announcements, vanished. The advertising sector revived when market opportunities flourished with imported consumer goods and industry deregulation after the Dergue regime fell in 1991 (Kenaw, 2005-27). With liberal economic policies, investments and a competitive market, many advertising agencies supported print, broadcast and outdoor advertising (Daniel, 2007).

2.3 Visualizing the idea

At this stage, the creative team begins to visualize the ad. They form a mental picture of how the basic appeal can be translated into an effective selling message. In creating an ad, you can describe your visualizing idea in words or in crudest sketch for an artist to carry out – unless you are the artist creating the ad. The important thing

in visualizing is to imagine the kind of picture you think would express your idea. While thinking of the visual form, find the words that will best reinforce and work together with the visual for the most powerful effect. Make as many versions of the basic idea as you can. Be as imaginative as you want to be, provided the end result delivers the basic message and the brand name. (Russell and Verrill, 1986:411).

Advertisement can sell the product in a generic way, a strategy which works only when the product dominates the market, or they can sell the brand, a strategy which is usually considered to be more effective. Another message option considers the information content of relative to its associational or emotional import. Information advertising is usually straightforward, fact filled, and often focused on news (Wells: et al: 1998:234).

We know that ads are not created for the sake of creativity. Each ad is created for a specific marketing purpose. All for a product should conform to the same set of objectives, even though some ads may not appear to be related, and usually they use the same theme or slogan in each ad. Using all the information you have about the product or service, write a statement of the one thing you need to say about the product to the prime prospect. This is your promise or the basic theme. The promise is a consumer benefit statement that tells the prospect what the product will do for them. (Russell and Lane).

To visualize an idea is to interpret it into pictorial form. There are many ways to interpret an idea visually. If several artists were asked to visualize golfing, one might show a man driving off at the tee another a man putting a third a room scene. A prominent photographer asked a number of men to get a picture representing smoke. One man took a photo of the smoke rising from a cigarette., another the smoke blenching out, of a chimney, a third the smoke curling up from an incense burner (How would you picture a smoke?). It is evident that the variety of ways in which a thought can be pictured is limited only by the imagination. (Otto Kleppners Advertising Procedure 1966:112).

It is time to execute the big idea. At this stage of the process, the creative team forms mental pictures of the big appeal can be translated into a selling message just as a good novel has various sub-plots that are brought together in a creative and interesting cohesive story line, a good ad has well-coordinated layout that flows well to create a compelling message about the product and its benefits, you might visualize a sports car as speeding on a mountain road and hairpin curves. You might see a sedan of understated luxury in front of a country club. These mental pictures can be shown in words or in the crudest sketches, the crucial thing is to imagine the kind of mental picture that expresses your idea. While thinking in the visual form (remember a picture is worth a thousand words) find the words that work with the visual for the most powerful effect. (Russell and Lane, 448&449).

2.4 Out Door Design

Because billboards must make a quick and lasting impression, design is critical to their effectiveness. The integration of art and headline is critical for the development of a strong concept. The layout is compact, with a very simple visuals, usually beginning with a strong graphic, followed by a catchy headline, and ending with some kind of product identification. The relationship should be so, clear and so integrated that the elements are perceived as one whole concept (Wells:et al 1998:510).

Designing an out door display is among the most difficult tasks for a creative team creating a picture and a few words to be seen by fast moving traffic at distances up to 500 feet is hard enough to do in a manner that moves customers to buy a product adds an obstacle not found in other media. However, outdoor also is one of the most enjoyable media to with from a creative stand point. Its size and color allow maximum creativity with the space constraints of other advertising vehicles (Russel and Lane 2002:325).

2.5 The Value of ad agencies in Advertising

When functioning at their best, advertising agencies create value for their clients in ways lawyers and accountants do not. When an agency clearly interpreters to its client what customers want and expect and then communicates information about the clients product or service to meaningfully, so uniquely, or so consistently that customers reward that brand or product or service with their loyalty, then the value of agency comes more sharply in to focus (Well,at, al 1998:105).

2.5 .1 Why Hire an Agency

Many companies hire agencies to plan and execute their advertising efforts. Why should a company sign a contract with an advertising agency? Hiring an agency has three main benefits: It provides objective advice:, especially experienced staffing, and tailored management of all advertising activities and personnel. An agency can offer objective advice to its clients because it is not as invested in product of development. Also, the client can't hire and fire agency staff. Clients expect an agency to tell them when they are misreading the market or are out of step with consumers advice that the clients own marketers might be afraid to voice (Wells:et al:82).

2.5.2 Agency Functions

In any event, since they serve client and media, all agencies embrace certain functions. They are client liaison,

creativity, production, placement and housekeeping .In every large agency it is the account executive (AC), often working as account supervisor, who maintains a constant liaison, that is, "lives with", the client. Some agencies attracted by the huge commissions generated by major national, automotive, food and beverage, drug and cosmetic accounts ,have tended to throw in a variety of other services in an attempt to attract and hold clients. These include .public relations, public opinions, sampling, market research, and promotional activities. An advertising agency is a large and complex operation (Whitney: 322 & 323).

2.5.3 To keep Originality of the Advertising

Creative advertising is interesting because it presents a unique or novel thought .The function of originality is to capture attention .People will notice something that is new, novel, or surprising. Creative advertising breaks through the old patterns of seeing and saying things without being irrelevant or bizarre. The unexpectedness of the new idea is what creates stopping power. Advertising agencies go to great lengths to create intrusive advertising (Wells, Burnett and Moriarty: 1998:251).

2.6 Copy structure and Color choice of Billboard Ads

As the Otto Kleppeners Advertising Procedure book suggests out:-a good advertisement contains an idea about a product that is thrust before the reader in a way that he feels immediately involved.

The idea must be clear in the mind of the creator of the advertisement before he begins his work .He can then express the idea in words, or by pictures, or by using all means of communications .The words, or text matter , of an advertisement are referred to as its copy.

The chief difference between the writing of copy and other forms writing lies in its purpose .The purpose of copy is to sell to marshal the language with the object of getting other to share ones enthusiasm for the product being advertised.

The Advertiser ,to, has his goals in spending money for an advertisement .He wants the reader to buy his product .The simplest advertisement ,therefore,consists of two elements the idea of interest to the reader and the idea of interest to the advertiser .(Otto Kleppeners Advertising procedure: fifth edition ,1966,81 & 82).

Outdoor allows a headline ,usually no more than seven words .Unlike copy in traditional media ,there is no theme development copy amplification .Conciseness is not only a virtue it is a necessity .Advertisers have learned to work with this constraints to provide not only interesting but motivating sales messages (Russell and Lane 2002:) As cited by Hawariat, only one fact is consistent: The outdoor message must be short and clear, initiating an immediate response (remember the local ads: “ ___ is sold here”) (Daniel, 2007).

The copy on billboard is minimal usually there is one line that serve both as a headline and some kind of product identification .The most important characteristic is brevity. The words are short, the phrases are short, and there are no wasted words .Some books suggest that no more than six to seven words be used. The headline is usually a phrase, not a sentence .There is nothing equivalent to the body found in print ad .The best copy for outdoor is short, Cathy phrase .It needs to catch attention, but it also needs to be captivating in order to be memorable., often the phrase will play on words or a twist on a common phrase. (Wells et al, 1998:510).

Good copy is clear ,concise vivid and specific .A big help is to use short sentences and uninvolved sentence structure .Terseness is not attained not by omitting essential idea ,but by expressing them in the fewest possible words .Good English continues to be good writing for the advertising(Otto Kleppeners Advertising Procedure 1966:100).The selection of the proper typeface is another extremely important factor in outdoor advertising .Mixing typefaces and using overly ,ornate designs can often reduce readership .Likewise .reverse type that is light color against a dark background is usually more difficult to read .Rule of thumb in creating outdoor advertising is to save unique creative ideas for the illustration not the typefaces (Russell and Verril 1986:289).

As Otto Kleppeners Advertising Procedure Book:-an advertisement printed in black ink on a white paper is referred to as a black and white advertisement .An advertiser can use additional color for contrast and emphasis .If one color is added (to the original black) it is referred to as two-color advertisement; if two-colors, it is a three-color advertisement; if three colors, it is a four-color advertisement. It is possible to reproduce the full range of colors in an advertisement in an a mixture of the three primary colors – yellow ,red and blue – and black .Hence ,a four –color advertisement is also referred to as a full color advertisement .

A source of never ending astonishment to us is the advertiser who insists on shrinking and squeezing copy into a tight corner of an ad in order to maximize “white space”. a triumph style over common sense .Other present copy cover a mottled background, making it almost impossible to read easily .Rever –two other common problems are reverse print over a light background, offering too little contrast, and centered copy (i.e. unjustified left and right margins), which forces the reader to work too hard to find the beginning of each line .An advertiser who includes a fair amount of copy obviously hopes that it will be read. Good content alone will not attract readers .The best written wittiest, and most powerful copy will be overlooked unless it is well spaced and sufficiently large and clear to invite the reader.(Russell and Lane ,2002,441).

Color talks its own psychological language .To make a drink look cool , there will be plenty of blue in the

background ;to make a room look warm (for heating advertisement) there will be plenty of red in the background .Spring time suggest light color and fall the dark tans .A clue to the choice of the dominating color thus may often be found in the mood in which the product is being shown.(Otto Kleppeners Advertising Procedure).

Bold, bright color is another characteristic of impact .The outdoor industry has done significant research on color or color combinations .It has found that the greatest impact is created by maximum contrast between two colors .The strongest contrast, for example, comes from dark color against white or yellow .Yellow adds tremendous impact as well as contrast other bright colors also add. The visibility problem is compounded by the fact that out board are seen at all times of the day and might under all kinds of lighting conditions .The most visible billboards use bright, contrasting colors.(Wells,et al).

Color is one of the primary advantages of outdoor. However; color must be chosen carefully to ensure readability .Out door designers use those colors that create high contrast in both hues (red, green, etc).

Certain products clamor for color reproduction –those in which color is an important part of the design, as fabrics, carpeting and automobiles .Color is eloquent in picturing appetizing dishes of food, and in showing scenes in natural color. Color may be used for the sheer beauty it brings to the advertisement. But the use of color is not merely a layout question also space charges for a color page are more than for a black and white – page ,and the costs of art work and plates are considerably higher.(Otto Kleppeners Advertising Procedure :1966:13).

2.7 Color in advertising

One of the most versatile elements in an ad is color .Depending on the product and advertising appeal, color can be used for any number of reasons: It is an attention getting device, with only a few exceptions, people will notice a color ad more readily than one in black and white .Certain products can only be presented realistically if color is used. Household furnishing, many clothing and fashion accessories, and cosmetics would lose their appeal if advertised without color. Color can highlight specific elements with in an ad .Occasionally, an advertiser will use spot color for the product in otherwise black and white ad, but saves money compared to four color processes .Color also sets a mood for the ad with its own psychological language .Cool, passive environments are created with blues and pastels, red denotes excitement and warmth, and yellow suggests spring time and youth.(Russell and Lane 2002 :456).

Color is used in advertising to attract attention, provide realism, establish moods, and build brand identity. Research has consistently shown that ads with color get more attention than do ads without color. Realism is important for certain messages strategies where full- color photographs may be essential. Some things just don't look right in black and white: pizza, flowers garden, beef stroganoff, and rainbows, for example .Color is needed to do justice to the content (Wells; et; al 1998:431).

2.8 Words and Pictures

Two of the most important factors in the execution are the words and the pictures –and that's true in print and broadcast advertising .Even radio can evoke mental pictures through suggestive or descriptive language and sound effects .Typically advertising planners and researchers focus on the words when they consider the effectiveness of advertising (through copy testing),and yet there is substantial evidence that the vast majority of all advertising communication received occurs nonverbally .An increasing number of advertising effectiveness studies focus on the visual imagery in the advertising(Russell and Lane).

2.9 Illustration and Photos

When art directors use the word art “art,” they usually mean photographs and illustrations .Photographs and illustrations can serve different purposes in ads .For, instance art directors know that photographs have more stopping power in advertising than illustrations, and that color attracts more attention than black and white images .In general, an illustration (or animation in television) is more fanciful; a photograph is more realistic. Illustration by definition ; illuminate many of the details you see in a photograph ,which can make it easier to understand since what remains are the “highlights ” of the image that we use most often in recognizing what it represents(Wells:et:al 2003:366).

2.10 Nature and use of appeals

Advertising motivates people by appealing to their problems, desires and goals and by offering a means of solving their problems and achieving these goals .People purchase products and services because, of the benefits they expect from them. The life living spark of an ad is its promise of the special significance benefit the product will provide a promise the product must be able to fulfill. That special significant benefit becomes the appeal of an ad .An appeal is a statement designed to motivate a person to action and is often stated in the headline or slogan (Russell and Verrill: 1986:385).

Most Products have a number of positive appeals that could be successfully promoted, so how do we go about making the decision as to which direction to go with an ad or appeal? The idea is to choose the one that is most important to the majority of our target. Because selecting the primary appeal is the key to any advertising campaign, many research techniques have been developed to find which appeal to use (Russell and Lane:2002:421).

Persuasion in advertising rests on the psychological appeal to the consumer. An appeal is something that makes the product particularly attractive or interesting to the consumer. Common appeals are security, esteem, fear, sex, and sensory pleasure. Appeals generally pinpointed the anticipated response of prospect to the product and message (Wells: et al: 1998:255).

2.11 Consumer Behavior

To create an ad work, advertisers must understand how consumers behave and they must be sensitive to their needs. The study of the consumers behavior helps advertisers to design effective campaign. The explicit goal of is to persuade consumer to do, something, often to purchase a product. To achieve this goal, advertisers must first understand their audience. They must learn about consumers ways of thinking the factors that motivate them, and the environment in which they live (Wells :et al,2003:96).

2.12 Mechanisms of getting attention on Billboards

Attention through dominant size. Having the advertisement stand out by its sheer size in relation to others serves to get attention for it. According to the Otto Kleppeners book of Advertising procedure. another device for getting attention to have an unusual pictorial design that stands out by its own provocative uniqueness. If such design is merely to “ catch attention ”, it represents a momentary optical opportunity to focus attention. Conversely at times an advertisement can get through the sheer simplicity of presenting its messages, which affect causes it to stand apart from surrounding advertisement straining for optical oddity.

According to Wells and his colleagues noted out the most important feature of billboard is conspicuous; it is noticeable, it bursts into view. The illustration should be an eye stopper. What make something visible? Size is one factor. It offers a grand scale, much larger than life and, therefore, can create tremendous impact. You can depict 25 –feet long pencil or a painting figure that is 48 feet long. The product or the brand label can be hundred of times larger than life. Most elements on billboard are big and bold –the type as well as the illustrations.

2.13 The Need to Attract Attention

Attracting attention, getting noticed and high visibility, no matter how you say it, this is the primary creative objective of an ad. Today’s advertising has to work very hard to get noticed. You cannot rely on strategy alone – positioning, the product appeals, the demographic and psychographic data that tell you what wavelength the consumer is on –to sell the customer. Obvious as it sound, you can not sell people until you attract their attention. Put another way, people are not going, to read the ad if they do not see it. Remember, your ad is competing with all advertising culture and editorial matter in a publication. Unfortunately; most ads in most publications are invisible. Strong art and design are taking a front seat as companies try to cut through media clutter. A properly designed visual can provide an instantaneous message and feeling. And it can capture the attention of consumers. But it has to be more than simply attracting attention. It must communicate the strategy. Good art direction can offer a fast, deep, and emotional connection (Russell and Lane 2002:451).

As Otto Kleppeners Advertising Procedure book suggests out, still another way to get attention should be to use a technique that stands apart from those currently being used, as a change of pace in typography or a style of art work used, or in the format of the layout itself. The skill in making the layout is not merely in being different but in exploring other ways of presenting a message more effectively. One of the most assured ways of getting welcome contrast is to see whether the presentation cannot be more simplified unless “ simplicity ” becomes such a wide spread fact that the pendulum swings back to making the advertisement more “interesting”.

The type usually demands sensitive handling. It has to be easy to read at a distance by the audience. The outdoor industry has reached type legibility on billboards. Among its conclusions is to avoid all- capital letters because that is the hardest typographical form to read. Ornamental letters, deep ending on how fanciful they are, can also be hard to read, as can script and cursive letters. Anything that is unusual can create legibility problems. Experts in outdoor advertising using simple, clean and uncluttered type. (Wells, et al. 1988:511).

Advertising has to attract attention, somehow, in order to penetrate the divided interests of the audience. Looking constructively at the problem, it is clear that the keys to effective attention getting lie in combination of the media context and the brand concerned. You stand a better chance of getting attention in a medium if what you are saying stands out in contrast to the to the programme or editorial in which it appears, or if it tunes into so closely with its context that it becomes almost seamlessly part of that context, and the reader or viewers is simply carried in to by the ad by the flow. Bearing in mind, too, that you are often going to be among other ads, a distinctive tone of voice –quieter, perhaps—may make the difference (Roderick White 2000:92).

Every ad in a publication directly competes for attention with every other ad and the editorial matter. It is axiomatic in advertising that a person must first pay attention to your ad if it is to be read. Many sins have been committed in the name of this oversimplified directive because you can use an odd device or a feak drawing that will catch a persons eye only long enough for him or her to discover that it was merely a misleading lure. The result is mistrust of the ad and the product. The real art of advertising lies in getting meaningful attention to an idea that relates the product to the reader (Russell and Verril: 1986:414).

If the brand carries its own interest, because it has something new or fascinating to say, this is a far better way of getting attention –in its own right – than standing up and shouting. What’s more, it has a better chance of working for the brand than a ‘ bolt-on ’ attention –getting device that can actually divert attention from the brand ;you then get an ad that people notice ,at least superficially ,but no benefit for the brand. Analysis of factors in ads that attract attention ,reported by Franzen,shows that attention can influenced by size ,color ,sound ,intensity(loudness ,bright color) ,movement and directional signs. In terms of the qualities in stimulus that help attract attention,novelty,surprise, uncertainty,unusualness and complexity(up to a point) all seem to encourage our interest (Roderick White;2000:92).

2.14 Creativity in Outdoor Advertising

Creativity doesn’t stop and start with art directors and copy writers. Every one on the team needs to come up with new ideas and approaches that positively impact the client’s businesses. Great researchers and planners are designing more effective ways to gather insights about consumers. Top –notch media strategies are building more innovative communication plans that get the brand in front of the right consumers, using the right context to make the message work harder. Being creative means changing your perspective looking at the possible angle. Bieng creative means asking your self “How can we?” instead of “Can we” Being creative means constantly exploring –experimenting with new technologies ,discover new ways to use traditional options ,anticipating new trends.(Wells et al: 2003: 196).

The creative essence in writing copy is to see a product in a fresh way: to explore the possible effect of the product upon the reader; to explain things in a way that causes the reader to view it with new understanding and appreciation. Most advertisements end by asking or suggesting that the reader buy the product. The difference between fresh advertisement and dull one lies in the approach to the subject. The lens trough which a writer sees a product may be the magnifying glass of the technician who sees every nut and bolt and can explain why each is important(Otto Kleppners Advertising Procedure 1966:99).

At this point, we are ready to begin to create the ad. Here we bridge the gap between visualization and concrete words and pictures –the creative leap. During this process, the creative team will suggest and reject numerous approaches. The basic appeal will be used to write many headlines. In turn, visual ideas that fit this headlines will be suggested. In some cases, the headline will result from an illustration. The creative team is a period of free association and brainstorming. No idea is too silly or farfetched not to be suggested. The crazy idea may be just the spark that leads to the illusive “great campaign.”(Russell and Verril : 1986:411).

As Wells and his colleagues’ state; the creative concept is the ads central idea that grabs your attention and sticks in your memory. A concern for creative thinking drives the entire field of advertising. Planning the strategy calls for imaginative problem solving. The research effort need to be creative and the printing and placing of ad in the media require creative thinking. Effective ad are well executed. That means the details the photography; setting, printing and the production values all have been fine tuned. Many good advertisers know that how you say something is just as important as what you say. What you say comes from strategy. Creativity and execution all contribute whether an ad wins an award.

Creativity is a crucial element in all advertising. However outdoor demands special creative skill because of unusual nature of the medium and its audience. The Institute of Outdoor Advertising(IOA)suggests out “...the fewer the words, the larger the illustration, the bolder the colors ,the simpler the background and the clearer the product identification the better the outdoor advertisement. The major challenge to the outdoor advertiser is ;developing meaningful message in the most concise way. One of the biggest short coming in outdoor creativity is attempting to take elements from other advertising media and translate them directly to outdoor. Advertisers often overlook the unique problems and opportunities associated with outdoor (Russell and Verrill:1986:287 &289).

Creative briefs ,then, are not easy to write. Potentially ,they can lead to great advertising ,but to do so they have to start out with that aim. As Steve Henry ,creative director, one of the top creative agencies in the UK,has said ,’ you should write the brief to change the world. This is ,obviously ,easier to do for an exiting product and a client who is committed to great things. One of the advertising worlds great problems is that it is too easy to produce routine creative briefs and routine advertising –and that both agency and client are often happy with that :its safer(Wells,et,al 1999.360).

A big idea that expresses an original advertising thought involves a mind shift. Instead of seeing the obvious, a creative idea looks at something in a different way, from a different angle. Finding the brilliant

creative concept entails what advertising giant Otto Kleppener called “the creative leap,” a process of jumping from the strategy statement to an original idea that conveys the strategy in an interesting way. Since the creative leap means moving from the safety of a predictable strategy statement to an unusual idea that hasn’t been tried before ,this leap is often referred to as the creative risk :If it hasn’t been tried before ,then it is a gamble .All creative ideas in advertising involve this element of risk, and that’s why copy –testing is used to test the idea before it runs ,to try to determine if it works (Wells,et ,al 2003:302).

CHAPTER THREE

3. Methodology of the Study

This chapter briefly presents methodology used in this study. It gives a brief explanation on which kinds of research methodologies were selected and used. Which sources were used, how the data was collected and analyzed.

3.1 .Study design

This study used descriptive content analysis with deep interview, primarily to find the intended result. Besides, experiences in the field of study and challenges of billboard advertising faced in the real working environment were also taken into consideration.

3.1.1 Deep Interview: these data gathering tool preferred because, it would enable to move ideas on maximum flexibility with the interviewee and get back vital information that feed the research strongly .Respondents are inclusive of pedestrians and car traffic who regularly or frequently exposed to billboard ad/s .The deep interview method mostly will focus on consumers of products advertised on billboard ad/s and the same question would be sent to both pedestrians and vehicular traffic

3.2. Study Area

This research was conducted in Addis Ababa city (Ethiopia), especially on the billboard ads those planted on the sides of major roads and roundabouts. As billboards ads are major advertising methods used to attract consumer’s attention to purchasing action. Addis Ababa city has been selected, because there are plenty of billboard ads planted in Addis Ababa on the sides of major roads and roundabouts.

3.3. Sampling technique and Sample size

The sampling technique used in this study was purposive sampling technique. It is an appropriate sampling technique which helps to find the required result. Accordingly, documentary pictures were shot from the selected sites and Deep interview was conducted based on the sampling technique chosen.

The sample size used in this research was varied according to the research methodology had been selected and used. . Respondents for both documentary photographs and deep interview selected in terms of their background knowledge, because this helped to gain concrete data for the research. The deep Interview was conducted with thirty individuals , ten from billboard ad designing agencies, ten with businesses, and the rest of ten were conducted with consumers , pedestrians and car traffic. The interview embraced those ad agency’s billboard designers, this includes, five designers, four consumers of products advertised through billboards as well as three from marketing professionals.

3.4 Method of Data Collection

Billboard advertisements those planted alongside major roads in Addis Ababa are primary sources of data for this study. The data sources were primarily inclusive of those ad designers well known in the city like Mono 2000, ADWEST, B.T Advert, Rainbow Digital advert, Mark Advert and I-Digital Print ...etc. This research thus examined how content of billboard (outdoor) advertising displayed on major roads in Addis Ababa to win purchasing action from consumers based on the guiding principles of Russell and Verill.

3.5. Documentary Photographs

This study was focused on examining graphic design, how products had been displayed and appearance of typography.To examine this basic construction inputs of billboard design twenty to thirty pictures of billboard ads had been shot from major sites selected such as, Bole road, Megenagna, CMC, Churchill Avenue, Piazza, and Mexico round abouts.Products and services to be shot will be categorized as follow:-

Table 1.1 Categories of products selected for analysis

Service giving organizations	Personal beauty care	Clothes and accessories	Home	Auto	Technical and occupational	Entertainment and leisure
These include billboard advertisements of bank, telecommunications, airlines, hospitals and the like.	When products include cosmetics, soap, perfumes and the like.	These include products ,clothes , underwear, shoes, and eyeglass...etc	When products include food or drink, household furniture, cleansing agents	All automobile vehicles, accessories , oil and maintenance and repairment	Technical and occupational products like building materials for home and office	Restaurants , bars and night clubs , alcoholic drink ,soft drink theater and film

3.5 Guiding Principles to analyze the content

The selection of the proper typeface is extremely important factor in outdoor advertising .Mixing typefaces and using overly, ornate designs can often reduce readership .Like wise, reverse type that is light colors against a dark background is usually more difficult to read .Rule of thumb in creating outdoor advertising is to save unique creative ideas for the illustration not the typeface. Outdoor advertising creativity is primarily concerned with three elements:-

Clear product identification .The trade mark may appear alone or on a package can it be immediately recognized? How clear it is at a distance? Large illustration size gets attention .The picture should tell the story colors should be bold and bright not pastel.

Short copy if any should be concise: the words are short the messages unambiguous to read and the copy out lowed .It must not take more than eight seconds .The typography should be large preferably heavy sanserif liberally spaced. The best color combination for legibility is black on yellow. Everything that enters in to an advertisement is a part of that advertisement and must help it to do its work. Learn how to pick out of the most important message about the product from the viewpoint of the buyer and to express it in a picture, and you will have learned to visualize.

CHAPTER FOUR

4.1 Data presentation and Discussion of findings

This study was intended to analyze contents of billboard advertisements in Addis Ababa with the aim to reveal how billboard ads were displayed, how messages have been designed, color choice and combinations, appeal strategies used, words and pictures, illustration methods employed to advertise products and services .The key findings of this study are presented and discussed in this chapter. This chapter embraces two sections. .First, findings of the study will be presented and then discussion of findings will follow on. Presentations of the findings are collected from Deep interview and Documentary photographs shot from selected sites. The sites where the documentary photographs collected include Bole road, Churchill Avenue, Megenagna, CMC, Haya Hulet and Mexico Roundabouts. Secondly, in a separate section, the findings presented and discussed deeply based on the research question designed .Due to lack of adequate study conducted in this particular area of content of billboard advertisements ;this study unable to associate the findings with other study results . Furthermore, discussion of results also elaborated with the guiding principles already set in the methodology part of this study and literature of Western Media studies.

4.2 Deep Interview and Documentary photograph Result Presentation

The messages appeared in the billboards selected were painted in association or with common agreement between the businesses who wish advertise products or ad agencies. Ten business centers and seven ad agencies have given the same feedback. As the feedbacks from the respondents indicate, effectiveness of messages painted in billboards ads were evaluated in terms of increased sells, comments those come to ad agencies as an appreciation from businesses. Businesses always likely to include messages those directly speak about the products and with greater details like mentioning benefits of products, brand name, product identification, which means all information about the products had been included. Ad agencies reflected that, when detailed messages inserted into the contents of billboards; they have a potential to destruct attention of consumers, particularly details of products /services with in the minimum seconds of exposure.

Results of Billboard ads appeared based on the evaluation Criteria like, message, Design, appeal strategies, photographs, visuals and illustrations. Accordingly, the result gained from one hundred sample billboards shot from the selected sites presented as follows.

Table 1.2 analysis of content of billboard advertisement

Elements of Evaluation	How they appear	What they lack
Message	-Highly Exaggerated -Couldn't prompt consumers to buying action -Long and detailed - Some appeared without messages and presented with mere pictures -Mostly appeared in Foreign language particularly English	-Preciseness, easily getting into viewers' attention. -Unable to deliver right information about the product /service being advertised. -They were not directed to the products or services being advertised.
Deign	-Most Billboards used copy of design of western media ads. Not localized to the Ethiopian context -Employed Complicated Design and -Covered with a lot of decoration	They lacked creativity ,mostly /usually used routine advertising technique ,familiar ways of design in both messages pictures rather than looking at towards attractive advertising mechanisms
Appeal Strategy	-used human photographs to create attractions ,particularly women's photographs ,in some of the ads mix of both sex/Men and women/	-Revolve around usual ways of advertising unable to cogitate to creative side of the advertising
photographs	used non related photographs .Photographs those inserted to the ads doesn't have connection to the product /service being advertised	-There is wide deficiency in associating the product with the message and photographs-
Illustrations	They were detailed .Add every information about the product or service being advertised	Vague ,couldn't not clearly express the product and service being advertised

Elements of evaluation those indicated in the Table 1.2 were key analysis areas of this study and the results in the table indicate as there is wide gap in creating effective ads those could able to sell the products in the broader market.

Concerning photographs, according to the respondent's human photographs were more attractive than any other photographs when they appeared in the billboards, particularly women's photographs. Sometimes ,women's photographs were used with no clear relation to the product or the service being advertised .Among eight photographs shot in front of Dembel City Center (Bole Road), four of them were appeared with the photographs of women's (Females), three of them were appeared with the combination of both female and male photographs., the remaining one photograph was appeared with two gentle men advertising clothes .Additionally, photographs those precisely explain the message were also highly attractive and catch the attention of consumers easily . It is indicated in **Picture 1.1 below.**



Picture 1.1 Advertisements Using Human photographs for Attraction

Among three photographs shot from Bole Road and one from Churchill Avenue confirmed the deep interview result mentioned in other section. An Owl with the eye glass but with none message (advertisement of **SUN OPTICS**), Cat offering massage therapy (advertisement of “**Aroma Massage Therapy Training Institute**”), and two “Surma”(one of Ethiopian Ethnic family) gentlemen with neck body Operating computer (advertisement of Internet) and chicken looking in surprise for the triangular egg were the most effective pictures those got high attention from customers ,because they explained the messages clearly as appeared on the billboard ads selected for the research . .Billboard ads with such content of creative art would work hard to prompt consumers to more purchasing action .According to the deep interview respondents, billboards with unique creative art work were attracted them to read and painted brand image in their mind.

As the deep Interview respondents and documentary photographs confirmed the majority of pictures those appeared in the billboard ads does not explain the message clearly .Designers and businesses put photographs those attract them not the consumers .Some of the documentary photographs were confirmed the deep interview responses. **Picture1.2** Aftron Electronics advertisement.



Picture1.2 Aftron Electronics Equipment Advertisement

As it was indicated in **picture 1.2** Electronic machineries on the left and a women on the right, it is evincive that the ad was vague and doesn't clearly explained what was intended to transmit to potential customers, because the product and photograph doesn't have clear relationship. The designer had not tried to create some kind of relationship the women had with the product, thus, sometimes photographs and the illustrations mismatched with the product being advertised.

Therefore, inconveniencies then happened in the need to tolerate the desires of clients. Clients or those business people who order ad agencies to create an ad were ordered them to insert something attractive, but practically they failed to do so.

As of ad agency designers suggested , billboard ads required to be simple to gain attention from the targeted viewers (pedestrian and Vehicular traffic), all the contents desired to be simple, for both literate and illiterate viewers .The messages are required to be vivid and clearer or easily get into sight from distance ,liberally spaced ,font sizes should also be bigger according to the sizes of billboards designed .Manipulation of words ,adding technical words, jargons could create inconveniencies to target viewers .Inserting unique ideas that would have the potential to grab viewers attention with in minimum seconds .**Picture 1.3** documentary photograph ,**Fly Emirates Airlines** Advertisement has confirmed deep interview responses ,the message won the ability to memorize the services which the Airlines offer to its customers “Every Time is the First Time.”



Picture 1.3 Advertisements of Fly Emirates Airlines

In this picture the contents were mixed appropriately, particularly the strategy used has the ability to hit target customer by repeatedly prompting customers to fly with Fly Emirates Airlines. Designers added to their responses color in billboards would likely destruct if it exceeds two or three colors combination, because the more the color used in it, the more it destructs the viewer's attention. Beyond its strategy of using memorable messages, this ad was bigger in size which is one method of gaining attention for billboard advertisements.

4.2 Discussion of Findings

The primary aim of this research was identifying the effectiveness of some common billboard advertisements found in Addis Ababa. Messages, illustrations, text sizes and shapes, color choice and combination were primary focus areas. In this section key elements of billboard design will be discussed in detail. This section thus embraces results of the deep interview and documentary photographs. The results of this study were gained from, ad agency designers, advertising professionals particular to billboard advertisement, consumers of billboard ad products, and businesses those advertise their products through billboards. In general the results received indicate as billboard ads contents poorly designed, had poor accent of design and as sometimes the photographs and messages mismatched with the product being advertised.

Messages those appear in billboards were detailed and break the boundary limit International Billboard ad designing Agencies set, for this matter the messages those appear in billboards were mostly packed with plenty of information about the product, filled with unnecessary details and unattractive by their nature. As the result gained from the collected data implied, most of billboard ads deployed in the city of Addis Ababa couldn't get proper attention from the passing viewers.

As cited by Hawariat (2008, 19), Daniel (2007, 25) says in Ethiopia was not without fault. Citing a 2000 publication from the Addis Ababa city Government Bureau of Commerce Industry and Tourism, she noted basic guidelines and identified the following problems.

- In general, Ethiopia has no advertising policy. So, the right of individuals, groups, the business sector and society can be abused by ill-conceived / indecent advertisements.
- Lack of creativity and in-depth research means that advertisements fall short of intended targets.
- Exaggeration causes misleading and boring ads.
- Significant number of ads that mimic a western style directly conflict with the Ethiopian cultures, Codes of conduct, missing audiences and customers.

It was found that billboards were giant advertising mediums today in the city of Addis Ababa and they are primary choices of businesses because of low expenses needed to advertise products those range from soft drinks, cloths, soap and types of service those Hotels, Airlines offer to their customers. Even tough as billboard ads increased with many numbers and preferred mediums to advertise products through in them in Addis Ababa they couldn't be effective as much as needed and expected. In general this would happen due to the following key

problems:-

- Ads filled with unnecessary detail about the product or service
- Appeal strategies used are poor and unable to build brand image
- Messages fail to communicate the rightful information about the product in which they communicate for.
- Most of the ads use women's image as decorative image with out any connection to the product/service advertised.
- It was found that in most billboard ads the message ,product and images were mismatched
- Billboard ads use mostly non related pictures with the product and message
- They lack to be creative and follow the sense of foreign advertisement principles
- Lack elements those make the advertisement attractive and appealing to the target customer

Except some purely designed billboard advertisements most of the ads failed to be effective, due to messages appeared in the billboards were presented in a detailed manner they lose attention from passing viewers (pedestrian and vehicular traffic).

Picture1.4 AL-SAM B-29 soap advertisement was a good supporting example to this result .In this ad around **fourteen** different products were displayed with the list of each soap ,brand name, even for some of them the benefits they offer also inserted as the message part of the product.



Picture1.4 ALSAM soap Advertisement, A women at the top wearing traditional cloth

This caused destruction for most of the viewers permanently exposed to this ad. Adhana Gidey suggests why this should happen (profession Marketing Expert).

Even though I am exposed plenty of times to this ad, I couldn't offer enough attention because, the messages appeared in this billboard ad were detailed so, it desired extra attention and consumed more time. Its design method was also poorly set up and executed. Its design, background, color and message all ordered in unattractive way, so I couldn't offer attention even though I exposed repeatedly. Different Colors used in this add but, they hadn't placed the products and messages in an appealing way. Particularly the women put over the ad with Ethiopian traditional cloth doesn't give sense because, the women can't make any action to show the product in use, so it destructs to see .I would be interested to see this ad if the messages are short and clear, help me to read from distance .I wish the sizes of the text appeared with the bigger font, if colors were bright and something added attractive that makes me stop to offer attention to the content in general (Adhana Gidey may, 10/2010).

With the exception of some billboard advertisements like the B-29 majority of ads presented boring and dull messages, and appeared with the unambiguous design. In this B-29 soap ad it is unclear why the designer put a women wearing traditional cloth over the billboard with irregular shape made. As a testimonial she didn't show any action while washing cloths or home appliances .The result also reflected³ when the messages presented in detail destruct and avoid attention. All the interviewee's responded, as billboard ad can be

effective when the messages should be short and bold because that offers attention while viewers passing away.

Scholars Russell and Verrill (1986) argue that, when messages in billboard ads presented in detailed way, they can lose attention of the viewers, because in nature billboard ads would be consumed out of home plantation so, the chance for looking billboards will be reduced if the messages are written with small fonts (hand writing sizes). Billboards advertisements should be short, concise, the words should be short, messages must be unambiguous and it must not take more than eight seconds to get the ads key idea. The typography should be large, preferably heavy sans serif as well as liberally spaced. The best color combination for legibility black on yellow.

From here the results implied, messages written on billboards were crowded with unnecessary details, font sizes were put inappropriate compared to the sizes of billboards. The sizes of texts were varied and not well mixed. For most viewers the design itself created struggle to read and understand messages from distance.

Every ad should lead the consumers to buying action consistently and must build unforgettable brand image, as Coca Cola advertisement did building brand image worldly. According to Roderick White (2000), *“argues advertising job is to help to communicate the consumers the relevant information about the brand and emotional values that the marketer wishes to associate with it, so as to make the brand as strong and attractive as possible. This involves, informing, persuading, and motivating, it also involves maintaining the established reputation or image of the brand, once it has developed its position in the market.”*

Most of the billboard contents appeared and displayed in Addis Ababa couldn't clearly communicate the relevant information about the product in a vivid manner about the product identity as well as the brand image. The messages had no consistency, messages those appeared this year may be changed after two years when the ad damaged or fade out and needs to be replaced by a new one. This also created limitless effect in building long time brand image. So, the results indicated as the messages of billboards unable to transmit enough memorable product messages. The results consistently indicated, the billboard advertisements lacked effectiveness in catching the viewers' attention as well as building brand image.

As it was indicated in the book Roderick White wrote, Professor Ehrenberg has suggested, “an important role for advertising is to enable the brand to say, “Look' Here I am.”. Advertising is the means to build strong brand and to create unshakable consumer loyalties to the brand. The job of competitive advertising is indeed, to seduce one's brand loyal users and to persuade them to become loyal users of ones own brand. It is possible that this was once a valid analysis of what happened in the market place, in the days when there was far less advertising, far few brands, and consumers were far less experienced in dealing with the advertising than they now are now.

Building unshakable consumer loyalty requires a mind that is creative, filled with persuading ability and working at the product or service advertised in a new angle and visualizing the product with a new insight. Here, the results indicated billboard ads concerned about temporary sales campaign which may last inside one year or two years time interval. Most of the billboard ads lack such quality in the city of Addis Ababa. This kind of culture did not developed in the billboard designing agencies in general and as business owners in particular.

Apart from attracting attention, it is cherished for pictures to have some kind of relevance to the product or service in which the ad intended to communicate for. Billboard ads those planted alongside major roads in Addis Ababa, sometimes unable to associate pictures with the product. This also found to be major obstacle to offer the right information to customers and it will have impact in building long term brand image. Roderick White argues; it is probable that visuals are more important as attention grabbers than words, especially for print ads, it is the ability of the advertiser to create fascinating, compelling, unusual but relevant pictures that will often make the difference. We are psychologically more responsive to pictures than words and we can take them in much more quickly.

In billboard ads displayed in Addis Ababa there were plenty of mismatches of photographs with the product or service being advertised. In fact visuals and photographs have innumerable impact on the viewers attention. This could be achieved through selecting impact pictures and photographs to the particular product being advertised. Some ads those planted alongside major roads in Addis Ababa don't assume the way how to build long term brand image and creating impact through pictures.

Results reflected, using non related pictures or service advertised is usual in the city of Addis Ababa. This was the result of business owners wrong understanding which they have about billboard advertisements. Most billboard advertisements used non-essential pictures which did not match with the product or service being advertised. Due to such poor design, viewers mostly could not understand what kind of product or service is intended to be advertised. Ads with such content lead to misunderstanding because they were poorly designed, photographs and messages mismatched and lack creativity. Apart from this, it was found that, incapability of billboard designing agencies and business to create pictures, messages and colors those would able to catch viewer's attention with the messages directly associated to the product.

Most of the contents of billboard ads concerning photographs use human photographs to advertise products particularly women's photographs. The results indicated, from one hundred billboard ads shot from selected sites

in Addis Ababa. As it was found on the research conducted by Hawariat (2008, 45), the majority of women's in billboard ads didn't have any relationship with the product or service advertised. Rather they were depicted merely as decorative object to attract attention. **Picture1.5 and 1.6** posted below confirmed this result.



Picture1.5 Aftron Electronics Advertisement



Picture 1.6 Yoye Two 7 car Rent Advertisement

Electronic equipments advertisements shown in picture 1.5 indicate as women's photographs only used to attract attention viewers without any association to the product or service being advertised. Women put on the side of the product were used as a decoration object or merely used for the purpose of attraction. The Women had no relationship with the product as a user or seller (business owner). The perception and understanding of how to build long term brand image in customers mind broken with the short term business oriented campaigns. Rainbow Advert designer and marketing expansion head Afework suggests why women's photographs used widely without any relationship to the product.

"Women's photographs were used widely in billboard ads we created but, those pictures of women were merely intended to attract attention of the consumers, particularly women's photographs were used without any connection they have with the product /service being advertised. If you look at every billboard ad planted in Addis Ababa city, except few of them have excluded human photographs, especially women's", (Afework Techane April 15, 2010).

Contents of billboards in Addis Ababa widely displayed with women's photographs, some others used mixed pictures of both Men and Women. Designers and businesses used women's as a decorative image to the product or service advertised. As the results indicated, most billboards ads doesn't explain the message clearly because designers and businesses included what attracts them not the consumers. The findings implied, they didn't create association the products have with the consumers. From the Billboards selected from the study sites, created huge misconception on the target consumers. **Picture1.5 Aftron Electronics** and **Picture 1.6 ; Yoye two 7 Car Rent** confirmed this result. On these billboard ads the pictures and the product doesn't have any relationship. The women's were added as a decorative object to the product.

Picture 1.5 intended to advertise electronics equipment on bigger sizes used a woman on the left and electronic machineries on the left. The ad was vague for the interviewee who selected to offer suggestion on the particular ad. Woman photograph in the billboard appeared with smiley face, but the woman doesn't have any relationship to the product.

Estifanos Gedelu, expert in advertising and billboard designing suggested, *"The products being advertised used pictures which were non-related to the product. I am always concerned about the way billboards ads were designed, printed and displayed. I believe the ad agencies must think on how they should make the ads creative, more effective and attractive."*

Girum Beyene, advertising expert suggested, *"I believe most ads were overlooked by the consumers, because the product they intended to advertise and the messages accompanied the product were mismatched. The ad agencies, businesses and ad experts should collaborate to make the billboard ads more understandable and clearer to the targeted audience."*

The result reflected, billboard ads displayed on major roads in Addis Ababa wrongly understood and perceived by the consumers, because the messages, the products and the pictures used were mismatched. Such misunderstanding by the consumers happened due to poor design of contents in the ads, less ability of designers

to match the product with photographs .While they struggle to gain attention temporarily, the businesses lost the target strategy which was selling their product.

As Russell and Verill (1986) argue, a rule of thumb in creating out door advertising is to save unique creative ideas for the illustration not the typefaces .For billboard ads the primary reason not to be overlooked by target viewers (both pedestrian and Vehicular traffic), is including unique ideas with simple design two to three color combinations and creativity would help to improve viewers attention to billboard ads.

On the billboards selected for analysis, it was found that inserting creative art work would be valuable in the campaign to build long term brand image .**Picture 1.7** manifested, as soon as photographs and messages matched in the content, they created significant impact .Some even deserved long term brand image building .This has been found in the ads like, Sun Optics and Deluxe Furniture billboard ads posted below.



Picture 1.7 Sun Optics and Deluxe Furniture Advertisements

These two billboard ads attained and deserved long term brand image building .The results indicated, customers loved these ads most .There is no need of writing illustration about product advertised and beyond their success they used creative photographs to advertise products .This reflected, brand image built in the minds of customers.

The brands images were planted very well in the minds of potential customers. Billboards with such content also won high attention from viewers because, the design was clear, the messages were short, used creative art work like the one in the Sun Optics advertisements, an Owl with the eye glass. In this ad creative art was used and it won the attention of viewers because, when men or women wear eye glass it is usual but, when an Owl took the role of human being it deviated from the familiar one. As the results showed, those ads included creative art work, illustrations, photographs and clearer messages potentially won the attention of customers.

Billboard ads those did not embrace creative art work, products, photographs and messages mismatched mostly lead to misunderstanding. The contents of billboards shot from selected sites reflected this result.

Mesele Wogayehu ,B.T Marketing Head ,reflected , “on regular basis I observed those ads which were displayed with the messages, products and photographs were totally mismatched. This made the billboard ads ineffective and unprofessional. He also added, When the client/business/ come to our agency to advertise their products they order us to put every message in to the billboards. whatever the designer believed to be attractive, while trying to respect the client interest we miss purpose of the ad, then this could lead to misunderstanding of viewers .It was usual to observe those billboard advertisements where photographs and illustrations mismatched with the product being advertised .Most of the time, such inconveniencies happen in the rush to fulfill the desires of clients .So, I believe this should have a limitless impact in the contents of billboard ads”,(Mesele Wogaheyu ” ,April 17/2010).

During designing billboards ad agencies and businesses did not offer valuable attention to the viewers need and level of understanding .For effective selling , it is better to understand the desires of customers to create billboards .

Mesfin Arega , Manager and Creative Designer of Mesfin Advert suggests how to create billboard contents :-“All the contents of billboard ads , messages, design and photographs required to offer considerable attention to the level of understanding customers had .They must able to attain simplicity ,this simplicity should

to embrace both literate and illiterate viewers .Inserting creative art work ,unique ideas will improve the level of attraction the ads had .Billboard ads those planted in the city of Addis Ababa did not seem to consider the level of understanding customers have inline to their education as well as their background. Most of designs copied the culture of western media, with out modification and making improvement to fit with the Ethiopian context (Mesfin, April 27 2010).”

While studying contents of billboard advertisements the value of color was not underestimated. Color has vast importance to the design of billboard contents .For most of the ads color depends on the logo of businesses. As the results indicated ,there were businesses those have their own logo color .This includes Dashen Beer, Coca Cola, Pepsi, and Ethiopian Commercial Bank ...etc were some of them .Apart from this, any business that come ad agency to order to advertise products will prefer color that attracts them .The following table indicated ad agency and customers color preference:

Table 1, 3 color preference by customers and ad agencies

Ad Agency Name	Suggestion(color choice)	Customers color preference
Mono 2000	Except businesses those have their own color ,the rest will depend on the choice of clients /businesses/	Bold,Bright,Blue,Red and Yellow
Mark Advert	Total Red and white and customers choice	
Rainbow Digital Advert	Any color but not exceeding two and three color combination	
Mesfin Digital Advert	Total Red with Bold yellow color	

Even though there were divided preferences observed in both ad agencies and customers, colors had not been underestimated in the contents of billboards .Viewers attracted to what attracts them, although only color did not have value without inserting creativity and creating contrast.Billboards those planted alongside major roads in Addis Ababa had lacked uniformity and design similarity . As the results indicated, color variety had created a huge impact on the product preference and purchasing. This reflected choice of color had tremendous impact in the minds of customers.

In billboard ads colors used to attract attention .According to scholars, Wells, Burnett and Moriarty argue ,color were used in advertising to attract attention, provide realism, establish mood, and build brand identity .Research has consistently shown that ads with color get more attention than do ads with out color .Realism is important for certain messages strategies where full-color photographs may be essential ,some things just don't look right in black and white ;pizza, flowers garden ,beef stroganoff and rainbow for example. Color is needed to do justice to the content. **Picture 1.7** indicated the value of color.



Picture1.7: Universal Food Complex Advertisement.

Results reflected colors without contrast hadn't made an impact .While designing billboards it is essential to look at if contrast is achieved .It was found that ,colors played a great role in advertising through billboards .An advertisement with black and white color wouldn't seem enter into the market in the age of digital advertising expanded and the technology permits to mix plenty of color choices .Black and white couldn't able to show color of flowers, baked bread, any kind of food dishes and the like. The importance of colors in such products

magnified the necessity of color to advertise products through billboards.

Results demonstrated, texts were mostly written in foreign language particularly English and they were too long, and detailed. In some cases they were little displayed with little size than the size most scholars argue. According to Wells and his colleagues noted out; the most important feature of billboard is conspicuous; it is noticeable, it bursts in to the view. The illustration should be an eye stopper .What makes something visible? Size is one factor .It offers a grand scale, much larger than life, there fore can create tremendous impact .In fact there were a lot of billboards with much bigger size, but the main problem remains with text sizes, they were not easily identifiable or get in to attention from distance .Thus, this was a big quality most billboards required .

Texts /illustrations/ did not clearly express the product had been overlooked by targeted viewers. Out of one hundred billboards shot the research analysis, relevant texts and sizes also mismatched, with such inappropriately designed billboard advertisements the campaign to win over the competitive market seems difficult. There was wide inconsistency with what scholars argue to incorporate in to billboards and ad agencies had been doing. In some billboard advertisements appeal strategies used were highly well-matched in manifesting benefits customers' desire from the products .Billboard ads have the ability to motivate customers by appealing to their problems, desires and goals .Documentary photographs indicated in **picture 1.8 and 1.9** confirmed the results obtained from respondents of deep interview and documentary photographs .Advertisements of Matador Radial Tyres and Egypt Air .



Picture 1.8 Matador Radial Tyre **1.9** Egypt Air Advertisement Advertisement

Creativity was one of crucial element missed in billboard advertisements planted alongside major roads in Addis Ababa. As otto kleppners Advertising Procedure suggests (1999), the creative essence in writing copy is to see a product in a fresh way; to express the possible effect of the product upon the reader; to explain things in a way that causes the reader to view it with new understanding and appreciation .Most advertisements end by asking or suggesting that the reader buy the product .Billboard ads followed familiar way of expressing the product ; there was lack of seeing a product in a fresh angle and insufficiency of advertising agencies to create ads in a newly fashioned way.

Creativity is valuable aspect in billboard advertising. As the result reflected from billboards shot for the analysis, there was less creativity in the billboards planted along side major roads in Addis Ababa. Scholars Wells, Burnett and Moriarty, argue, creative briefs, and then are not easy to write.Potentially they can lead to great advertising ,but to do so they have to start out with that aim ,as Steve Henry ,creative Director, in one of top creative agencies in the United Kingdom(UK),has said ,you should write the brief to change the world. This is obviously, easier to do far an escaping product and a client who is committed to great things. One of the advertising world great problems is that it is too easy to produce routine creative briefs and routine advertising and both agent and client are often happy with that it is safer.

In billboard ads planted alongside major roads In Addis Ababa there was lack of creativity. They followed direct delivery of message of the product rather than inserting and cogitate to the creative side of advertising. The study indicated, in creating billboard ads, ad agencies and creative teams of ads should work hard to come up with something fashioned but, could able to sell the product or service effectively. As the results revealed, in Addis Ababa, there were some billboards achieved creativity in the contents as it is indicated in **Picture1.10, 1.11 and 1.12.**



Picture 1.10 computer Advertisement

Picture 1.11 LioPrinting Advertisement

Picture 1.12 Aroma Massage Therapy Training ad

These pictures attracted more attention of customers while passing because of their creative essence and character. On the major roads of Addis Ababa selected for analysis, the chance to see with such creative design billboards was very rare and limited.

Esayas ad agency owner, Billboard design expert, *“Billboard ads with good design can easily win the customers attention, because the ads easily painted in the minds of customers. .Purchasing action from the customers is a temporary objective needed to be achieved, but brand image building is the long term impact needed by businesses .Therefore, working to plant brand image is the ultimate objective every business and ad agency should focus.”*

CHAPTER FIVE

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

This chapter embraces ending statements about the study findings, and then offers conclusion and draws recommendations based on the results discussed in the previous chapter. Mainly this chapter helps to find where to use the results, indicates how to resolve problems for questions raised on billboard advertisement content.

5.1 Conclusions

Through using Qualitative content analysis this study intended to analyze contents of billboard advertisements displayed in Addis Ababa, particularly from selected sites like Bole Road(Africa Avenue),Churchill Avenue,Megenagna,Haya Hulet,and Mexico round about. The contents analyzed include, messages, photographs, illustrations, text, design, and color were some of them. These elements of contents of billboard advertisements broadly and widely discussed in association with other studies conducted in analyzing contents of billboards in other countries and guidelines scholars set in producing effective billboard ads.

As the result showed, billboard ads located in major ways in Addis Ababa, most ads used long and detailed messages to express the product, which were not easily consumed by target viewers. Every character and information about the product was included to the ad, such poor design contributed for billboard ads to be overlooked by target viewers. Messages included in all billboards were too long, detailed, and vague and were not easily understandable.

Due to detailed and vagueness of billboard messages they unable to communicate the rightful information about the product or service being advertised .Apart from this, the messages were not clearly seen from distance as they were targeted to the eyes of passing customers. Texts/illustrations/ did not clearly explain the product or service have wider opportunity to be out off sight due to their smaller size .Particularly such advantages will increase where billboards crowded and difficult to read and look them while passing away. In some of the billboards, relevant texts and illustrations were missed with such inappropriately designed billboards. Advertisements the campaign to win over the competitive market seems difficult. There was wide inconsistency with what scholars argue to incorporate to billboard content and ad agencies will be doing.

Results reflected billboards mostly used photographs and pictures those were non- related to the product or service being advertised, these kinds of advertisements were usually observed on the major sites selected. Some billboard ads covered none-essential photographs and pictures which did not match with the product or service advertised. In case of this most viewers unable to understand what kind of product intended to be advertised. Ads with such poor choice and design of photographs had led to misunderstanding by customer's .On the billboard ads selected for analysis such inconveniences happened due to insufficiency of billboard ad designing agencies

and businesses in creativity to produce ads with photographs and message matched with the product advertised.

Lack of creativity was another result gained from this study, most of the contents were found less creative. They followed direct delivery of messages rather than inserting creativity and ruminating to looking at the product from a new angle.

In relation to using non-related pictures in billboard advertisements, human photographs were found more attractive when they appeared in billboard ads, particularly women's photographs. This has been confirmed by documentary photographs shot from selected sites, with out any relation to the product women's photographs were mostly used in billboard ads. This kind of wrong perception led most customers to misunderstanding the product and service being advertised.

Large proportion of billboard advertisements planted along side major roads required simplicity, clarity and attractiveness. One of the methods used to attract attention was creating contrast through color, in most billboard ads there were problems associated in creating contrast. This study indicated, major problems related to some common contents of billboard ads planted in Addis Ababa in relation to picture usage, message writing, color combination and the design methods used. To the end, this study offers recommendations which may help to devise mechanisms to solve problems associated to content of billboard advertisements.

5.2 Recommendations

Advertising is a key force to move customers to buying action. To be effective in the market the ad produced desired to have, motivating, persuading and compelling character. Whatever the medium particularly to billboard ads, design of the elements like messages, creativity and benefit the ad will promise to customers could have immense value to the ads effectiveness. Billboard advertisements elements such as, messages, photographs, creativity, color and appeal strategies used are primary mechanisms to get attention of customers. The elements mentioned above are very key to billboard advertisements, so these elements required to be studied carefully to produce effective, catchy and billboard ads those could make appropriate impacts on the consumers.

This study was conducted to find mainly problems related to billboard advertisement. It was also aimed at finding strong sides billboard contents have in designing. As the result reflected, on the analysis part billboards those displayed in Addis Ababa, lack creativity, use detailed messages, most of them use human photographs with out any relation to the product/service advertised. Furthermore, problems were also found that with relation to creating contrast through using colors. In general the Ethiopian billboard advertisement in case of Addis Ababa;

- Some billboard advertisement have long term brand image building as a result they did not insert detail of the product to the ad.
- There are number of billboard ads use women's photograph with out any relation to the product or service advertised.
- The message accompanied with the product were long, detailed and use straightforward product advertisement.

Thus, the following recommendations are made based on the findings of this study:-

5.3 The Businesses

- They should offer focus to the product and make order targeted to the product quality and benefit the product will promise to customers to make the message short and appealing to the customers.
- Avoid incorporating detailed message while they order ad agencies.
- Examine how their advertisements can win customers attention in the competitive market by offering special attention to design of photographs, creativity and appeal strategies used in general.
- Need to be focused in building long term brand image.
- They should avoid packing the ad with detailed messages.

5.4 Advertising Agencies

- Guide and help businesses/clients/ to effective advertising through offering constructive suggestions while businesses order them to advertise through billboards.
- Signpost how to produce creative, catchy and easily identifiable billboard ads.
- Stop to use copy of western media advertisement style and try to stick to the own creative works.
- Avoid using photographs and pictures non related to the product /service advertised.
- Try to create ads product, message and photographs fine tuned and matched.
- Create contrast in every ad through using colors.
- They must look at ad design guidelines set by scholars.
- They should get training and skill-gap filling through regular training

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