



**Midlands State University**

**Established 2000**

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**FACULTY OF COMMERCE**

**DEPARTMENT OF MARKETING MANAGEMENT**

**INVESTIGATING THE EFFECT OF BILLBOARD ADVERTISING ON COMPANY PERFORMANCE. A CASE OF SABLE PRESS PRIVATE LIMITED.**

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**THIS DISSERTATION IS SUBMITTED TO THE MIDLANDS STATE UNIVERSITY IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR A BACHELOR OF COMMERCE HONOURS DEGREE IN MARKETING MANAGEMENT**

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## **DEDICATION**

To my parents.

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I would like to express my utmost gratitude to God, the creator of heaven and earth for the life he has given me and the many opportunities he has granted me in life. I would like to also extend my profound gratitude to my academic supervisor for her support, patience, commitment and guidance throughout this research, Sable Press management, Sable Press corporate clients and the general public for their support and cooperation throughout this research. Exceptional thanks also goes to MSU marketing management department and my family for being there for me, supporting and encouraging me in all my endeavors. Special thanks also goes to my friends for their continued encouragement and support.

## **ABSTRACT**

The billboard as a medium of advertising has caught up well with advertisers in Zimbabwe and the general public as well. Its main aim is to communicate with road users, pedestrians and drivers. It also aims at reminding customers about a product, attract attention and make them more aware of a product leading to increased purchases. The research was carried out as an investigation on the effect of billboard advertising on company performance focusing more on sales, market share and customer perception at Sable Press Private Limited as they have intentions of adding billboard advertising to their marketing tools. The research aimed to determine if billboard advertising would enhance the sales of Sable Press, to find out if billboard advertising would enhance the market share of Sable Press and also to establish the influence of billboard advertisements on customer perceptions. Major literature came from various billboard advertising authors, this major literature focused more on the effect of billboard advertising on sales, market share and customer perception. The study used descriptive research design to try and get an understanding of findings such as explanations from respondents as to why they would behave in a certain way towards an advert placed on a billboard as well as the different attitudes they had towards a company which advertised on billboards. The researcher also used exploratory research design to shed more light on the real nature of the problem of Sable Press's poor performance in terms of its sales and its market share as well as suggest possible solutions to new ideas. It also helped the researcher to gain ideas and insights into the effectiveness of billboard advertising. To capture all the desired data for the research, questionnaires and interview guides were designed to cover variables in the conceptual framework. Questionnaires were distributed to the target market which is Sable Press corporate clients and the general public. The interview guides were used to carry out face to face and telephone interviews on Sable Press management staff. The researcher used a sample of 60 questionnaires and 4 interview guides and the data was presented in tabular form as well as on graphs. The major findings showed that most of the respondents would buy a product or service advertised on a billboard and the respondents would also move from one company to the other after being exposed to a billboard advert, also customer perceptions towards a company and its offerings were influenced by billboard adverts. The research concluded that if billboard advertising was to be given a chance, it would indeed enhance a company's performance which in this research refers to the sales and market share of Sable Press and that billboard adverts influenced customer perceptions. The research also recommended Sable Press to consider adding billboard advertising to their marketing tools as it would provide a significant improvement to their challenge of poor sales and low market share.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

|  |           |
|--|-----------|
| Release form.....  | i         |
| Approval form .....  | ii        |
| Dedication .....   | iii       |
| Acknowledgements.....  | iv        |
| Abstract .....   | v         |
| Table of contents.....   | vi        |
| List of appendices .....   | viii      |
| List of figures .....  | ix        |
| List of tables of contents .....   | x         |
| <b><u>CHAPTER ONE: GENERAL INTRODUCTION</u></b> .....                        | <b>1</b>  |
| 1.0 Introduction.....  | 1         |
| 1.1 Background to the problem .....  | 1         |
| 1.2 Statement of the problem.....  | 3         |
| 1.3 Objectives .....   | 3         |
| 1.3 Research questions .....   | 3         |
| 1.4 Significance of the study .....  | 3         |
| 1.5 Delimitations.....   | 4         |
| 1.6 Assumptions .....  | 4         |
| 1.8 Limitations .....  | 5         |
| 1.9 Summary.....   | 5         |
| <b><u>CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW</u></b> .....                           | <b>6</b>  |
| <u>2.0 Introduction</u> .....  | 6         |
| 2.1 Defining billboard advertising .....                                     | 6         |
| 2.2 Effect of billboard advertising on sales .....                           | 8         |
| 2.3 Effectiveness of billboard advertising on a company’s market share ..... | 12        |
| 2.4 Effect of billboard advertising on customer perception .....             | 17        |
| 2.5 Summary.....   | 22        |
| <b><u>CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY</u></b> .....                      | <b>23</b> |
| 2.0 Introduction.....  | 23        |
| 3.1 Research design .....  | 23        |
| 3.2 Target population .....  | 24        |

|   |           |
|---|-----------|
| 3.3 Sampling.....   | 24        |
| 3.4 Sampling size .....   | 25        |
| 3.5 Sample frame .....  | 26        |
| 3.6 Research instruments.....   | 26        |
| 3.7 Data collection procedure.....  | 27        |
| 3.8 Data sources.....   | 27        |
| 3.9 Validity and reliability.....   | 28        |
| 3.10 Data presentation and analysis tools .....   | 28        |
| <b><u>CHAPTER FOUR: DATA PRESENTATION ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS.....</u></b>    | <b>30</b> |
| 4.0 Introduction.....   | 30        |
| 4.1 Response rate .....   | 30        |
| 4.2 Determining if billboard advertising enhances the sales of Sable Press .....          | 31        |
| 4.3 Determination of whether billboard ads enhance the market share of Sable Press; ..... | 33        |
| 4.4 Influence of billboard advertising on customer perceptions; .....                     | 36        |
| <b><u>CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS .....</u></b>                | <b>40</b> |
| 5.0 Summary.....  | 40        |
| 5.1 Conclusions.....  | 40        |
| 5.2 Recommendations .....   | 41        |
| 5.3 Recommendation for further research.....  | 43        |
| <b><u>REFERENCE LIST.....</u></b>   | <b>44</b> |



## LIST OF APPENDICES

|   |    |
|---|----|
| APPENDIX A: LETTER.....                           | 49 |
| APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR MANAGERS.....     | 50 |
| APPENDIX C: CORPORATE CUSTOMER QUESTIONNAIRE..... | 51 |
| APPENDIX D: GENERAL PUBLIC QUESTIONNIARE.....     | 53 |

## **LIST OF FIGURES**

|   |    |
|---|----|
| Figure 4.1 Variables used to determine if billboard ad enhances sales.....                        | 32 |
| Figure 4.2 Variables used to determine if billboard ad enhances market share.....                 | 34 |
| Figure 4.3 Variables used to determine the influence of billboard ads on customer perception..... | 36 |

**LIST OF TABLES**

Table 4.1 Response Rate for questionnaires.....30  
Table 4.2 Response Rate for interviews.....30

# CHAPTER ONE: GENERAL INTRODUCTION

## 1.0 Introduction

The research tried to get a clear understanding of the idea of using billboards as a medium of advertising. As the researcher conducted the research, the main aim was to find if billboard advertising would have a positive impact on the performance of a company. The researcher carried out an investigation on the effectiveness of billboard advertising in Zimbabwe. The research was done for Sable Press Private Limited as they had intentions of adding billboard advertising to their marketing tools in trying to improve the performance of the company in terms of its sales as well as its market share.

## 1.1 Background to the problem

Dominick (2007) asserts that advertising is any form of non-personal presentation and promotion of ideas, goods and services, usually paid for, by an identified sponsor. Sadeh et al (2013) define billboards as large outdoor erections found mostly in high traffic areas such as alongside busy roads and are used as an advertising medium. Geek (2013) define billboard advertising as the use of large signs along roadways to advertise a wide range of products, services and causes. Billboard advertising can thus be defined as a paid form of non-personal presentation and promotion of ideas, goods and or services by an identified sponsor through the use of large outdoor erections found mostly in high traffic areas such as alongside busy roads.

A company can either perform positively or negatively depending on how the company responds to the strategic plans. Company performance in this research was measured through how well the organisation was doing in regard to its sales and market share.

The concept of billboard advertising has been researched by other various researchers who include Bhargava and Donthn (1999) who in their research found out that outdoor advertising has the ability to quickly generate sales responses, but that location and other marketing mix variables are moderating factors. Taylor and Taylor (1994) and Taylor (1997) highlighted that billboards provide a wide range of potentially useful information to consumers. They concluded that small businesses would be harmed by a lack of access to billboards. These researchers managed to come up with effects of billboard advertising independently on sales of a company or brand visibility, however none of these authors managed to look broadly into the performance of the company as a whole in terms of sales and market share. Therefore the researcher took the chance to look more into how

billboard advertising affects the performance of a company as a whole, with the performance measures being the sales of a company as well as the market share.

According to the sales figures made available to the researcher from December 2012, sales recordings showed that the average weekly sales figures for 2012 were US\$36106, for 2013 the weekly average sales reduced to US\$28885 and for 2014 the weekly average sales figures further reduced to US\$24311 showing an average decrease of 18% sales per week after every year. With information provided from the company data base of customers in 2007-2008 the company had an average of 1500 customers, 2009-2010 the company had 1300 customers, 2011-2012 the company had an average of 1150 customers and from 2013-2014 the client database showed an average of 1200 customers with only a few of these clients being regular customers. On average from 2007 up to 2014 the company lost 13% of its market share after every two years. These problems triggered the researcher to work on a research that tried to find out if billboard advertising could in anyway improve the performance of Sable Press in terms of brand visibility, market share and sales, since the company management once raised a concern of engaging in billboard advertising.

The problem of poor company performance in terms of sales and market share started in 2007, when the company moved from Msasa Park, and started operating in Blufhill Industrial Park. From the internal surveys carried out within the organisation in 2008 results showed that players in the printing sector had increased from eight players to 14 players automatically showing a rise in competition for customers.

Players in the printing sector were also engaging in more aggressive advertising for example Print Works advertised in the popular Marketers Association of Zimbabwe magazine known as Zim Marketer where more than 200 companies advertised and this resulted in Print works getting more coverage via the magazine platform. Also competitors like Print Dynamics as well as Print Works used billboards as an advertising platform and they are still using billboards even up to now. Print Works and OT Printers also advertised in newspapers were as Sable Press did not engage in much advertising. The research pursues to assess whether Sable Press can enhance its performance in terms of its sales and market share if it is to use billboard advertising.

## **1.2 Statement of the problem**

Sable Press has been facing a challenge in its performance in respect to its sales as well as its market share. This is seen by the 18% decrease of the sales values of the company annually and the 13% loss in market share after every two years. In this research the researcher tried to find out if using billboards as an advertising medium would in any way help enhance the organisations performance.

## **1.3 Objectives**

- To determine if billboard advertising can enhance the sales of Sable Press.
- To find out if billboard advertising may increase the market share of Sable Press.
- To establish the influence of billboard advertisements on customer perceptions.

## **1.3 Research questions**

In conducting the research, the researcher was guided by the following questions;

- What effect does billboard advertising have on the sales volumes of a company?
- What influence does billboard advertising have on the market share of a company?
- Does billboard advertising have an influence on customer perceptions?

## **1.4 Significance of the study**

- To the business world

Findings from this study would show the benefits of using billboards as advertising tools. Business and town planners also got information which could be used in formulating town policies and for planning purposes.

- To the Company

Sable Press would be able to make a decision on whether to engage in billboard advertising based on this research's recommendations thereby stating the exact effects of billboard advertising. To know the benefits of billboard advertising and how it would enhance the performance of the company. The research also tried to change the stereotype that billboard advertising is an expense to the company, but instead view it as a potential investment for the future success of the organisation thereby helping in decision making.

- To the university

Midlands State University would be able to use the research findings as a reference to future studies in the subject of advertising, particularly under the sub-topic of billboard advertising.

- To the student

The research helped the student appreciate how to research and present information whilst coming up with strategic business decisions concerning the effects of billboard advertising on organisational performance. The research was done in partial fulfilment of a Bachelor of Commerce (Honours) Degree in Marketing Management at Midlands State University.

### **1.5 Delimitations**

- The study focused on billboard advertising, and how it affects the performance of a company in terms of sales, market share and customer perception.
- The research focused mainly on participants in Harare.
- Study participants included organisations stakeholders like the procurement department or marketing department as well as the general public and also Sable Press management.
- The research also made use of secondary data from 2007 to 2014.

### **1.6 Assumptions**

- All the information that was obtained would be a true representation of facts provided by the respondents.
- The environmental factors mostly the economic factors, the legal factors and the political environment remained the same during the period the study was undertaken.
- The research assumed that billboard advertising positively affected the performance of a company that is it would enhance the sales and market share of Sable Press.
- The researcher had most of the resources required to carry out the study.
- The organisation remained in operation during the period the research was carried out.

## **1.8 Limitations**

- The participants might provide false data as responses which can affect the overall result of the research.
- Some participants might not be willing to participate in interviews which will be done as part of sourcing information about the research thus affecting the sample size.
- The use of questionnaires as a research instrument may be a barrier to getting proper information, because some participants might fail to understand that which is asked, and some may be ignorant to some questions.
- The research findings are from one city which is Harare and the findings may somehow be different if obtained from the other cities.

## **1.9 Summary**

Sable Press has been faced with the problem of poor performance in terms of its sales and market share and from the internal record and surveys carried out at the company the problem started in 2007. The researcher therefor carried out an investigation on the effectiveness of billboard advertising on company performance focusing more on sales, market share and customer perception at Sable Press Private Limited as they had intentions of adding billboard advertising to their marketing tools. The research aimed to determine if billboard advertising would enhance the sales of Sable Press, to find out if billboard advertising would enhance the market share of Sable Press and also to establish the influence of billboard advertisements on customer perceptions. This research was of significance to Sable Press, to the business world, to Midlands State University as well as to the researcher. There were some delimitations to the research such as that the research focused mainly on participants in Harare. Among the researcher's assumptions, the researcher assumed that billboard advertising positively affected the performance of a company meaning it would enhance the sales and market share of Sable Press. The next chapter looked at the various authors who contributed substantially to the subject of billboard advertising and its influence on sales, market share and customer perception. Major literature towards the research was also discussed in this next chapter.



## **CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.0 Introduction**

This chapter details views of various advertising authors, specifically billboards regarding the framework of billboard advertising from related literature obtained from text books and journals. This part of the research focuses more on concepts from other authors who contributed either positively or negatively to the idea of billboard advertising and its influence on the performance of a company in terms of sales and market share. The researcher examined literature so as to find that which supports the idea of billboard advertising having a positive influence on the performance of a company and then criticize those authors who said otherwise towards the topic under study. Authors who contributed substantially to the concept of billboard advertising and company performance include Kotler, Tendick, Rempur, Woodside, Okoro, Simcore, and Plumely.

### **2.1 Defining billboard advertising**

Merriam-Webster Dictionary (2011) defined advertising as the act of bringing something to the consideration of the general public usually by paid broadcasts. Entrepreneur (2011) supported Webster dictionary by defining advertising as a way of bringing everyone's attention to your company, normally driven by the need to push sales of a company by selling a company's offerings, via different types of advertising media which include print and broadcast announcements. Advertising grants information about a company's offerings directed to the company's target audience. O'Barr (2010), carried out a research and found out that the major aspect in advertising history was in the technique put to use, whereby there was a change from face to face marketing messages to the mannered, repeated, reproduced adverts of early newspapers, to the mass communication by radios and televisions, to the re-personalization of a message via direct mail, cable or the internet. Advertising is at the front of sending the good message to customers and potential customers. Taylor (1978), in the journal for traffic and transport engineering supported the view by O'Barr by stipulating that advertising has the main aim of encouraging clients that the firms offerings are the best, improve how customers view the company, pointing out and making a need for the goods offered by the company, revealing of new tasks for established products, declaring new products and programs, highlighting the salespeople's individual messages, drawing clients to the company, and holding on hand customers.

Azad and Boushehri (2014), view billboards as huge erections located in public positions which present advertisements to passing passer-byes. The billboards are usually placed on main roads where there is a huge amount of motor traffic and pedestrian traffic. They can however be placed at any place with massive visitors, such as at a railway station, in shopping malls or buildings and in arenas. Taylor et al. (2006) agrees with Azad and Boushehri (2014) when the author viewed billboards as the most common type of outdoor advertising. Over the years billboards have been built in all sorts of shapes and sizes, mostly along highways or major streets in cities in order to attract the attention of people. However the author goes on to highlight the advantages and disadvantages of using billboards. An obvious benefit is that they are very visible and can be easily observed and so their message is seen by passers. Also, advantages of billboards have been listed as including, potential assignment of the advertisement near the point of sale, 24-hour attendance, and geographic flexibility for local advertisers, and visual effect from advertisement size and message creativity. A study of billboard users found that compared with other media, billboards were rated higher in terms of ability to attract new customers, communicate information affordably and to increase sales.

Kotler et al (2010) views billboard advertising as being flexible having a great recurrence publicity, being low priced, having lower message competition than other advertising tools and bearing excellent positional selectivity. The high repeat exposure will eventually make customers notice and understand the advert no matter how they try to avoid it, thus resulting in more enquiries about the products, which may lead to an increase in market share, sales and profits hence boosting company performance.

A research carried out by Kayode and Afolami (2013) on the economic influence of billboard advertising as communication infrastructure on Lagos landscape showed that observably, the changing shopping habit of customers seems to be a product of the conviction established by the communication power of 'good' billboard graphics. In the modern world of business, a product promotion through this means remains the issue of the first priority to nations (Reece-Myron, 1998). The billboard advertising market has experienced an explosion in recent years in Lagos State due to the fact that there are population explosion and business concerns all over the place. Interplay of design elements and principles make visual communication infrastructure discernible. Such knowledge of interplay is needed by the media advertisers for the mobilization and reflection of the personality of product and the integrity of the business organization. Graphics in advertising means the combination of visual illustrations, typography and sometimes the logotype.

## **2.2 Effect of billboard advertising on sales**

Lusan (2008) highlighted that billboard ads are undoubtedly the most fixed of advertising media forms. The author goes on to say when billboards are used for advertising a company's goods or services they can be placed at a geographically attractive location which mostly requires lower costs per thousand exposures compared to other advertising tools like television adverts. Tendick (2011) supported Lusan's view by contributing that billboard advertising has moved in a bit to try and advance towards the digital era. Tendick goes on to say the huge LED billboards which are constantly popping up in the busy market areas are attesting to be quite an achievement as sales volumes are constantly increasing in these markets. The author goes on to say advertisers normally prefer these billboard adverts because of their huge effect and economic prices. The low costs incurred in billboard advertising also works as a factor which also results in goods or services having low prices, and because of these low prices more consumers tend to purchase more leading also to increased sales.

Ayanwale et al (2005), outlines that the major aim of operating a business is normally to produce revenue and profits. The author goes on to say that in order to remain operating an organisation must generate enough sales from its merchandises to cover operating costs and post reasonable profits. Considering the relevance of sales on business and also considering the link between consumers and revenue, it is very important for organisations to partake programmes that can persuade consumers' decisions to purchase its offerings. These programmes include the art of billboard advertising, that helps in making clients more aware of the company's goods and services and condition the mind of a potential consumer to finally make purchase decisions. Hutt and Sper (2001) and Kotler (1999) agreed with Ayanwale et al (2005), when they highlighted that billboard advertising help derive demand of goods and services being offered. Therefore a company whose products or services are well advertised and are made more visible will find use of billboard advertising to be useful as they help meet organisational promotional objectives like enhancement of sales. These authors gave an example of the Intel Company erecting billboards close to colleges, so as to attract college students to purchase the Intel computers hence, increasing its sales volumes.

Zikmund and D'amico (1996) highlight that most advertisements, excluding radio advertisements, show both copy and art. The two elements must work hand in hand and be able to support each other so as to achieve the communication goals put forward by management. To do this, most advertising companies make use of the hierarchy of effects model which is known as the AIDA formula. They

go on to say when consumers truly want a message which reminds them of package ID or a small sales promotion, outdoor advertising (billboards) is deemed proper. Thus billboard advertising can be used to remind existing customers of the promotions which might be taking place, and when these promotions are happening and trigger purchase. Sales are then enhanced thus supporting the idea that using billboards as a medium of advertising can improve the performance of a company in terms of its sales volumes. Although the primary communication tool in Business to Business marketing remains the salesperson, other methods of communication mostly the non-personal communication tools like billboards also have a contribution in the process of communicating an organisation as well as its offerings to the target market. Hutt and Sper (2001) added to what Zikmund and D'amico contributed by saying that well-crafted advertising can make personal selling more fruitful. Morrill (1970) supported the above authors by stipulating that sales are normally high when customers have been exposed to some form of advertising, which in this scenario is billboard advertising.

Kotler (1997) put forward that advertising firms have increased their spending on outdoor media over the last ten years. Outdoor media (billboards) provides an excellent way to reach local consumer subdivisions. Thus using billboards as an advertising tool, companies can be sure that more people are reached, and more people will get to know about the company as well as what it offers. The more people are reached the more inquiries are made, and with some inquiries being turned to sales this will mean an increased volume of sales. More so, Johansson (1997) in support of Kotler's contribution suggested that outdoor advertising like billboard advertising has much importance in Japan and South Korea than in the west, most likely being a reflection of the reality that such media can reach a huge number of persons in large cities as well as in large towns. The author goes on to say when a larger population is reached, and with more people being aware of the company as well as its offerings, sales figures are likely to be enhanced. Moreover, Kramer suggests that mass media are normally characterized as print (newspapers, magazine and billboards advertising). Reminder advertising attempts to keep the products title among the targeted population. This can be of use when the brand has attained favour from the consumers or insistence perhaps in the maturity or sales decline stage. Here the advertiser may use soft sell ads that mention or show the name as a reminder. An example given by Kramer shows that Nike uses outdoor billboards that simply shows a picture of a large Nike shoe and the Nike Brand name in bold print to remind consumers that they are still in existence and hence stimulate purchases resulting in improved sales.

Taylor et al. (2006) explain billboards as the most common type of outdoor advertising. Over the years billboards have been built in all sorts of shapes and sizes, mostly along highways or major

streets in cities in order to attract the attention of people. However there are advantages and disadvantages of using billboards. An obvious benefit is that they are very visible and can be easily observed and so their message is seen by passers. A study of billboard users found that compared with other media, billboards were rated higher in terms of ability to attract new customers, communicate information affordably and to increase sales.

Kerin (2000) goes on to highlight on the economic part of billboard advertising. The outdoor billboard advertising has experienced a surge of growth recently. The author goes on to say smaller charges, good technology and much of creativeness have enticed great global advertisers, the likes of Sony and Microsoft to engage in billboard advertising. Kerin (2000), adds on to say the visibility of this medium is good supplemental reinforcement for known products and its relatively low cost, and this reinforcement can enhance sales for the known products. In support of the above authors' view Rempur (2011) postulates that when an organisation thinks of being economic and effective, use of billboard advertising use of billboard advertising is normally deemed necessary. Rempur (2011) says that billboard advertising is one of the most reasonably priced options of advertising and it surely has credible reimbursements. The author goes on to say technological development also has contributed to the lower costs incurred from the use of billboard advertising. Years back it was expected for billboards to be designed and drawn by hand as there was no machinery to do electronic printing in addition, it took a lot of time for advertising agencies to have the billboards designed and painted by hand. In this day and age, there are many advanced ways of printing techniques that provide more rapid and enhanced services. Thus making it clear that billboard advertising is considered one of the most cost effective type of advertising.

According to Myers (1996) advertising including billboard advertising aims to relate the company's offerings to consumer needs by stimulating a good image of the company. Kotler (2002) in support of Myers contribution suggested that advertising can be used to build up a long term image for a product. The author gave an example of Coca-Cola ads on billboards, being able to portray a good image and henceforth generate fast sales. The researchers view that billboards enhances the performance of a company is supported by these authors as they say that billboards promote a favourable image to consumers which then trigger sales.

Sundarsan (2007) evaluated the effectiveness of billboard advertising on sales of small and large firms, and for multinational corporations. The results showed that advertising has influenced sales, though its relative effectiveness was not the same for all the categories of firms. Pagan et al (2001)

also supported Sundarsan when the author studied the effectiveness of billboard advertising on sales using bi-variate Vector Auto Regression model and showed that at one time an increase in advertising expenditure lead to an increase in the sales of orange with a one month lag. It was also found that the impact of advertising expenditure on grape fruit sales was more immediate and relatively large.

Dwyer (1991) argues that although it is not usually the case that an industrial consumer acquires a product or service, because they have seen an advert, seeing an advert can however lead to quite a number of actions. Billboard advertising can speed up forecasts more quickly through the process of choosing what to purchase and from whom to purchase it, which at that time leads to act. Therefore billboard advertising can make the decision making process when making a sale faster, hence increasing the sales of a company. To add on to what Dwyer (1991) said, Rudelius (2002) added that advertising can impact on establishment of consumer attitudes, a bad attitude can be promoted by material displayed on a billboard with no troubles at all. Billboard ads can also build up opinions about a firms offerings, in so doing firming up the position or weakening the opinions believed about the products or services offered by a firms competitors. Therefore if a billboard is designed well and has informative and persuading wording it can drive one to make a sale thus showing an enhancement in the performance of a company. Ryski (2011) postulates that retailer's measure how well their adverts have affected the performance of their company by looking in the till. If they find out that sales targets have been met then they believe that their promotion would have worked.

Rumpur (2011) goes on to say billboard advertising helps in the creation of brand awareness and a massive brand recognition among the targeted population. This is as a result of the attractive, innovative and appealing advertisements of a firms offerings, which can have an additional positive influence on the thoughts of the targeted population. The positive impact generated will promote the purchase of the advertised goods or services resulting in the generation of huge sales volumes, there for improving the performance of the organisation. Kerin (2000) adds on to Rumpur's school of thought by outlining that, the best advertising tool to remind clients about a firm's goods and services is outdoor advertising such as advertising scoreboard at San Francisco 3 Com Park. The author goes on to say the most common form of outdoor advertising is billboard advertising. Billboard advertising usually helps in reaching a large population, increases product inquiry rate and often has shown to enhance purchase rates which result in an increase in sales volumes. The author further explains that visibility of this medium is good additional support for the goods and services which are already known by customers and it's relatively low cost and flexibility can make it a good

way of reaching quite a number of prospective customers. Because of its ability to reach so many potential customers, billboard advertising can create awareness of a company's offerings, which normally results to an increase in sales.

It is one thing to persuade and influence customers to buy a product. It is another thing to prevail on them to keep buying such a product. This poses a challenge to the effectiveness as well as to the retaining power of most of the billboard advertisements on city landscapes which will need to communicate strongly to consumers through fascinating pictorial concepts in order to meet a demand such as this. Pictorial concepts in this regard foretell commercial signs that require a great deal of creative imaginations, especially when selling a product that itself depends largely on visual appeal. To communicate is to understand the planned opportunities derivable from the flow of human and vehicular traffic. Commercial firms, according to Semenik and Bamossy (1993) have gained advantage of this to communicate to current and potential customers about products, services, and other values that make the brand appealing and capable of providing satisfaction. If billboard advertisements cannot commercially deliver the good in public spaces then they will ultimately be standing alone without influencing any one, but if they do, Akinyosoye (2010) state that they will translate to an increase in aggregate output, which can have an effect on the sales of a company. Grove and Cresswell (1983) also note that the desire for widened contact and interchange would be created in the citizens. When a company wishes to sell to the public or improve the sales of its products or services, it may decide to advertise on billboards. Marketing is the wider process of creating a product or service, advertising it and selling it.

### **2.3 Effectiveness of billboard advertising on a company's market share**

Rampar (2011) highlighted that there are various types of billboards presented in the market, and with regard to these types, their usefulness also tend to differ. Bearing in mind the fact that advertisements on billboards are present all the time there are considered to be the best tool when it comes to the promotion of a firm's offerings. The usefulness of a billboard depends on how visible it is with regard to road traffic and population. The most useful advertisements are those that are highly visible with regards to traffic and population. Usually to get high exposure, quite a number of billboards are erected, hence from such visibility more customers are brought into the company hence increasing its market share. Mason et al (1986) adds on to Rampar's ideas by viewing advertising media as the ways of communicating to the targeted customers used by advertisers to send their messages these prospective clients, and on the advertising media comes in billboards as a

medium. Mason goes on to say billboard advertising offers three major advantages to the advertiser. First it can be greatly restricted such that in a Spanish speaking region, the advertiser can make use of Spanish duplicated adverts. Secondly the message is fixed and people passing by can view it over and over again. Lastly the communication can be made to be very big, vibrant use of colours, drawings as well as movement can also be put to use. Messages are most effective when they are straight to the point. Thus Masons' contributions supports the researchers' view that billboard advertising improves the performance of a company when it comes to its sales and the market share. This is because the target consumer sees the advert on a billboard over and over again thus making the consumer more aware of the products on offer, thus any time the consumer wants a similar product he/ she thinks of the one advertised, leading to increased market share of the company.

Lamb et al (2000) further add on to Rampar's theory by postulating that billboards are normally used to disseminate advertisements to customers. They go on to say that one of the benefits of billboard advertising is its capability to communicate to huge masses of people all at one time. Moreover, Kerin (2000) suggests that, a good billboard site depends on traffic patterns and site lines. Kerin (2000) however argues with Mason and Lamb et al by stipulating that in many areas environmental issues have limited the use of this medium. One disadvantage of this medium as highlighted by the author is that of heavy travel times. The author goes on to say when the targeted consumers are too many and people are so close together, no one really gets the time to look at an advert or pay much attention to it, because usually everyone will be giving much attention to reaching where they are going safe and sound.

Furthermore Kotler (2002) says advertising as a public nature deliberates some type of acceptability on the goods or services offered and also suggests a uniform offering. Billboard advertising allows the seller to communicate his/her products over and over again. This form of advertising also permits the seller to compare the advertised products or services to that of other suppliers. Advertising promotes a platform for an organisation to clearly communicate its offerings through artful use of print, sound and colour. Using billboards for advertising will show the companies' offerings in a more real manner through the use of good design, sound and colour thus attracting more customers to try the designs offered on the billboard leading to an increase in the market share of an organisation. Hawkins (1995) supports the idea by Kotler (2002), by highlighting that both colour and movement serve to attract attention with brightly coloured and moving items being more noticeable. A brightly coloured advert is more able to receive attention than a dull advert, thus with billboards mostly holding brightly coloured adverts, they can be noticed more, and hence gaining



favour from the target market and impacting on the market share of the advertising company. Myers (1996) also in support of the above authors' outline that advertising can be used to attract customers and cast the organization in favourable light. Palmer and Stull (1991) add on to Kotler's idea by viewing advertising as being significant to the company that makes use of it, as well as to its customers and the economy of the nation as a whole. The authors further view billboard advertising as an important media to the business because it is a means of communicating with many existing customers as well as the potential customers. Advertising works as a way of getting to know about the numerous products which are available.

Taylor et al (2006), view billboard advertising as one of the most prominent medium of advertising which is put to use entirely all over the globe with an aim of delivering fast and rapid concepts to a group of people that no other advertising medium can reach. Abdulla and Abdulaziz (2012), in support of Taylor's view also say that billboards have become important these days because they reach a group that no other advertising tool can reach, thus attracting the unserved and unreached market resulting in an increase in market share. Barrios (2003) and Clifford (2008), in agreement with the above authors say billboards are normally placed in high traffic areas, in a bid of serving the purpose of getting attention from the target audience which is highly mobile and does not have the time to stop and look at visual designs, thus billboard ads coming in as they deliver quick and informative messages to the mobile public.

Price (2003), contributed that according to the Arbitrun study carried out, billboard advertising has been proved to be effective. The study reported that seventy one percent of Americans recognise billboard ads on the road side. The study also showed that at one point in time, quite a number of people in America noticed an occasion, that was of interest to them as a result of a billboard advert, and then attended the occasion, thus showing that billboard ads, have an effect on numbers and it can enhance the market share numbers of a company.

Price (2003) adds on to say with the huge competition in markets such as the New York market, firms still can be noticed by their customers as a result of an effective billboard ad. Billboards are a medium of advertising that gets the attention of many customers including motorists as well as pedestrians. These billboards are also located in areas where there is high traffic and were the billboards can also be visible to huge masses of people, thus billboard advertising reaching large numbers of potential customers in a bid to try and increase the market share of a company. However Nwabueze (2006) disagrees with the theory that billboard ads capture attention, the author points out

that billboard advertising only works as a reminder to customers. Adverts will have been shown elsewhere first maybe on the television or in newspapers, hence billboards only acting as a reinforcement to the already exposed advert. Thus if the target audience have not been exposed to a message via other forms of advertising, it might be hard for them to understand the one shown on billboards because they are often brief and does not carry much information as they try to capture the attention of audience which in most cases is mobile.

Palmer and Stull (1991) go on to say that billboard advertising helps create a company's image. The type and amount of advertising a company does creates the image of the company in the mind of the customer. If most of the advertising carried out by a firm focuses on new products and services the company will be viewed by its customers as highly innovative. Kerin (2000) in support of Palmer and Stull's view highlighted that the outdoor advertisements continue to experience growth, because of its ability to reach so many prospective buyers and because it can create awareness. Once awareness is obtained, advertising can influence the creation of attitudes, thus resulting in the creation of positive attitudes towards a product or a service, leading to the brand being preferred more, resulting in an increase in market share.

Kramer (1997) states that, the usefulness of billboard advertising does not only rely on the total money put to use and form of billboards selected but mostly it relies on what is communicated and how that communication is presented. According to Batra (1996) one of the roles of billboard advertising is trying to make a product more noticeable in the mind of the consumer such that it is the only choice they have and no considerations of other varieties are formed. Thus if consumers do not have a choice, a huge market share is guaranteed.

Lamb et al (2000) said that the cost of contacting one person is low when using billboard advertising therefor allowing companies to reach more of the targeted group resulting in an increase in company consumers, unlike in personal selling. However the author goes on to say the costs incurred in billboard advertising can however be on the high side for the small business, but further stipulates that a grain of maize seeded today will in future produce more than just the one seed put in the ground, meaning that the costs of billboard advertising incurred today whether by a small firm or a big firm will in the long run produce more income in terms of revenue and also market share which is on the good side for organisations whether big or small. In support of Lamb et al, McCarthy et al (2009) wrote an article about a global engineering company named ITT. They went on to say ITT is a global engineering company with a wide range of products such as fluid control systems. ITT

wanted to scheme a more integrated position in trying to be the leaders in the provision of water equipment. The industries trade show was the perfect opportunity for ITT to communicate to its customers as well as other stakeholders all at the same time, so ITT marketers used unique media placements such as outdoor adverts near the area where the trade show was taking place and large billboards in the chief transportation points which lead into the trade show centre to communicate its message. Researches carried out before and after the show showed that there was a 20% increase in show attendees who viewed ITT as a market leader, hence resulting in an increase in the market share for ITT .

Bovee and Arens (1985), support the idea of billboard advertising as being cheap, according to these two authors this is because the targeted group can view the advert at any given time, and the major aspects of its helpfulness are being economic and also its ability to cover a large market. The authors go on to say billboards are an effective way to market a firms offerings anywhere and at any time. Advances in technology have also contributed to the cost effectiveness of billboard advertising. Back then billboards were hand painted and because of the high labour required more costs were incurred, but as a result of the advent of machines which are able to produce billboards, faster and cheaper, the overall costs of advertising via billboards have been lowered leading to low priced products and services which attract so many customers and therefor enhance the market share of an organisation. Bovee and Arens (1994) go on to say billboard advertising is a cheaper advertising medium compared to other mediums, they further state that like any other outdoor media, billboards have the lowest expenditure when it comes to cost per exposure. Nwabueze (2006) however disagrees with the concept of billboard advertising being said to be cheaper than other advertising mediums and translating the low costs to the price of products by saying that the initial cost of producing billboards from design costs, layout costs, costs of billboard material and space buying costs may sum up to huge expenses. These huge costs may discourage the extent to which billboards are used.

Nwabueze (2006), postulates that messages on billboards can be seen over and over again, leading to high frequency of the population exposed to the message which is a necessity if an organisation is to make an impression on the targeted group of people. The author goes on to say billboards are huge and also aggressive specially when located at strategic sites at the centre of huge cities. This contributes in making sure that messages make a swift but convincing impression in the thoughts of the target population. Effective Billboard Media (2014), also highlight that billboards are also available the whole time hence reaching the target population at all times, unlike other advertising mediums which can be switched off at any time. The availability of the advert at all times leads to

repeat exposure of the advert, which makes customers more aware of the firms' offerings and can trigger interest, resulting in an increase in a firms customers. Billboards are also of a big size in nature allowing dominant and bold messages to be showcased. Such types of messages attracts customers to want to know more about the advertised products or the company and inquiries made can result in an increase on the clientele base of an organisation. Bovee and Arens (1985) cited in audience perception of billboard use adds on to say, billboard advertising has been in use for a very long time and is also well recognized because of the significant influence it has on the target population. The colour, art, site and visibility of billboards help in luring customer focus towards the billboard. An article from The Marketing Donut (2013) also contributes that billboard ads are mostly noticed because of their huge sizes and location. Billboard ads also do not require much effort from the target population when trying to access them. The easy accessibility of the adverts attracts more viewers which can be turned into customers, therefor resulting in a huge market share and enhancing the performance of an organisation. Nwabueze (2006) conflict with the above authors who agree that billboard advertising attracts many people and increases the market share. The author supports this disagreement by saying that billboard ads mostly target only the mobile population, meaning that if the target audience is not always on the road, the effectiveness of the billboard adverts become limited.

#### **2.4 Effect of billboard advertising on customer perception**

According to Kotler (2003), customer perception can be defined to be a procedure of selection, organising and interpretation of data to give a picture which makes sense. The author goes on to say some stimulus can be viewed by consumers in various forms subject to their selective attention, distortion and retention. Selective attention means that the customers filter information according to their understanding. Selective distortion means that the consumers screen data depending on their personal views. Additionally in selective retention, consumers recall the opinions as well as the sentiments which they have learned well in the past. Hence it will be interesting to know how customers perceive billboard advertisements. According to Olson (2010) effectiveness of advertisements, can be measured by making use of various aspects which include ad-recall which can measure the number of customers who can recall an advert when asked about it later. Persuasion tries to look at how far customers were influenced to buy a firms offerings. Vogt (2015) add on to Kotler's theory by defining perception in advertising as buyers' views about a particular product or service that may not be fixed on reality. For instance a soda advert placed on a billboard, with the

billboard showing a thin movie star drinking the soda may make the target audience think that if they take the soda they may look like the movie star. This perception through the use of billboard advertising, helps improve the demand for the particular product. Unlike a merchandise that may be defined by research and statistics, the perception of a product can be shaped by the impressions the client has on the advert broadcasted and it can also be short-term. Khuong and Tram (2015) agree with Kotler's definition of perception by saying that perception is the ways that an individual select, organise and also interpret stimulation, these stimulations are detached and deep-rooted and turned out to be an individual's understanding of the world. Two persons will never experience the same stimulations even when they are exposed to the same things which are displayed in the same environment. The author goes on to say every day, we are presented with a million kinds of stimuli, smells, sound, tastes, sights and textures. But only a very insignificant quantity of these stimuli are taken in and administered by our brain.

Vogt (2015) as outlined in a newspaper article states that one principal element of consumer perception linked to advertising is exposure. Exposure is made of how regular consumers are exposed to a firms offerings regardless of whether they are products or services. Perception is normally built on how visible people are to ads surrounding them. For instance if one is not shopping for a home, they may not notice ads which have to do with home purchases, be it on television, magazines or even on billboards, but if they are shopping for a home they tend to see more of home adverts. This then shows that, billboard advertising may not necessarily impact on the perception of customers on a firm or its offerings, if the product or service being advertised is not of any interest to the customer.

Fishbein and Middlestadt, (1995) highlight that consumers' attitudes and perceptions of a brand and the brand's products are formed by the information they possess about the products and their features. These brand perceptions are, according to recent billboard advertising literature, claimed to be the most reliable measurement of billboard advertising effectiveness. Weilbacher (1993) also say that this has its origin in the fact that consumers are incapable of discerning all the advertising they are exposed to. Mitchell and Olson, (1981) go on to say an important and interesting factor impacting the brand attitude and the perception forming among consumers is the consumers' attitudes towards the advertising. Mitchell and Olson, (1981) as well as MacKenzie and Belch, (1986) agree on to say this has its explanation in the fact that the advertising's popularity transfers to also apply to the brand itself. If consumers have obtained enough information about the products or services on offer from the information made available on the billboards, the information can help in the formation of

perceptions by the customers, and also if the customers have a positive attitude towards billboard ads they can also have an effect on how consumers will view the organisation as well as its offerings. Voyt (2015) adds on to say attitude towards the advert measures how customers felt about the advert like relevance, uniqueness as well as likeability. If factors like billboard advertisements remembrance, billboard advertisements persuasion, billboard advertisements attraction have a substantial impact on purchase decisions of clients and the occurrence is sustained by positive attitude in the direction of billboard advertising, then it is expected to lead to increased billboard advertising effectiveness, further leading to increased purchase intention from customers perception.

Khuong and Tram (2015), have highlighted that emotions represent another form of language widely spoken and understood. An emotion is an intellectual and physiological condition supplemented by a wide variety of emotional states, judgements, and in-house or outside conducts. Emotion is a process, in which the opinion of a set of stimuli, permits a rational evaluation which hence forth allows individuals to label as well as identify a specific emotional state. The author goes on to say there is a new notion of marketing which is emotional marketing which focuses on the significance of emotional relation amongst the corporation and the customer affected by means of such a system. The distinguishing values and needs of present-day consumers, in turn creates new symbol consumption beliefs. Moreover, the author continues to say emotional marketing can be defined as a new classic approach or else as an innovative marketing modification, where management gives more attention to the making, maintenance and assessment of emotional association between the corporation and the customer or any other additional players in the market and this come to be the fundamental exchange-stimulating feature. In such a scenario the authors view billboard ads to have an effect on how consumers perceive a company as well as its offerings. If the ads on billboards contain an emotional message and also feature pictures which are of an emotional nature, customers will to react to the messages, maybe by purchasing certain products because they feel if they do not use such products or services something bad will happen to them. Consoli (2010) adds onto say, the condition of mind, the sentiments as well as the compassions become prime. Apart from superiority and price, customers want self-assurance, affection as well as imaginings. Consoli (2010) goes on to say the emotions turn out to be much more vital with the development of a principle of customer pleasure. Emotions are a unique element which have to be added in a bid to try and augment the main supply of a firms offerings and mainly when they are designed as well as managed with accuracy and an ethical spirit. The consumer does not look for products or services that meet the needs as well as the rational procedures, nonetheless they try to find an object that can turn out to be a centre of symbolic meanings, psychological as well as ethnic, a source of a particular emotional

condition, relations as well as emotions. This clearly shows that emotions displayed in a billboard advert can be of much effect on how customers perceive a company or its brand, and these perceptions may trigger purchase or actually avoid it. Furthermore, the consumer purchasing decisions are defined as the choices made on buying either products or services from a particular retailer.

Vogt (2015), in a publicized article go on to say there are definite methods in which an organisation can go about modifying how their target customers as well as the existing ones perceive the firms offerings. The author postulates that a firm can show their emotional opinions on a certain product by means of including signs or story lines that clearly touches on particular emotions into their ads. For instance a pasta company can concentrate their billboard ad on a mother preparing the pasta for her family, which may then persuade customers to purchase the pasta because they will perceive it to be as good as a home cooked meal. Therefor billboard ads can make customer' perceive a product or a service to be something good to them because of how the advert is portrayed. Vogt (2015) goes on to say another way to modify consumer opinions is by making use of the bandwagon tactic, which encompasses the process of making customers feel they are missing out on something or make them feel that they are not part of some group just because they are not using your product. A billboard can simply have information that maybe there is new stock selling, and customers may then feel that if they miss out on the new stock then they will not be grouped as the early innovators, hence making them rush for the new stock. This hence shows that billboard ads can make a person change how they have been thinking, as they can instantly purchase something advertised as new to them even if they did not have any plans of buying such.

Dahlen et al (2008) outline that billboard advertising using an extra original content conveys a more sophisticated value to clients compared to advertising with a less innovative content. When customers stick to this belief, they will then perceive that a company with such types of advertising media such as billboards offer high value products or services, thus associating the company with high value offerings. Neil (2015) also says billboard advertising helps drive up the perception of worth for your brand. This builds up the benefits side of the value equation, which indicates that price relative to benefits equals' value. In essence, buyers compare your price to the perceived benefits to determine value. Over time, as your brand achieves stronger perceived value, consumer demand increases, leading to higher sales volume and also better profits.

Kartopn et al (2004) highlight that consumers who work hard or go around from one place to another are hard to catch, but billboard advertisements catch them in every place with effective reach. Due to this reason billboard advertisements are preferred by advertisers and marketers. It is hard to catch consumers with this vehicle because of the movement of the consumer. Solomon (1998) supports Kartopn et al by adding that there is no time to stop and look at the billboard while running from one place to another. There are also outside atmosphere provocations which disturb the target audience's perception. To catch the buyer and to be much more in effect, billboard advertisement's pictures and design principles' have to be made with perception criteria's view, they ought to gather and lure user's interest as well as attention. As previously defined perception is a process by which stimuli that includes light, sound and colour are selected, organised and interpreted. Elden (2003) also agrees with Solomon (1998) and goes on to say that another objective of billboard advertisements is to gather and entice customers' attention as well as respect.

Taker (2003) stipulates that advertising using billboards began in the 1980's and it created interest with its exciting, diverse colours, designs and messages. Elden (2003) adds on to Taker's contribution by proposing that, the general meaning of the messages, pictures and illustrations which are displayed on billboards, are vital and effective for the perception of the purchaser. Solomon (1998) also agreed with Taker (2003) by highlighting that billboard adverts have to influence clients as a result of its diverse enticements, colours and designs.

Andrews (1959) in the journal of advertising (2001), showed that consumers perceived billboard advertising to be a contributing factor in the provision of better goods and services as this form of advertising promotes competition. Calfee and Ringold (1994) in the journal of advertising (2001) added on to Andrews' views by stipulating that most customers view adverts as a source of information about products or services which hence help customers in making decisions on what to purchase and in quantities to purchase it. The author goes on to say as a result of the informative adverts on billboards, customers tend to perceive the advertising organisation as an informative organisation which really wants its customers to know every piece of information about the products or services they are buying. Lowrey et al (1998), also in the journal of advertising (2001) supported Calfee and Ringold (1994) and went on to say that consumers use billboard adverts to find out about local sales and brands as well as the availability of certain products, hence perceiving billboard ads as information sources. Pollay and Mittal (1993) in the journal of advertising (2001) however argue with Calfee and Ringold (1994) as the author contributes that billboard ads often lead to distortion of information, whereby product features may be too enlarged, compared to the actual product, thus



customers viewing billboard advertising as not trustworthy, misleading and insulting to customer intelligence.

In another research carried out by Calfee and Ringgold (1994), from the period 1974 to 1989 as highlighted in the journal of advertising (2001), results showed that customers perceived billboard advertising especially the electronic billboards as being entertaining and hence viewed the services offered by the supplier as also being good and entertaining. Lena (2006) in the Asian Pacific journal of marketing and management go on to review that billboard advertising has an impact in brand image and brand equity. Factors like product design, billboard layout and information display also contribute on how customers perceive an organisation and its offerings. Advertising is not just about selling goods or services, but rather it is a way to position a company and its offering in the mind of the customer, such that at the end of the day the customer will have a positive perception on the company and its offering. For example an organisation may make use of its billboard advertising platform to communicate the high quality aspects in product offering, hence when consumers see the advert they will perceive the company as one that offers quality products and services, thus giving the company good publicity, which helps it gain a competitive advantage.

## **2.5 Summary**

The researcher managed to come up with various thoughts including that billboard advertising plays a very important role in customers' life. Billboard advertising plays very important roles for the producers and the sellers of the products, because it helps on increasing sales and identifies their competitors to adjust the level of competition. From other scholars the researcher also managed to find out that billboard advertising had a significant effect on the perceptions of customers towards, a company, brand or goods and services offered by the company. This chapter looked at the views of other various scholars who contributed to the idea of billboard advertising. It showed authors who supported and also those who disagreed that billboard advertising could enhance the sales as well as the market share of a company, and it also showed how billboard advertising affected customer perception. The next chapter looked at the research methodology used in a bid to get data from the target population about the area under study.

## **CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **2.0 Introduction**

This chapter explored the methodology which was used in data gathering. It outlined how the researcher went about the research design, sources of data and data collection techniques. The researcher looked at the research designs which are exploratory and descriptive designs.

### **3.1 Research design**

Kiby and Tunner (1993) postulate that a research design is a method upon which an investigation is based. It is a design that stipulates the techniques and ways for bringing together and thoroughly examining information required for a particular research. For the purposes of this research the chosen research designs were descriptive and exploratory designs.

#### **3.1.1 Descriptive research design**

Zikmund (2000) defines descriptive research design as a tool used by researchers in a bid to try and get a more clear interpretation of results such as explanations given by respondents on how they behave and why they behave that way. The researcher used descriptive research design to try and get an understanding of findings such as explanations from respondents as to why they would behave in a certain way towards an advert placed on a billboard as well as the different attitudes they had towards a company which advertised on billboards. The method was also appropriate because a large number of respondents would be included in the research.

#### **3.1.2 Exploratory research design**

Blois (2000) outlines that exploratory research is the development of a clear formulation of the research. The researcher used exploratory research design in a bid to try to shed more light on the real nature of the problem of Sable Press's poor performance in terms of its sales and its market share as well as suggest possible solutions to new ideas. It also helped the researcher to gain ideas and insights into the effectiveness of billboard advertising.

### **3.2 Target population**

Population in research refers to the people or objects who will take part in a research especially those who will participate in providing information relevant for the research, as well as those who meet the standards that the researcher is looking for. The estimated population of this study was one hundred and sixty participants from Harare. Harare was chosen because of its closeness to the target population.

### **3.3 Sampling**

Sampling involves selecting a relatively small number of elements from a larger defined group of elements. In this case the researcher expected that the information gathered from the small group would provide accurate judgment about the larger group. In conducting this research the researcher used the probability and non-probability sampling techniques to obtain the sample frame and information required from the cooperate clients as well as from the general public.

#### **3.3.1 Sampling methods and techniques**

The researcher used non- probability sampling technique. This describes a method in which each sampling unit has an unknown chance of getting selected in the final sample. These non- probability sampling techniques can be classified into convenience sampling, purposive or judgmental sampling, quota sampling and snowball sampling. In this case the researcher used purposive or judgmental sampling. The researcher also made use of the probability stratified random sampling technique.

#### **3.3.2 Purposive or judgemental sampling**

The researcher selected a group of people who had similar traits that the researcher wanted to study. This technique was used for the general public. The researcher just picked anyone whom the researcher thought would give meaningful information. The researcher also used different approaches which comprise accessibility and skilful decision making, which is swift, economical and convenient.

#### **3.3.3 Stratified random sampling**

This is a technique whereby respondents are grouped into different categories or departments. The researcher used stratified random sampling for the population consisting of the corporate clients as they were grouped into non-governmental organisations, parastatals, government ministries, advertising agencies as well as other private companies. The researcher used the stratified random

sampling technique for these corporate clients because this would guarantee the researcher of getting views from the main groups of companies who make up the huge clientele of Sable Press. This technique was also used to group management respondents. The researcher grouped management into their departments such that information would be obtained from the whole company as each department would be represented, thus avoiding a scenario whereby information only comes from one department. The researcher also used stratified random sampling technique for the respondents consisting of the corporate clients as well as the management as a way to try and divide the population into homogenous sub-groups.

### **3.4 Sampling size**

There was a lot of consideration on matters such as costs, accuracy and ability of respondents so as to bring out a representative sample size. A small number of people was deemed appropriate when carrying out a research study as it was believed to give a reliable measure of the whole population. For both companies and the general public a formula by Lucy (1997) was used where 10% only is sampled when n is above 200 and 40% only is sampled when n is below 200. The breakdown of the sample unit is given below;

$N = \text{Population size} = 160$

Total sample size = 40% of 160 = 64

#### **The sample size for the general public was;**

Total population for the general public = 100

$100/160 \text{ by } 64 = 40$

The sample size for the general public was be 40 people.

#### **The sample size for the corporate clients was;**

Total population for the companies = 60

$60/160 \text{ by } 64 = 20$

The sample size for the corporate clients was 20.

#### **The sample size for management was;**

Total population for management = 10

$10/160 \text{ by } 64 = 4$

The sample size for management respondents was 4.

### **3.5 Sample frame**

The sample frame shows the categories of the target population. The researcher grouped the cooperate clients into non-governmental organisations, parastatals, government ministries, advertising agencies and private companies. This would guarantee the researcher of getting views from the main groups of companies who make up the huge clientele for Sable Press. Management was also grouped into different departments, including marketing department, finance department, procurement department, communications department and production department. The researcher grouped management into these different departments so as to get views from the various departments of the organisation. The general public was also grouped in respect of their gender as a way of trying to get the views of both male and female consumers.

### **3.6 Research instruments**

To capture the desired data for the research, the data collection instruments used by the researcher were questionnaires and interview guides. These instruments were designed to cover variables that determined the effect of billboard advertising on the performance of Sable Press.

#### **3.6.1 Questionnaire**

The researcher issued printed as well as soft copy questionnaires to the study population to help solicit information from them. The questionnaires targeted the company representatives who would participate in the research and the selected general public. The questionnaire captured all the variables in the conceptual framework. The research objectives and literature were translated into specific questions that were asked to the respondents. The questions aimed to answer the question on whether billboard advertising had an effect on the sales and market share of Sable Press as well as the effect of billboard advertising on customer perceptions. These questionnaires comprised of closed ended questions where the respondents were asked to give their responses by ticking the answer deemed appropriate by them. Open ended questions were also used to respond to questions which required the corporate customers and general public to explain more about a certain element of the research. The researcher also structured simple questions so that these respondents would clearly understand the questions and that which was expected from them.

#### **3.6.2 Interviews**

An interview is a conversation between an interviewer and an interviewee. This is a process whereby one person the interviewer asks questions to another party the interviewee. For purposes of this

research, the researcher conducted face to face interviews with Sable Press management and for some of the managers who were not in the office during the time of the research the researcher conducted telephone interviews. The researcher prepared interview guides which contained the questions that management was supposed to respond to, and the questions tried to find out if Sable Press had ever thought of engaging in billboard advertising and what would be the possible benefits of using such an advertising tool. The researcher also tried to pay attention to the tone in the speech of the interviewee's and obtain from the replies a more in depth understanding of the nature of communication.

### **3.7 Data collection procedure**

The researcher obtained a letter from Midlands State University, which asked the respondents to be of help to the researcher, and which also gave a guarantee to the respondents that the information gathered would be used only for academic purposes. The researcher called the targeted companies to get email addresses of the relevant people who would answer the asked questions and emailed the questionnaires. After emailing the questionnaires the researcher called back to the companies to find out if the questionnaires had been received in good order, and the questioners were sent back to the researcher after completion. For some companies the researcher called to book an appointment as to when the respondents would be in to fill in the questionnaire. The researcher would go in with the questionnaire, gave the responded time to fill in the questionnaire about fifteen minutes and then collected the completed questionnaire. For the general public the researcher would ask the chosen responded for his or her time to fill in the questionnaire, and then collected it as soon as the responded was done. The researcher called Sable Press management to book appointments as to when the interviews both face to face and telephone would be done and the researcher would go in or call to carry out the interviews at the agreed date and time.

### **3.8 Data sources**

The researcher collected data from primary and secondary sources because the researcher believed that the gap between the data in the present and that of the past was going to be identified.

#### **3.8.1 Primary data**

In order to get data that would be necessary for the study, the researcher designed and distributed questionnaires so as to get information from existing customers as well as the targeted customers. The researcher used the primary data to obtain facts relating to the views that stakeholders involved

in the research had about billboard advertising. These responses would help the researcher fulfil the research objectives which were to find out how billboard advertising affected company performance in terms of the sales of Sable Press as well as its market share and also how billboard advertising contributed to customer perceptions.

### **3.8.2 Secondary data**

Secondary data is a viable alternative source of data which provides comparative and contextual information that can result in other discoveries. The researcher used data which had been collected for other purposes which were deemed relevant for the particular study as it contained records related to current research for example sales and profit statements which were compiled for the sake of auditing were used by the researcher as secondary data for the research. The secondary source of data also included Sable Press quarterly performance review reports, Sable Press market share analysis and Sable Press strategic plans.

### **3.9 Validity and reliability**

The researcher was sure that the information obtained during the research was valid and the results of the study would be reliable because a small sample size was used, thus trying to get a small number of people to represent the rest of the country. The researcher also asked simple and clear questions, so that the respondents would clearly understand the questions asked thus also helping in soliciting for the appropriate and relevant responses. To make sure that the questions would be understood by the target population a pilot survey was run by the researcher. The supervisor also cross examined the research instruments that is the questionnaires as well as the interview guide, before they were used on the respondents so as to make sure that the questions asked were valid for the research which was being undertaken.

### **3.10 Data presentation and analysis tools**

This segment represents data that was collected from the target population which consisted of companies and the general public obtained from the use of questionnaires. These findings were analysed and interpreted using excel spread sheets, tables and graphs to give meaning to the study. The researcher also managed to come up with well-versed recommendations based on the results from the study which was undertaken.

### **3.11 Summary**

This chapter looked at various areas of the research methodology. It looked at the research designs, the target population, sampling methods and techniques, research instruments, data sources, validity and reliability as well as data presentation and analysis tools. It also took into consideration the advantages and disadvantages of using certain research instruments, such that valid and reliable data is guaranteed. The next chapter looked at the research findings that is presentation, analysis and discussion of the results.



## CHAPTER FOUR: DATA PRESENTATION ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

### 4.0 Introduction

In this chapter the researcher concentrated on the presentation and analysis of the information which was gathered from the use of research instruments which include questionnaires and interviews. The researcher made use of quantitative as well as qualitative methods in a bid to try and analyse the information gathered. Presentation of information was done, and afterwards the answers given by the respondents which were the Sable Press corporate clients, the general public as well as Sable Press management were further examined, and the meanings of the responses were also deduced with aid coming from information attained from literature review.

### 4.1 Response rate

60 questionnaires were circulated by the researcher. The researcher issued out 20 questionnaires to Sable Press corporate clients. 40 questionnaires were also given to the general public. 3 face to face interviews and 1 telephone interview were conducted on 4 Sable Press managerial staff members.

**Table 4:1 Response rate for questionnaires**

| Category of respondents | Number of questionnaires circulated | Number of questionnaires revived back | Response rate (%) |
|-------------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|-------------------|
| Corporate clients       | 20                                  | 17                                    | 85                |
| General public          | 40                                  | 40                                    | 100               |
| Total                   | 60                                  | 57                                    | 85                |

**Table 4:2 Response rate for interviews**

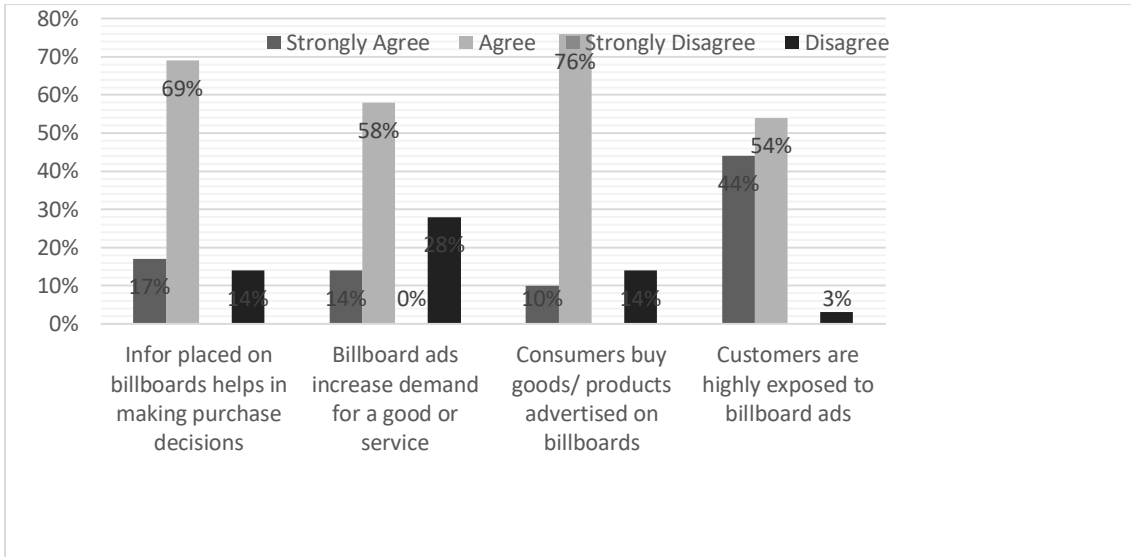
| Category of respondents | Number of interviews scheduled | Number of interviews done | Response rate (%) |
|-------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------|
| Management              | 4                              | 4                         | 100               |

The researcher got back 57 questionnaires, showing an average response rate of 85% from both the corporate clients as well as the general public who received the questionnaires. The 15% which did not respond to the questionnaires were 3 corporate clients who were out of the office on work agendas. For the interviews all 4 Sable Press managerial staff from the 4 departments participated in

the interviews carried out, showing a response rate of 100%. Overallly the research showed that 95% of the respondents managed to give back feedback from both the questionnaires and the interviews done. Such an extraordinary response was associated with the respondents' interest of being part of such a research as well having an interest in finding out the effects of billboard adverts on the performance of a company looking specifically on sales, market share as well as customer perception. In the case of Sable Press management, the high response rate was associated with the fact that results from this research would help the organisation decide on whether to engage in billboard advertising or not.

#### **4.2 Determining if billboard advertising enhances the sales of Sable Press**

The research aimed at finding out whether engaging in billboard advertising could enhance the sales of a company which in this research was Sable Press Private Limited. In this segment the targeted population comprising of the corporate clients, the general public and Sable Press managerial staff were required to answer as to whether billboard ads enhanced their demand for goods or services in any way, and they were required to rate their responses on whether billboard advertising affected their buying on a scale of 1 to 4, with 1 being agree, 2 being strongly agree, 3 being disagree and 4 being strongly disagree. Variables used to measure whether sales would increase as a result of billboard ads, were finding out if information provided on billboards helped consumers in making purchase decisions, if billboard ads increased the consumers demands of goods and services, whether consumers ever bought goods or services advertised on billboards and finding out if customers were highly exposed to billboard.



**Fig 4.1 Graphical Presentation of the variables used to determine if billboard ads can enhance the sales of Sable Press**

17% of the corporate clients and the general public strongly agreed and 69% agreed that billboard advertising helped them in making purchase decisions. Most of the respondents further explained that billboards were an advertising tool which is always available and which they could always refer to at any time to get any information pertaining to the products advertised and hence being helpful to them when making purchase decisions. 14% however disagree and said the information placed on billboards would not be of any help to them when making purchase decisions, and this was because the respondents were very loyal to their current service providers thus making them not considering any advert of a competing brand when making purchase decisions. 14% of the respondents also strongly agreed and 58% agreed that billboard ads would make them increase their demand for a good or service and most of them said the majority of the billboards they had come across advertised affordable products hence making them want more of the products advertised on the billboard. However 28% disagreed and said billboard ads would not make them increase their demand for a good or service as the products might be advertised when the clients did not require them at that particular time. 10% of the respondents strongly agreed and 76% agreed that they would also buy products advertised on billboards as they were affordable showing that generally customers associated billboards with affordability. 10% of the consumers said they would not buy products advertised on billboards because they did not have the time to pay attention to billboards as most of the times they would be mobile. 44% strongly agreed whereas 54% agreed that they were highly exposed to billboards as they spent most of their times outdoors but 3% said they were not highly exposed to billboards as they spent most of their time indoors.

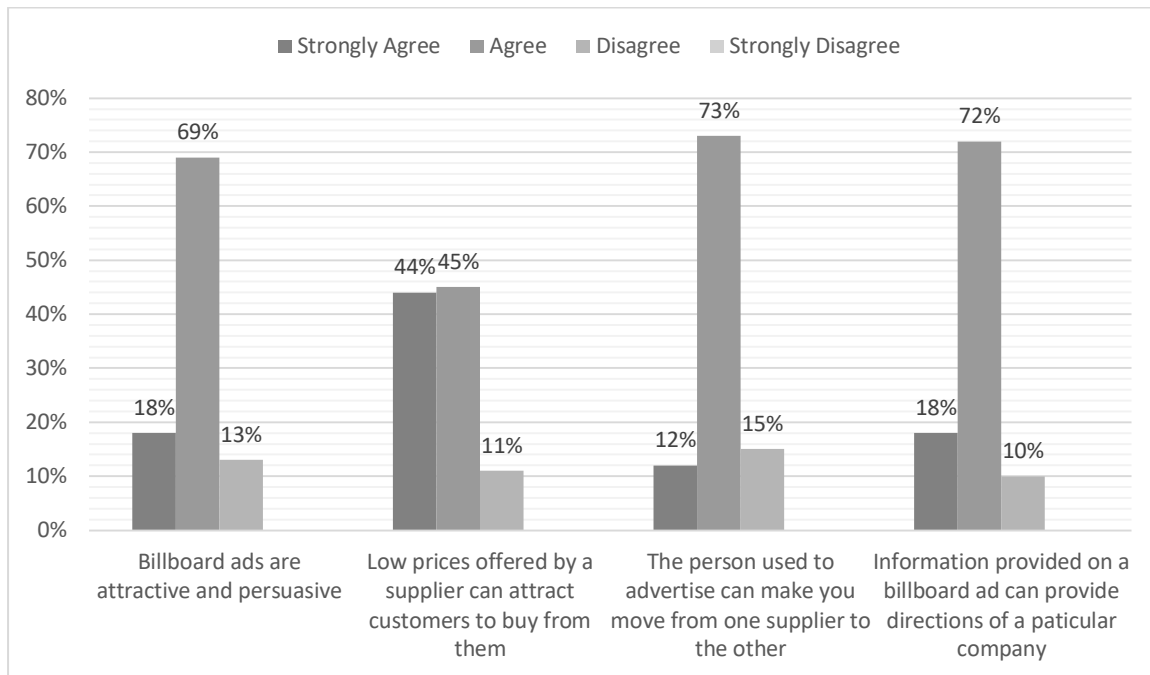
Overallly out of all the respondents consisting of Sable Press corporate clients and the general public who took part in the research, 64% agreed whereas 21% strongly agreed that billboard advertising would enhance their buying hence showing that if Sable Press considered the use of billboard ads this could lead to an increase in sales volumes at the company. The respondents agreed to this as shown in Fig 4.1 as they viewed billboard ads to be brief but informative and they also said billboard ads gave them the chance to repeat the messages over and over again until they finally made a purchase. Respondents also said that they were attracted by the models used on billboards as well as the good colour combinations used and also that they were attracted by the low prices highlighted on the billboards. Hutt and Spur (2001) as well as Kotler (1999) agreed to this finding, when they said billboard ads would help derive the demand of goods and services being offered. This was also supported by Johansson (1997) when the author contributed that outdoor ads like billboards had much importance in large cities as well as in large towns showing a reflection of a reality that such media can reach a huge number of persons. The author went on to say when a large number is reached with more people being aware of the firm as well as its offerings sales figures were likely to be enhanced. 15% of the corporate clients and the general public however said their purchase was not influenced by the presence of billboards as they spent most of their time indoors and they also did not pay much attention to billboards as they would be concentrating on the road and also they concluded that billboard ads were not easy to access because in most cases when they reached the location of the billboard ads they would be concentrating on something else and also that the area would be overpopulated , making the billboards hard to see, read and interpret.

From Sable Press management the researcher managed to get to know that the organisation had sometime considered the use of billboard advertising as they were trying to look at all the options which would help them enhance their declining sales as well as their declining market share but the idea was not implemented because, they were not sure of it would help them achieve their set objectives. 100% of Sable Press management thought that billboard advertising would reach a lot of people all at once thus making more people know about the companies' offerings, which could lead to more enquires, that would be turned into sales through making use of good communication and negotiation skills.

#### **4.3 Determination of whether billboard ads enhance the market share of Sable Press;**

The research also determined whether the use of billboard advertising could enhance the market share of a company which in this research is Sable Press. The distributed questionnaires comprised of questions which aimed to find out if clients would leave one supplier and move to the other as a result of a company advertising on a billboard and reasons as to why the customers moved were also

established. The variables used to determine if billboards made customers to switch suppliers were finding out if the information placed on a billboard would or the person displayed on the billboard would make one move from one supplier to the other, determining if low prices attracted customers to switch suppliers, finding out if billboard ads attracted customers and also looking into the ability of billboard ads to direct customers to a particular company. The findings are as outlined in Fig 4.2.



**Fig 4.2 Graphical presentation of the variables used to determine if billboard ads can enhance the market share of Sable Press.**

As shown in Fig 4.2, 18% of the respondents comprising of Sable Press corporate clients and the general public strongly agreed and 69% agreed that billboard ads were attractive and persuasive and the respondents highlighted that the bright colours mostly used on billboards as well as the models used and the size of the billboards attracted them to pay attention to the billboards, and also to the company advertising on the billboard, hence resulting in an increase in market share. 14% however said they were not attracted by billboards as they did not even pay attention to the billboards. 44% strongly agreed and 45% agreed that they were attracted by the low prices charged by companies and they would definitely move to the company offering low prices as it gave them more buying power. The low prices incurred in advertising via billboards would be transferred to the cost of the products resulting in low priced products which attracts customers. 11% of the corporate clients and the general public however said they were not attracted by the low prices charged on goods or services because they considered some other factors like product quality or company reliability when choosing a supplier. 12% strongly agreed and 73% agreed that the person used to advertise on a

billboard would make them move from one supplier to the other. Most of the respondents said that they were attracted to the models personality, appearance, gender and/or facial expressions hence wanting to be associated with whatever that model used to advertise was involved in resulting in an increase in the market share of the advertising company. 15% of the respondents however said they would not switch suppliers because of a person used to advertise on billboard, as they viewed the person as an ordinary advertising strategy which cannot have an effect on the quality of the products delivered.

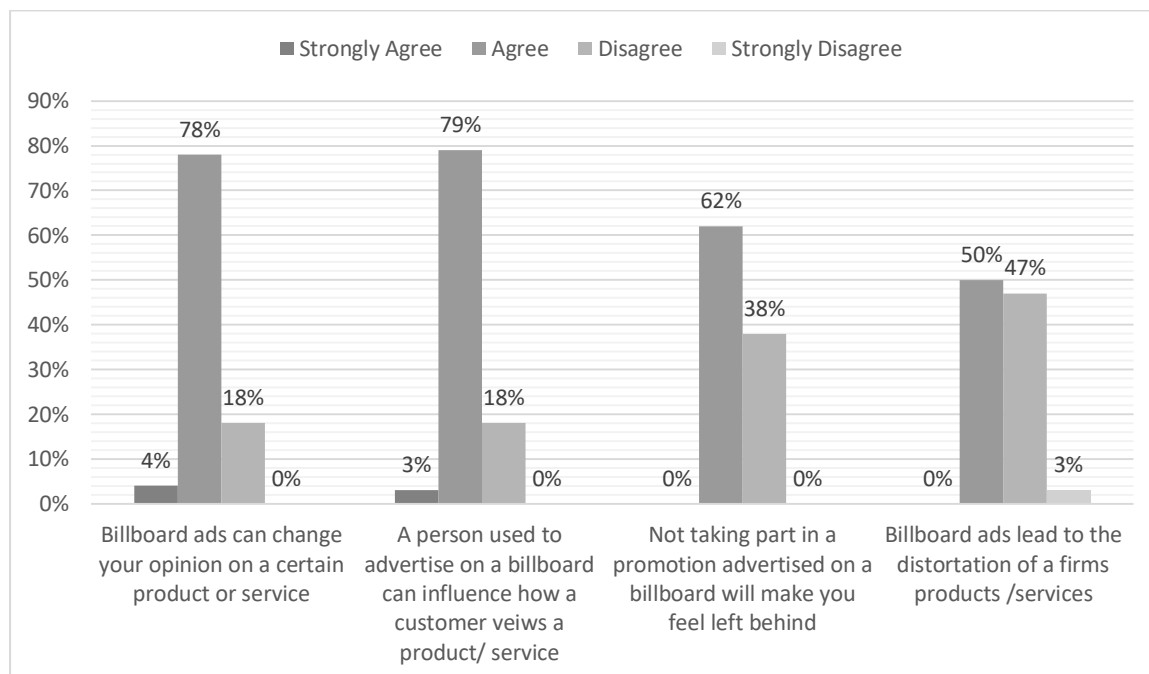
18% of the general public and Sable Press corporate clients strongly agreed and 72% agreed that information placed on a billboard would direct them to a particular suppliers. They supported this by saying the attractiveness of the billboard would make them search for the advertising company and also the contact details displayed on the billboard would help them locate the advertising company leading to more prospects which if handled properly would turn into regular clients showing an increase in market share of the company advertising using billboards. 10% however said they had never been directed to a particular company by a billboard advert.

The respondents answered questions on the variables used and the findings obtained, analysed and interpreted by the researcher overall showed that 65% of the respondents agreed and 23% strongly agreed that they would switch suppliers after being exposed to informative billboard ads and also they were attracted by the low costs associated with products or services advertised on billboards. 12% however disagreed and said they would not move from one supplier to the other because of billboard ads as they considered more than just the price or the person used to advertise the products, but they also considered the turnaround time of the company in terms of delivery, the quality of the products and they also considered whether the company met regulatory requirements like being registered to operate. This finding was also supported by Bovee and Arens (1994), when the authors said that billboard advertising was a cheaper medium compared to others like newspaper ads in terms of cost per individual exposure, and the authors went on to say the low costs can be translated to a lower price of goods offered compared to that of competitors, hence attracting more customers and increasing the market share of a company. Hawkins (1995) also supported that billboards ads can enhance the market share of a company when the author said that a brightly coloured advert is more able to receive attention than a dull advert, thus because billboards mostly hold brightly coloured adverts they can be noticed more and hence gain favour from the target market and impacting on the market share of a company.

Upon being interviewed, Sable Press management highlighted that their market share had been declining for the last 7 years, but they did not know how they could stop this problem. They however highlighted that they were trying to get customers through the use of newspaper adverts and the sponsorships they were doing to various organisations but there was no significant increase in the figures for the market share. The Public Relations, Marketing department and Sales department heads said that they had once considered the use of billboard advertising in a bid to try and enhance their market share but the issue was dropped because as management they were not sure if this move would cause any noticeable change to their company in terms of the market share. Upon being asked whether they thought billboards could enhance their market share 100% of Sable Press management said they thought it would because of its ability to be seen by so many people and also because of its permanent position, but they had not implemented it because their thoughts were not backed with any tangible evidence or research.

#### 4.4 Influence of billboard advertising on customer perceptions;

This segment of the research aimed at finding out whether billboard advertising had any influence on how customers view billboard adverts and whether the use of billboard ads would change how they perceived a company as well as how they perceive the company’s offerings. Variables outlined in Fig 4.3 were used to establish the influence of billboard advertising on customer perceptions.



**Fig 4.3 Graphical presentation of the variables used to determine the influence of billboard advertising on customer perception.**

4% of the general public and corporate clients respondents strongly agreed and 78% agreed that billboard ads would change their opinion on a certain product or service or even the company offering it. 18% however said their opinion on a product or a company was not influenced by billboard ads. 3% strongly agreed and 79% agreed that a person used to advertise on a billboard would have an influence on how they viewed a product or company. The respondents highlighted that if the person used to advertise had a good personality they would obviously associate the company advertising with the good ways of the model used. However 18% disagreed and said the person used to advertise would not influence how they perceived a company or the products offered as they totally separated the model with the operations of the company, considering that the model used would not contribute anything to the final output.

62% of the respondents agreed that not taking part in a promotion advertised on a billboard would make them feel left behind as they wanted to enjoy the advantages of the low prices which came with most promotions advertised on billboards. 38% however disagreed and said they would not feel left behind if they failed to participate in an advertised promotion. 50% of the corporate clients and the general public respondents agreed that billboard ads lead to the distortion of a firm's offerings as they believed that the sizes portrayed in the billboard advert were too exaggerated as well as the quality of the products especially beauty creams was also too exaggerated as the advertisers smoothed someone's skin using the photo editors but in reality the creams would not smoothen skin to the extent displayed on the billboard. However 47% disagreed and 3% strongly disagreed and said billboard ads did not lead to the distortion of a firm's products, as they viewed the organisations as only trying to make the products more legible hence increasing the size of the product on the billboard as well as the quality enhancement.

Overall 67% of the corporate clients as well as the general public respondents agreed whereas 2% strongly agreed that billboard ads influenced how they perceived an organisation as well as its offerings, showing that billboard ad indeed can influence how customers view an organisation as well as its offerings. Fishbein and Middlestadt, (1995) supported this finding by highlighting that consumers' attitudes and perceptions of a brand and the brand's products are formed by the information they possess about the products and their features. These brand perceptions are, according to recent billboard advertising literature, claimed to be the most reliable measurement of billboard advertising effectiveness. However 30% disagreed and 1% strongly disagreed and said how they viewed a supplier was not influenced by billboard ads but by other factors like the firm's reputation, quality of products as well as reliability of the company.



Sable Press management were able to tell how they thought consumers would view them if they were to use billboard ads, as they related to how they viewed other companies to which they are also consumers that use billboard ads. The accounting department head thought if Sable Press was to use billboard ads consumers would view the company as being of high quality provided that the billboard design and layout was also of high quality. The respondents also further explained that if a company used a very small, black and white billboard it would compromise the quality standards of the company as viewed by the consumers, thus affecting how consumers viewed Sable Press. 75% of the respondents highlighted that they saw billboard advertising as a way of organisations trying to portray the goodness on their offerings but 25% of the respondents said that the billboard ads in some way lead to the distortion of a firms offerings as they were sometimes over rated on the billboards.

#### **4.5 Summary**

This chapter looked more at the results of the research. Responses from the target population consisting Sable's Press corporate customer, the general consumer as well as Sable Press management employees were analysed and interpreted to give meaningful results of the research. Responses were obtained via the use of questionnaires, as well as from interviews. The researcher analysed the effect of billboard advertising on company performance concentrating more on whether sales and market share of Sable Press could be enhanced by the use of billboard adverts as well as how billboard ads influenced customer perceptions. This chapter was also helpful in answering the research objectives as well as the research questions. Overall out of all the respondents consisting of Sable Press corporate clients and the general public who took part in the research, 64% agreed whereas 21% strongly agreed that billboard advertising would enhance their buying hence showing that if Sable Press considered the use of billboard ads this could lead to an increase in sales volumes at the company. The respondents agreed to this as shown in Fig 4.1 when they viewed billboard ads to be brief but informative and they also agreed that billboard ads gave them the chance to repeat messages over and over again until they finally made a purchase. Respondents also said that they were attracted by the models used on billboards as well as the good colour combinations used and also that they were attracted by the low prices highlighted on the billboards. 15% of the corporate clients and the general public however said their purchase was not influenced by the presence of billboards as they spent most of their times indoors and they also did not pay much attention to billboards as they would be concentrating on the road and also they concluded that billboard ads were not easy to access because in most cases when they reached the location of the billboard ads

they would be concentrating on something else and also that the area would be overpopulated , making the billboards hard to see, read and interpret. The respondents also answered questions on the variables used to measure if billboard ads could enhance Sable Press's market share and the findings obtained, analysed and interpreted by the researcher overallly showed that 65% of the respondents agreed and 23% strongly agreed that they would switch suppliers after being exposed to informative billboard ads and also they were attracted by the low costs associated with products or services advertised on billboards. 12% however disagreed and said they would not move from one supplier to the other. Overallly 67% of the corporate clients as well as the general public respondents agreed whereas 2% strongly agreed that billboard ads influenced how they perceived an organisation as well as its offerings, showing that billboard ad indeed can influence how customers view an organisation as well as its offerings. However 30% disagreed and 1% strongly disagreed and said how they viewed a supplier was not influenced by billboard ads but by other factors like the firm's reputation, quality of products as well as reliability of the company. Sable Press management also highlighted that sales and market share were indeed going down, and they once considered using billboard advertising but they had no concrete evidence that it would benefit them, but they generally thought that billboard ads could enhance their sales and market share, and also make clients perceive them to be the best in the design and printing industry.

## **CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **5.0 Summary**

The research was carried out to find out the effect of billboard advertising on the performance of Sable Press Private Limited. The research's main objectives were to find out if billboard advertising was able to enhance the sales of Sable Press, if it was also able to increase the market share of Sable Press and finally to find out if billboard advertising had any influence on the perception of customers towards a firm and its offerings. The research was driven by the continued loss of sales and market share at Sable Press over the past 7 years which led to the poor performance of Sable Press. Many authors contributed substantially towards this area of study as they highlighted the benefits of billboard advertising towards the sales of organisations, and also towards the market share of the company. These authors highlighted the many factors that would eventually make a company enjoy from the use of billboard adverts. Some academics also highlighted the many factors that influenced how consumers viewed a company after being exposed to a billboard advert. The research made use of both qualitative and quantitative research methods, in a bid to get the best results out of the research. The sample size used for the research was 64 respondents. 20 of the respondents were Sable Press corporate clients, 40 were the general consumer and 4 were Sable Press managerial staff. On average the total response rate was 95%. The research findings reported that Sable Press's problem of low sales and continued reduction in market share would be resolved by the use of billboard advertising as the research findings showed that most the customers agreed that they would buy a product advertised on a billboard and that they would move from one supplier to the other provided the information provided on the billboard met their needs for example the information showing the affordability of the products as well the quality aspect of the firms offerings. From the analysis of the research the researcher concluded that if billboard advertising was to be given a chance at Sable Press it would indeed improve the performance of the company in terms of sales as well as market share, and also billboard advertising significantly influences how customer's perceived company.

### **5.1 Conclusions**

The researcher made conclusions of the research as outlined below.

#### **5.1.1 Determining if billboard advertising enhances the sales of Sable Press**

Overally out of all the respondents which took part in the research, 64% agreed whereas 21% strongly agreed that billboard advertising would enhance their buying hence showing an increase in sales volumes at Sable Press. The respondents agreed to this as they viewed billboard ads to be brief but informative and because it gives them the chance to repeat the message over and over again until

they finally make a purchase. Respondents also said that they were attracted by the models used on billboards as well as the good colour combinations used. 15% however said their purchase was not influenced by the presence of billboards as they spent most of their times indoors and they also did not pay much attention to billboards as they would be concentrating on the road.

### **5.1.2 To find out if billboard advertising increases the market share of Sable Press.**

From the findings obtained, analysed and interpreted by the researcher the 64% of the respondents agreed and 23% strongly agreed that they would switch suppliers after being exposed to informative billboard ads and also they were attracted by the low costs associated with products or services advertised on billboards. 12% however disagreed and said they would not move from one supplier to the other because of billboard ads as they considered more than just the price or the person used to advertise the products, but they also considered the turnaround time of the company in terms of delivery, the quality of the products and they also considered whether the company met regulatory requirements like being registered to operate.

### **5.1.3) To establish the influence of billboard advertising on customer perceptions**

Overallly 67% of the respondents agreed whereas 2% strongly agreed that billboard ads influenced how they perceived an organisation as well as its offerings. However 30% disagreed and 1% strongly disagreed and said how they viewed a supplier was not influenced by billboard ads but by other factors like the firm's reputation, quality of products as well as reliability of the company.

## **5.2 Recommendations**

From the findings and conclusions above the researcher recommends that:

The sales and marketing managers at Sable Press ought to consider billboard advertising as a marketing tool which can help the company in solving the problem of poor performance in terms of sales and market share because:

- It is an excellent way to communicate with targeted customers and helps derive consumer's demands of the company's services. Ayanwale et al (2005) supported this recommendation when the authors stipulated that programmes which include the art of billboard advertising, help in making clients more aware of the company's goods and services and condition the mind of a potential consumer to finally make purchase decisions. Hutt and Sper (2001) and Kotler (1999) also agreed with Ayanwale et al (2005), when they highlighted that billboard advertising help derive demand of goods and services being offered. Therefore a company whose products or services are well advertised and are made more visible will find use of

billboard advertising to be useful as they help meet organisational promotional objectives like enhancement of sales.

- It is economic compared to other forms of advertising like television advertising as it is exposed to thousands of people all day long. This is supported by Lusan (2008) when the author highlighted that billboard ads are undoubtedly the most fixed of advertising media forms. The author went on to say when billboards are used for advertising a company's goods or services they can be placed at a geographically attractive location which mostly requires lower costs per thousand exposures compared to other advertising tools like television adverts. The low costs incurred in billboard advertising also works as a factor which also results in goods or services having low prices, and because of these low prices in most cases consumers tend to purchase more leading to increased sales.
- It allows a firm to communicate their products and services over and over again. In support of this recommendation, Kotler (2002) says advertising as a public nature deliberates some type of acceptability on the goods or services offered and also suggests a uniform offering. The author goes on to say billboard advertising allows the seller to communicate his/her products over and over again. This form of advertising also permits the seller to compare the advertised products or services to that of other suppliers. Advertising promotes a platform for an organisation to clearly communicate its offerings through artful use of print, sound and colour. Using billboards for advertising will show the companies' offerings in a more real manner through the use of good design, sound and colour thus attracting more customers to try the designs offered on the billboard leading to an increase in the market share of an organisation.
- It helps create a company's image. Palmer and Stull (1991) go on to say that billboard advertising helps create a company's image. The type and amount of advertising a company does creates the image of the company in the mind of the customer. If most of the advertising carried out by a firm focuses on new products and services the company will be viewed by its customers as highly innovative. Kerin (2000) in support of Palmer and Stull's view highlighted that the outdoor advertisements continue to experience growth, because of its ability to reach so many prospective buyers and because it can create awareness. Once awareness is obtained, advertising can influence the creation of attitudes, thus resulting in the

creation of positive attitudes towards a product or a service, leading to the brand being preferred more results in an increase in market share.

- It can help build a good opinion on how consumers view the company's. Andrews (1959) in the journal of advertising (2001), supports this by when the author showed that consumers perceived billboard advertising to be a contributing factor in the provision of better good and services as this form of advertising promotes competition.
- Although billboard advertising does not make customers buy a product, it does build awareness, bearing in mind that awareness is the foundation of all sales, the marketing manager ought to give billboards advertising a try.

### **5.3 Recommendation for further research**

The researcher further recommends research to be done on the effect of billboard advertising on brand visibility, independently from sales, market share and customer perception.

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## **Appendix A: LETTER**

Midlands State University  
Department of Marketing Management  
Private Bag 9055  
Gweru

07 April 2015

The Human Resource Manager  
Sable Press Private Limited  
Blufhill Industrial Park  
Unit 20, 21 & 22  
Mabelreign  
Harare

Dear Madam

**REQUEST TO CARRY OUT RESEARCH AT SABLE PRESS.**

R114560J is a bonafide student at Midlands State University in the Department of Marketing Management. As a mandate for the completion of my program I am carrying out an investigation on the effect of billboard advertising on company performance. All gathered data will be for academic purposes only. Please be of assistance in any way possible.

Yours Faithfully

R114560J

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## **APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR MANAGERS**

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- 1) What advertising tools are you currently using?
- 2) How are these tools benefiting the company in terms of its sales, market share as well as how customers view the services provided to them?
- 3) Are you familiar with the advertising tools being used by your competitors?
- 4) If yes what advertising tools are your competitors using?
- 5) Have you ever considered advertising on billboards?
- 6) If you are to advertise on billboards, do you think the company will benefit in any way?
- 7) If yes, how do you think the company will benefit from the use of billboard adverts?

**Thank you for your cooperation.**

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**APPENDIX C: CORPORATE CUSTOMER QUESTIONNAIRE.**

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My name is R114560J and I am a fourth year student at Midlands State University (MSU). In partial fulfilment of my Bachelor in Commerce Honours Degree in Marketing Management I am carrying out an investigation on the effect of billboard advertising on company performance specifically looking at sales, market share as well as the perceptions of customers. Below is a questioner with a few questions which I sincerely ask you to answer honestly as a way to gather data on the above topic and to ensure the results are reliable and valid. I would be really grateful if you become part of this research. Please respond by ticking your response in the spaces provided. For any enquiries pertaining this research you can call or WhatsApp me on 0772 742 072 or alternatively email me at [etoma9@gmail.com](mailto:etoma9@gmail.com).

**Section A; Basic Data**

- 1) Company name .....
- 2) For how long have been employed at this company? .....
- 3) What position do you hold at this company?.....

**Section B**

**Make use the scale provided to give responses for the questions that follow;**

**Strongly Agree- 4; Agree- 3; Disagree- 2; Strongly Disagree- 1**

| Number | Statement   | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
|--------|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1      | Information provided on billboards helps in making purchase decisions               |   |   |   |   |
| 2      | Billboard adverts increase your demand for goods or services                        |   |   |   |   |
| 3      | Customers buy goods or services advertised on billboards                            |   |   |   |   |
| 4      | Customers are highly exposed to billboards  |   |   |   |   |
| 5      | Billboard adverts are easily accessible compared to TV , radio or newspaper adverts |   |   |   |   |
| 6      | Billboard adverts are very attractive   |   |   |   |   |

|    |   |  |  |  |  |
|----|---|--|--|--|--|
| 7  | Low prices can attract you to buy a good or service from your suppliers   |  |  |  |  |
| 8  | Information provided on a billboard advert or the person used to advertise can make you move from one supplier to the other |  |  |  |  |
| 9  | Information provided on a billboard can help give you directions of a particular company                                    |  |  |  |  |
| 10 | Billboard adverts can change your opinion on a certain products   |  |  |  |  |
| 11 | Not taking part in an advertised promotion will make you feel left behind   |  |  |  |  |
| 12 | Information provided on a billboard can make you feel like you are missing out on something                                 |  |  |  |  |

13 If you agreed or strongly agreed on question (8), why does the person used to advertise products or services on a billboard make you move from one supplier to the other?.....  
.....  
.....

14 Do you spend most of your time indoors or outdoors? .....

**The end.....thank you for your time and cooperation.**

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**APPENDIX D: GENERAL PUBLIC QUESTIONNAIRE**

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My name is R114560J and I am a fourth year student at Midlands State University (MSU). In partial fulfilment of my Bachelor in Commerce Honours Degree in Marketing Management I am carrying out an investigation on the effect of billboard advertising on company performance specifically looking at sales, market share as well as the perceptions of customers. Below is a questioner with a few questions which I sincerely ask you to answer honestly as a way to gather data on the above topic as well as to come up with valid and reliable data. I would be really grateful if you become part of this research. Please respond by ticking your response in the spaces provided. For any enquiries pertaining this research you can call or WhatsApp me on 0772 742 072 or alternatively email me at [etoma9@gmail.com](mailto:etoma9@gmail.com).

**Section A; Basic Data**

- 1) Gender;
- Male
- Female
- 
- 2) Age in years;
- 18-24
- 25-31
- 32-38
- 39-45
- 46and above

**Section B**

**Make use the scale provided to give responses for the questions that follow; Strongly Agree- 4; Agree- 3; Disagree- 2; Strongly Disagree- 1**

| Number | Statement  | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
|--------|--|---|---|---|---|
| 1      | Information provided on a billboards can help you as customers in making purchase decisions. |   |   |   |   |



|    |   |  |  |  |  |
|----|---|--|--|--|--|
| 2  | Billboard adverts increase your demand for goods or services.   |  |  |  |  |
| 3  | Customers buy goods or services advertised on billboards.   |  |  |  |  |
| 4  | Billboard adverts are easily accessible compared to TV, radio or newspaper adverts.   |  |  |  |  |
| 5  | Billboard adverts are very attractive and persuasive.   |  |  |  |  |
| 6  | Low prices can attract you to buy a good or service from your suppliers.  |  |  |  |  |
| 7  | Information provided on a billboard advert or the person used to advertise can make you move from one supplier to the other.      |  |  |  |  |
| 8  | Information provided on a billboard can help give you directions of a particular company.   |  |  |  |  |
| 9  | Billboard adverts can change your opinion on a certain products.  |  |  |  |  |
| 10 | Not taking part in an advertised promotion will make you feel left behind.  |  |  |  |  |
| 11 | Billboard adverts lead to the bias of product or service features, hence underestimating the intelligence of you as the customer. |  |  |  |  |

12 If you agreed or strongly agreed on question (7), why does the person used to advertise products or services on a billboard make you move from one supplier to the other?.....

13 Do you spend most of your time indoors or outdoors? .....

14) If you agreed or strongly agreed on question (5), what is it that attracts you on billboards?.....

**The end... Thank you for your time and cooperation.**