



**LOCAL CONTEXT: AN EXPLORATION OF THE ROLE OF
GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATIONS IN OUTDOOR ADVERTISING**

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DECLARATION BY CANDIDATE

I, Ksenia Sadovnik, declare that the research project submitted for the qualification BA Honours in Graphic Design, at Vega School is my own work and it is original work that has not been previously been submitted to any other institution of higher education. I further declare that all sources cited or quoted are indicated and acknowledged by means of a comprehensive list of references, and that I:

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ABSTRACT

Outdoor advertising is a challenging form of communication. It is generally non-personal, with limited selectivity, and historically has been very static. Since the start of the 21st century, the outdoor advertising sector has been transforming due to a number of economic, regulatory, social and technological factors. Outdoor advertising needs to be re-examined in order to better connect with the public. Focus on a specific location and being aware of the local context and cultural sensitivities of a specific site make it a more effective and relevant form of advertising. To achieve this, brand managers need to investigate cultural sensitivities and gain local insights about specific outdoor advertising locations.

This study explored the characteristics of specific locations in Johannesburg, South Africa, to take into account the local context in order for consumers to feel that brands are talking to them directly and are tied to them emotionally. The purpose behind this study was to determine the effectiveness of brands being contextualised in outdoor advertising to create a positive image of a brand. The study explored three different sites in Johannesburg – Sandton, Soweto and Maboneng.

The research paper sought to answer the following research questions:

- How does the cultural landscape of a particular area influence perception of outdoor advertising and impact efficiency of communication?
- Can companies possibly benefit from ‘localising’ their outdoor advertising solutions to better suit the peculiarities of a particular neighbourhood?

The study utilised critical realism as the main research paradigm. A phenomenographical approach was chosen for data collection. Thematic analysis was used to analyse the patterns in the data collected and to answer the research question.

The research revealed that effective advertising needs to be not only creative, but strategic as well, and that location is key to a successful outdoor advertising

strategy. Customers differ in their preferences and needs, depending on location. The right positioning can affect the advertised product and its success in the area.

The study revealed that each location has unique characteristics, such as geographical position, history, culture, specific profiles of inhabitants and visitors, including income level, education, main occupation, and the location's signature activities among others. The outcome of this study should provide branding strategists with some insight into how the cultural landscape of a particular area may influence perception of outdoor advertising and impact efficiency of communication as it demonstrates that brands could possibly benefit from 'localising' their outdoor advertising solutions to better suit the peculiarities of a particular neighbourhood.

Furthermore, this study should help brands to fit more organically into the environment, to increase the ability to attract the interest of the public, to gain insights into the local market and enhance the efficiency of communication. Companies can reconsider their current brand communication strategies to achieve greater impact.

Key words: context, location, outdoor advertising.

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CHAPTER 1 – ORIENTATION OF THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Advertising is a crucial media industry, which has a high impact on the cultural environment. Outdoor advertising, as pointed out by Siddiqui, Tarani, Fatani, Raza, Butt and Azeema (2015), is probably the most effective and profitable medium for advertisements, because it cannot be hidden. Consumers often spend long periods of time travelling on roads, where they would inevitably see billboards which create maximum exposure of a brand in the market. However, the traditional business model is now under challenge from the new forms of social communication afforded by the internet (Sinclair, 2015). Globalisation is another threat. The advertising business has become highly globalised. Global corporations from the United States and Western European countries own most of the brand names that we know through advertising and they spread their culture and lifestyle to the rest of the world (Sinclair, 2015).

The focus on global culture can lead to an identity crisis in local communities. Many researchers point out the importance of local market sensitivity for brands (Chahal, 2015). John Hegarty, an advertising executive and a founder of the agency Bartle Bogle Hegarty, states that advertising will not work when people do not feel connected, because the advertisement does not have a good fit with their culture. Without considering ethics and norms, advertisements have the capability of destroying a sense of belonging to places (Jordaan, 2001).

1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT, RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND OBJECTIVES

1.2.1 Problem Statement

Outdoor advertising plays an important role in the visual environment in South Africa. It affects the process of creating healthy communities. A sense of place and identity is essential and created by means of the visual environment. It guides, informs and directs viewers. However, if outdoor advertising is done without proper planning and careful consideration, it may negatively impact the local environment (Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism, 1998).

“Socially responsible urban advertising” is not a new concept, but the global economic recession in the early 21st century, coupled with other trends such as growing competition in the market, shifting urban demographics, and advancements in web-based technology, has not allowed this concept to take root in outdoor advertising (Ries & Trout, 2001: 24). New strategies must be applied, where not only the advertisement’s content and size, but also the specific location, plays a big part in building brand awareness successfully.

1.2.2 Purpose Statement

This paper aims to bring visibility to this new approach to urban outdoor advertising, as well as to contribute additional information to the current body of knowledge in the following ways:

Firstly, it identifies differences across various locations – what makes them unique and how does it affect outdoor advertising placed there?

Secondly, it positions this research in the context of other modern advertising strategies.

Thirdly, it creates a resource platform for companies and designers.

Lastly, the study determines the field and begins to map the parameters of this type of work with the intention of highlighting both the attention to methods and the impact of outdoor advertising.

This research – exploring the context of locations – will help to expand the current understanding of the problem, stimulate new connections, and give further recommendations for mapping of the field.

1.2.3 Motivation of the Relevance of the Study

The researcher’s experience of working in an advertising agency and knowing some of the challenges which brands can face in putting their advertisements on billboards, are the reasons behind this research. The author believes that

investigating different aspects of outdoor advertisements, such as location, is key to success in the age of digitalisation.

The problem of the loss of influence by outdoor advertising worldwide is complicated because of many factors. A rise of social media is one of them. Advertising agencies are trying to discover a new role for classical outdoor advertising. Brand marketing and content are the leading advertising strategies in recent years (Gregory, 2018). Innovation in advertising comes from the understanding of users' needs and wants and the understanding of an area where an advertisement goes and the area surrounding it. Each location¹ has its own characteristics, which makes it different from the other similar locations. Ensuring the strong connection to places and people is critical to the maintenance of a successful brand.

1.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The primary research question of this study is:

How does the cultural landscape of a particular area influence perceptions of outdoor advertising?

The secondary research questions of this study are:

- Which characteristics need to be explored in analysis of specific locations?
- Why is it important for the brands to consider these differences?

1.4 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

This study aims to explore the effect of location within the outdoor advertising industry. The aims for this research study are to:

- Investigate different characteristics of three chosen locations that brand managers must consider to make their advertisements successful within a local context.

¹ Location means the area or suburb where the advertisement is going to be placed

- Use the gained knowledge about the characteristics of locations to determine how to best to communicate outdoor advertising to people.

The objectives of this study are:

- To critically assess the locations' characteristics.
- To classify and evaluate the information regarding the specific locations.
- To evaluate how the local cultural context impact perceptions of outdoor advertising.

1.5 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

All studies have limitations that could possibly impact the results of the study. The list of the limitations related to this study are highlighted below:

The sample size can be the first limitation. The number of the units of analysis depends on the type of research and can be limited. If the sample size is small it will affect the whole research process. Findings can differ according to different sample sizes. However, the qualitative approach lends itself to the selection of small samples, such as the sample used in this study.

The lack of reliable or available data can limit the analysis and the size of the sample. The current study depends on having access to documents and people around only three specific sites in Johannesburg. Other sites may be very different. At the same time, this provides an opportunity for future research.

In a qualitative study, the trustworthiness of data is limited due to the fact that it cannot be independently verified. This can be counteracted by the use of triangulation, i.e. the use of different data-collection tools where the results from each can be compared. In this study, observations and semi-structured interviews, supported by tourism websites helped to overcome this problem. There are limitations with semi-structured interviews which may result from the selective memory of a researcher and exaggeration of some information.

Cultural differences can create additional misunderstandings. There is the potential to view things or places in a consistently inaccurate way, which differs from reality.

1.6 ANTICIPATED CONTRIBUTION OF THE STUDY

The researcher anticipates that the results of this study will show the importance of unique characteristics of various geographical locations of outdoor advertising, to which brand managers need to pay more attention, in order to be able to adjust their campaigns to the local markets and thus be successful. The study hopes to prove that brand managers should avoid generalising and must use localised market insight; in other words, brands should connect to specific locations to be able to reach more of the population from a particular geographical area.

CHAPTER 2 - LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This literature review discusses current findings in the outdoor advertising industry in general; the outdoor advertising market in South Africa specifically; and, how outdoor advertising can be more effective if cultural, lifestyle and other features of a specific outdoor advertising location are taken into account.

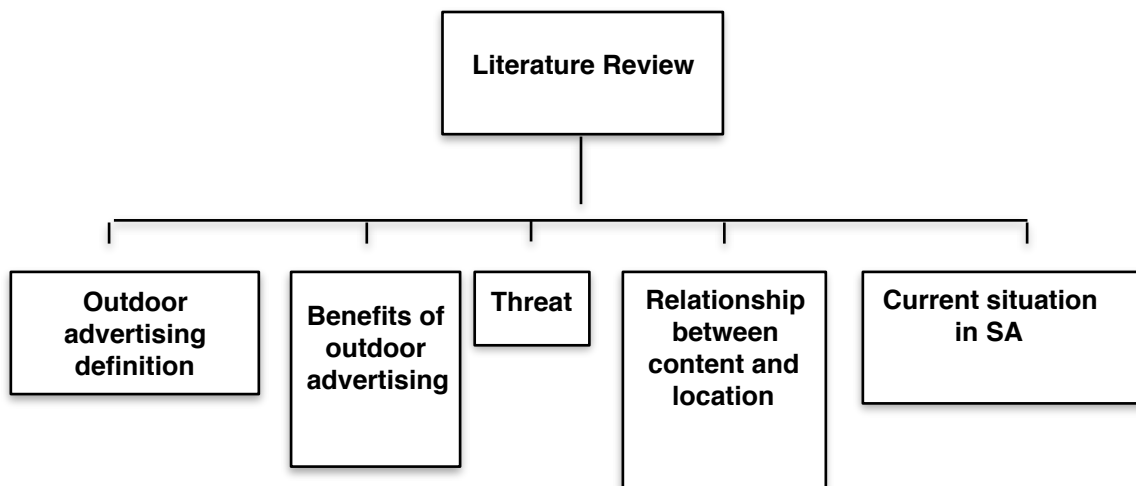


Figure 2.1: Outline of the literature chapter

2.2 THE CONCEPT OF OUTDOOR ADVERTISING

Communication plays an important role in an economic system and the functioning of modern market economies. In this case, communication through advertising can be a useful tool for supporting healthy and ethically responsible competition that stimulates economic growth (Achien'g, 2009).

According to the South African Manual for Outdoor Advertising Control, outdoor advertising is a visible representation of an object, word, symbol, name, or a combination of them (Jordaan, 2001). Davidson (2001), a former general manager of the Outdoor Advertising Association of South Africa, adds to that by describing outdoor advertising as a land-use form of advertising and a medium for displaying commercial information. He further states that it is a big part of the

Western economic system, which has direct and indirect positive outcomes for the different parts of a community.

Outdoor advertising is usually produced in the form of large printed billboards, which can be placed on buildings (walls, windows), street furniture, such as bus stops, or can be freestanding (on poles and/or frames). These signs are usually located at very visible, prime city spots, at the crossroad advertisements of major human routes. The access to these spaces is generally unrestricted to the public. The material used may vary. Recently the technology has expanded from only posters to more than 40 other types of media, from high-tech electronic billboards and video walls, to innovative store fascias. However, the most cost-effective print medium is vinyl. The advertisements can also be hand-painted, presented on digital screens or can include some animated elements, such as flashing signs. Davidson (2001) states that outdoor advertising space is usually used by global companies for medium to short-term advertising campaigns.

Over the last fifty years, outdoor advertising has been a key medium to express and explore ideas and different strategies (Achien'g, 2009). Nowadays, billboards are an essential means of communication, particularly in business. To ensure effectiveness, they must follow certain communication principles. Effective advertisements must have a clear message with a strong visual appearance to support them. They must be easy to read and be clutter-free. It is hard to evaluate the effectiveness of billboard advertising as there is no real way to analyse who absorbs the message.

There are many benefits to using billboards. Placement is among of them. Placing an advertisement close to the point of sale can increase the sales in the area. Geographic flexibility is another advantage as it provides wide exposure at low cost. Visual impact will depend on the size of the advertisement and creativity of the message. Billboards, however, have their limitations as due to typically short time exposure to the advertisement, there is a limit to the number

of words that can be included in the message. Billboards are also generally inefficient for measurement and demographic selectivity (Achien'g, 2009).

Outdoor advertising is beneficial for:

- rundown areas – to revitalise trade or businesses;
- community – to provide information and identification;
- charities – to advertise charitable causes;
- safety – to provide more secure environment;
- amenity – to contribute to an area by screening unsightly features and by adding colour to a drab environment, to enhance the symbolic value of a city by becoming landmarks and objects of interest and pride for its citizens and visitors alike (Davidson, 2001).

According to Ornico (2014), website monitoring and analysing data show that nine out of ten people believe that billboards are changing the environment making it colourful, eight out of ten find the information on billboards important, and seven out of ten people trust the brands depicted there.

Schwartz (2014), the global creative president of advertising firm TBWA, says that the outdoor industry is under threat. He points to statistics, which show that, in 2014, the most money spent on advertising went into digital (28% digital and 4% outdoor). Digital advertising has taken the market by storm and now is the mainstream form of advertising. This situation is expected to increase to the detriment of the outdoor advertising in the future (Hiebert, 2014). According to Accenture's (2016) research, the biggest factor in using digital formats is greater returns.

Companies still believe that the convergence of traditional and digital advertising can help to target their audience more effectively (Accenture, 2016). New strategies involve the use of some interactive elements. A campaign 'Smarter Cities for IBM', designed by advertising agency Ogilvy France, is a good example of this new approach. The outdoor campaign showcases real

shelters from the rain, benches and ramps upstairs, with the slogan “Smart ideas for smarter cities”. This campaign does not just visually show that IBM can make cities smarter, but demonstrates it in practice, making this advertisement a useful part of the infrastructure (Creative Guerrilla Marketing, 2016).



Figure 2.2: IBM's Smarter Cities campaign

Source: (Creative Guerrilla Marketing, 2016).

Not only content and size, but also location plays a big part for brand awareness. Location must be connected to the brand to be able to cover more of the population from a particular geographical area. Chahal (2015) agrees that brands must avoid generalising and must use localised market insight. A generic approach to advertising can be inefficient due to cultural differences. It is very important to identify differences of countries, and then utilise those identified insights to target a specific market. Brands must have even finer cognisance of the even smaller local context. The content of the advertisement must be quickly understandable to the public from that neighbourhood. Usually the viewers spend approximately three seconds watching the billboard. Content needs to be set according to the audience who is exposed to it the most, and be easy to understand. Companies need to pay attention to unique characteristics of various locations. Mostly locations are analysed based on their geographical characteristics and on user perspectives merged with historical events. Liu, Wei, Sun and Miao (2013) state that geographical information plays a more important role in the analysis and suggest investigating geographical

characteristics from the perspective of location using empirical analysis, with a focus on the geographical neighbourhood. Each geographical area has a specific function, such as education, entertainment, business.

For many global companies, Africa represents a market full of opportunities for outdoor advertising. With structural changes in the economy, the population is quickly urbanising and the middle class is growing rapidly. The urban population percentage has already reached 40% and is growing (Ornico, 2014). South Africa, as one of the leading economies on the continent, is at the forefront of this trend. The outdoor advertising industry in South Africa, according to Davidson (2001), is still small, but is evolving fast and is becoming highly innovative. Outdoor advertising is the most effective way of communicating with the developing elements of the population and reaching potential consumers in South Africa. It is the only medium of brand communication in some rural areas, where 60% of population are functionally illiterate and most of them do not have television (Davidson, 2001).

South Africa is a unique country in terms of culture and historical heritage. It is a very diverse place where differences in languages, culture, race and social backgrounds could lead to various people from different backgrounds understanding and processing the same information in different ways. Because of those differences, misunderstanding can happen in the process of communication and negatively impact the people.

CHAPTER 3 - RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 OVERVIEW OF THE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1.1 Research Paradigm, Approach and Design

In the opinion of this researcher, critical realism is the most appropriate research paradigm for this research paper. The reason the researcher adopted this practice is that it focuses on the transformation of society. The purpose is not to interpret the world, but to change it. In critical realism, ideas are based on relationships in the society. The critical realism paradigm questions the current assumptions and values, and challenges conventional social structures. Critical realism combines participants and researchers in order to develop new ways of understanding, which then leads to action (Gray, 2014). Methods, which allow for collaboration, like group discussion and interviews, are part of the critical paradigm.

Inductive thinking is used in this research. It is based on relationships between things or information (Crouch & Pearce, 2012). As opposed to deductive thinking, inductive reasoning works by moving from specific observations to broader generalisations and theories. Inductive thinking generates theories from observations and creates new theory. This can be called a "bottom up" approach. In this case, a conclusion is likely to be based on premises (Burney, 2008). The disadvantage of this approach is that it can lead to speculative thinking and can involve a degree of uncertainty.

For this study, a combination of qualitative research approach and quantitative research approach is used. Qualitative research explores behaviour, social life and generates words, while quantitative focuses on statistics and generates numbers, as data for analysis (Bricki & Green, 2007). Qualitative research allows more information to be available and makes gathering information easier for the researcher (Bricki & Green, 2007). It is a descriptive and reasoning research. The advantages of this approach are that it gives the researcher opportunity to understand perceptions of participants better and provides

researchers with a meaning behind the numbers. It allows flexibility to choose research methods appropriate to the situation. The disadvantage is that it cannot be applied to the whole population due to its small sample sizes. Quantitative approach uses directly measurable type of data collected. The advantage of quantitative approach is that it allows for generalisation of the research findings. Generalisability is much easier with this approach because it uses probability samples (Bacon-Shone, 2015). By using a combination of qualitative and quantitative approaches, i.e. identifying the issues first, then measuring responses, one can achieve more reliable outcomes.

A phenomenographical approach was used for data collection. Phenomenography is a qualitative research methodology, within the interpretivist paradigm. "Phenomenographers deal with both the conceptual and the experiential, as well with what is thought of as that which is lived" (Richardson, 1999: 60). It is a theoretical perspective that uses "unstructured" methods of data collection. It puts emphasis on the inductive collection of large amounts of data. The advantage is that it allows for the inclusion of factors that were not part of the original research focus. It focuses on people's experiences and their natural settings. This methodology gives an opportunity to gather data from local people through casual conversations, as opposed to formal interviews.

3.1.2 Population and Sample

The population included workers and residents, as well as other people such as visitors to the locations. The research required one person from each location, which resulted in a sample of three. Opportunity sampling, which is based on availability of people willing to take part, was used. This is an easy method, but it does not provide a representative sample (McLeod, 2014).

3.2 DATA COLLECTION METHOD

Triangulation was selected as the ideal research method for this study. Triangulation is a new approach when qualitative forms of research are used. It

is a multi-method approach to data collection and data analysis. Semi-structured interviewing, usage of documented sources and participant observation are sources of data collection.

Interviews with key informants were conducted to corroborate and complement the observations. According to Braun and Clarke (2013), semi-structured interviews use an interview guide, but allow more flexibility such as asking questions in a manner suitable to a specific situation. The questions can be open-ended and be not included in the interview guide. The advantage of this method is that the researcher can be also involved in a discussion by providing input, which will lead to cooperation between research participants and the researcher (Braun & Clarke, 2013). Another plus is that this method can uncover in-depth detailed insights from the participants and touch on sensitive issues that cannot otherwise be easily accessed. The main disadvantage of semi-structured interviews is that this method cannot be generalised and applied to a broader population because of small sample sizes.

Participant observation is the most natural data collection method. This method explores human behaviours and experiences in a particular context. The advantage is that this method allows a designer to uncover the meaning behind the human behaviours and has no limitations (Taylor, Bogdan & DeVault, 2015). The challenge is in organising and systematising of the findings of such a fluid process.

Usage of documented sources involves systematic data collection from existing records. Document sources can include reports, financial documents, orders and websites. The advantage of this method is in the ease of data collection since the information already exists. The disadvantage is that some sources of data may be unreliable and the process of searching for the right sources can be time-consuming.

3.3 DATA ANALYSIS

Data analysis is an essential part in research process, where the researcher answers the research question (Braun & Clarke, 2013).

Qualitative data analysis was applied in this study. This involves a range of procedures and processes that require understanding, explanation and interpretation of the gathered information (Online QDA, 2017a). Qualitative research takes understanding through inductive research. Inductive research moves from grouping fragmented details into a view of a situation as a whole. When applying the inductive process, data is collected first and then analysed to find out the relationships between elements. The purpose of inductive approach is to find the internal logic of the subject. The advantage of inductive process is that it takes into account the existing concepts and theories, but does not set out to falsify or corroborate them (Gray, 2014: 17).

The main principles of qualitative data analysis are that:

- people understand reality differently;
- a social phenomenon can be only understood inside its own context;
- analysis is not linear; and
- there is close interaction with the data.

In this study, a thematic approach to data analysis was used. According to Clarke, V., & Braun, V. (2014) this approach has no limitations and can be used in a descriptive or realist way. It provides a systematic framework for coding qualitative data. Then it helps to identify patterns across the data.

3.4 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Ethical considerations are the dilemmas about using the right way to execute research and not to create problematic conditions for the people involved in the research process (Schurink, 2005). Schurink (2005) states that research ethics

is a complex matter and believes that it is useful to follow a certain process, where researchers need to be honest about the purpose of their research.

According to Bryman and Bell (2007), the following ethical principles must be considered:

- Participants should not be harmed in any way;
- Respect of dignity of participants must be prioritised;
- All the concerns should be obtained from the research participants prior to the study;
- Participant's privacy must be protected;
- Level of confidentiality of the research data must be ensured; and
- All the communication must be done with transparency and honesty.

Researchers must understand their full responsibility to be respectful and sensitive to research participants. In order to address ethical considerations in an effective manner, the researcher ensured the following:

- She explained the aim and objectives of the study as well as the procedures to be followed up front to everybody taking part in the research;
- She made it clear that participating in the research was voluntary, and if any of the participants wanted to withdraw from it, they had a right to do so;
- She avoided use of discriminatory, offensive or other unacceptable language;
- She ensured that participants' privacy and anonymity will be respected at all times and that the information they share will be confidential; and
- She maintained the highest level of objectivity in discussions.

3.5 TRUSTWORTHINESS

Using more than one research method increases the trustworthiness of the research process. Some data can be available only through one collection method, but using a mixed data collection approach one can balance the results (Dawson, 2009). The benefit of using this method is that it highlights the imperfection in each data collection method and uses the strengths of each of them. Triangulation method is used to crosscheck the results of the gathered data.

CHAPTER 4 – DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The aim of this chapter is to reach a better understanding of the environment of three different locations in Johannesburg, namely Sandton, Soweto and Maboneng – their history, cultural context and other specific features, and how those may impact perception of advertising in the area. Neighbourhood analysis is a complex process that requires a broad approach and different research methods. Those methods are: documentation, observation and semi-structured interviews with participants connected to the area.

4.2 FIRST LOCATION - SANDTON CENTRAL AREA

4.2.1 Documentation

Sandton was established in 1969 and its population at present is around 230 000 people. It is a home for different races: white (49,78%), black (34,67%), Indian (11,12%) and others (Frith, 2018). The area is located 20km north of the Johannesburg Central Business District (CBD). The name Sandton developed from the combination of Sundown and Bryanston (Dictionary of Southern African Place Names, 2018).

Sandton is a major business and commercial centre of South Africa. Sandton Central precinct employs a skilled management team that aims to deliver an exceptional experience for Sandton's residents and visitors. The first component of their strategy to achieve this is a focus on providing security and creating a clean environment. There is a team of people who does maintenance, cleaning and landscaping. The second component is about marketing and branding the area through promotional strategies, market research, media and public art programmes. Sandton, being central to Gauteng and South Africa, is a truly African cosmopolitan centre of business, trade, finance and ideas, promoting global people and smart ideas (Sandton Central, 2018).

It took less than 30 years to achieve this status. The suburbs in the south of Sandton were established in the late 20th century and soon became known as 'gentlemen's' areas. At that stage, the area extended beyond the city and formed the northern suburbs of Johannesburg. At that time, Sandton was a smallholding and farming community. First residents of the area were wealthy white farmers. They lived in solid brick houses, and owned land, but still had a fairly simple, unsophisticated lifestyle growing vegetables and fruit. The Sandton population was traditionally English-speaking with high levels of education. The transformation of Sandton from a semi-rural, farming community to a business district came with the building of Sandton City, a large mall with an office tower, developed and opened for trade in 1974. The area has flourished into becoming the one of the most stylish and alluring areas in Johannesburg. The precinct was very privileged under the apartheid regime, receiving consistent support from the government. This support was in the form of education and providing jobs to avoid competition from black workers (Nyapokoto, 2014).

The area had always a good connection with Johannesburg CBD. The commercial development started booming in the 1980s. The area was cheaper than the CBD, with affordable office space and offered a pleasant environment with green lawns and fountains. In the second decade of the 21st century, however, Sandton now commands the highest office rentals and has become the most important business district in South Africa. Sandton is home to some of the largest consulting, banking and financial firms. Nedcor building, Sandton Convention Centre, Discovery, Sasol and Webber Wentzel buildings are among the new developments in Sandton. In 2000, the Johannesburg Stock Exchange moved its headquarters to Sandton from downtown Johannesburg.

Sandton is not only the home to the biggest corporates, but is also a world-class urban development with a large number of green buildings and the continent's finest contemporary architecture. The number of new apartment towers is also increasing. The right combination of safety, convenience of location and large plots have made it the top suburb for wealthy individuals and

families. Coronation Street, also known as the Billionaires' Street, is one of the wealthiest streets in the area with the prices for a residence topping as much as R40 million (Nyapokoto, 2014). Sandton has a wide range of accommodation. There are business hotels, such as the Hilton, 5-star luxurious hotels, such as the Saxon and Michelangelo hotels and upmarket guest houses. Despite rapid development there are some traces of history to be found, like the church on Stella Street, built in 1925, across from the Sandton Gautrain Station (Sandton Central, 2018).

Sandton was developed with a view to meeting the demands of the most sophisticated and educated individuals. Residents of Sandton always had the power to influence their lifestyle and environment; according to The Media Online (2018), almost two thirds fall into the High Living Standards Measure (LSM) group. Most of them are married or living together with the partners while 61% have higher education qualifications and work full time (The Media Online, 2018).

A wide range of educational facilities is another central benefit of the location. Schools in the area include Crawford College, St David's, Marist Bothers, Redhill School, Sandhurst Preparatory School and many others. With maximum class sizes of 25 pupils, education at these schools guarantees a happy and enriching environment with a sense of social responsibility, ability to change the world and personal integrity. These schools have a high Grade 12 pass rate and teachers are highly experienced and qualified (Nyapokoto, 2014).

4.2.2 Observation

The description in this section arises from the researcher's observations in April 2018. The rapidly growing infrastructure is what strikes you first when you are entering Sandton area. The architecture is mostly contemporary. All the new developments are massive, such as Discovery head office, but look very light. Not only office complexes, but also apartment buildings, commercial developments and infrastructure objects, such as Gautrain station, have a futuristic appearance. New developments are not covered with the

advertisements, only with construction wraps during the development phase. Most of the buildings have their own branding on them, mostly corporate logos.

Sandton is a major shopping destination, and home to a number of large shopping malls. They are trying to keep up with the changing architecture of the precinct and increasing sophistication of its residents – most have gone through renovation and serious expansion. The upgraded Benmore Garden shopping centre has been recently opened to the public and has become a popular retail destination. Sandton City shopping centre is still the biggest and the busiest shopping centre in the location. The Protea court in Sandton City shopping centre, with its elegant glass dome, is home to various prestigious brands.

The roads are fairly narrow, with multiple traffic lights, so traffic is usually busy. The busiest time is in the mornings from 7am to 9am and in the evenings from 4pm to 6 pm. Some roads, close to the schools, such as Rivonia Road or Grayston Drive are also busy during lunch time, when children are fetched from schools. Quality roads and sidewalks are improving and providing safe and comfortable experience. Upgrades are taking place in Grayston Drive, West Street, Katherine Street, Rivonia Road, 5th Avenue and Friedman Drive. The new Grayston bridge is almost complete. The active construction situation causes additional traffic congestion. Although the area has recently upgraded sidewalks and dedicated cycling lines to enhance safety and encourage more people to cycle, there are not many people walking or cycling on the streets. It only becomes crowded during lunch time, when people go out to buy food or to eat outside of the offices. Most of the people in central district dress well and look smart. They can be noticed in the local restaurants or crossing the streets close to Sandton Convention centre. The residents mainly speak English. There is a sense of safety in Sandton. A visible presence of security guards gives this impression.

Sandton is developing an integrated public transport solution aiming to reduce traffic congestion. Gautrain station is central in Sandton and is usually busy, even crowded in the morning and after work hours. Gautrain Sandton Station

connects the area with OR Tambo International Airport, Pretoria and the Johannesburg CBD.

There is some outdoor advertising in Sandton, but there is a sense of balance with the environment. Sandton Central has fewer billboards than the rest of the area. There are several digital screens in the area, and some billboards have solar panels on top of them. Most of the advertisements are placed at the traffic lights. They are informative and take little space.

4.2.3 Semi-Structured Interview

An interview was conducted on 16 March 2018. The participant, Jane², was originally from Russia, but has been living in South Africa for the last 11 years: two years in Cape Town and the rest in the Sandton area, Johannesburg. She is a housewife and is raising a son, 8 years old, and falls under high LSM.

Having learned about the participant's background, I moved to questions related to the area. First of all, it was important to understand why her family chose the Sandton area to live in. Jane explained that convenience of the area was the main priority. Her husband, a financial adviser, had an office in Katherine Street in Sandton. Even with the constantly growing rental costs, he was not considering moving the office. For him, it was essential to be close to his clientele, international and local, and Sandton presented the ideal positioning. It also gave a sense of prestige and status to the business. Jane's son went to Crawford school in Benmore. The school was only across the road from where they lived. Jane said that in the mornings, they walked to the school, and this was an important part of their routine, and it made them happy. All her son's activities, swimming and boxing, were also in the area. Jane explained that Sandton offered a wide variety of extra-mural activities for children. The quality standards of those activities were high due to a very high professional level of teachers. Having all the activities in one area helped to avoid unnecessary traffic. Sandton also met Jane's other basic needs. She bought groceries at the

² For ease of reading, but to preserve confidentiality, I have called her Jane – this is not her real name

recently renovated Benmore shopping centre, and went to the new luxury Virgin Active gym in Alice Lane.

Answering the question on the other benefits of the area, Jane mentioned entertainment. She had many friends living close by and preferred to stay in the area when she could meet them. Usually they went to the restaurants in the evenings or to dance in the clubs. At late hours, Jane often used Uber for a number of reasons, such as convenience, safety, or drinking and driving. Uber worked perfectly in the area and Jane was not aware of any bad cases related to Uber in Sandton.

The next questions were about advertising in Sandton. She said she liked observing advertisements while she was in traffic. Jane mostly noticed advertisements with a focus on lifestyle, such as fashion or different events. Digital screens did not grab much of her attention during daytime but, interestingly enough, this changed completely at night. Jane mentioned it was the time when she enjoyed watching digital advertisements on the screens and ignored the static print. All the lights and movement attracted her attention while she was sitting in the passenger seat in an Uber car.

4.3 SECOND LOCATION - SOWETO

4.3.1 Documentation

Soweto, originally a large township in the south-west of Johannesburg, falls under the municipality of the Johannesburg Metro Council, Gauteng. The place is symbolic to South Africa. It is a vibrant area combining the apartheid past and possibility of a new Africa.

The history of Soweto goes back to the discovery of gold in 1885 in Johannesburg. The discovery attracted many people from around the world, and specifically from Africa. The city was inundated with people, with more than half the population being black, living near the mines in the city centre. The first residents, only black families, were based in Klipspruit, later renamed Pimville. In the 1930s, the new demographic boom brought more labour to the city, so

new housing was built in an area now called Orlando. The area was named after the first administrator Edwin Orlando Leaky. This was the time when the government started to separate Whites from Blacks. Soweto was the largest black township at that time, but the population did not have permanent residence status; they were regarded only as temporary residents working in Johannesburg (South African History Online, 2011). The next major shift happened in 1940s, when James Mpanza, known as the Father of Soweto, carried out the first land invasion. As a result, about 20 000 squatters occupied land near Orlando.

The name change was initiated by William Carr, a chair of non-European affairs in government. He held a competition to name the area. People's response was very enthusiastic. The name Soweto came from the first letters of the original description of the location South Western Township. The name was first used in 1963 and in only a few years became well known internationally (South African History Online, 2011).

Soweto was a centre of the struggle against the apartheid. Between 1955 and 1958, the government, implementing apartheid policies, moved thousands of black families from Johannesburg city to Soweto (Naidoo, 2018). The area experienced serious civil unrest during apartheid. There were violent riots in 1976, where 176 striking students were killed and 1 000 injured.

Since the end of the apartheid regime in 1994, a huge amount of work has been done to develop Soweto and to integrate it into the city of Johannesburg: more than 100 000 houses have been built, sanitation and electricity connections have been installed, more than 314 kilometres of roads have been resurfaced, and street lights and pedestrian walks have been established. Soweto is also the home of the biggest healthcare facility in Africa, Chris Hani Baragwanath Hospital, and the state-of-the-art Soweto Theatre. Sowetan residential property is now booming. The original houses have been sold to the families that resided there, mostly through a special government programme. Private housing was developed in the 1980s (Soweto, 2018). Five shopping

centres have been built over the last twenty years, including the 65 000m² Maponya Mall, built in 2007 by Soweto's homegrown millionaire, Richard Maponya. These days, the Johannesburg Housing Company is converting old single-sex hostels into comfortable family homes. The city of Johannesburg has also invested about R130 million in an affordable good-quality housing project in Orlando, Soweto (TheSouthAfrican.com, 2018).

For decades, Soweto was a dusty area with only few trees planted in the 1950s. The Greening of Soweto project, started in 2006, is aiming to plant half a million trees. This green revolution has been rewarded two gold awards in 2008 and 2010 at the United Nations Liveable Community Awards (TheSouthAfrican.com, 2018).

Another focus area for development of Soweto is public transport. Many Soweto residents historically and still today have to travel long distances to other parts of the city for work, so reliable and affordable public transport is essential. The government is investing heavily in providing solutions.

Sport also plays big role in Soweto. The area is the home for Kaizer Chiefs, Orlando Pirates and Moroka Swallows soccer teams, all top soccer teams in South Africa. The area produces the highest number of professional soccer players in the country (TheSouthAfrican.com, 2018). In 2010, Soweto hosted the Soccer World Cup and the world's attention was focused on the South Africa's oldest township. FNB stadium, which is based in Soweto, is the largest stadium and the centre of soccer in South Africa. Other sports arenas are Orlando Stadium, Eldorado Park Stadium, Jabavu Stadium, Moroka Swallows' Dobsonville Stadium, Noordgesig Stadium and Meadowlands Stadium.

Soweto has become a scenic tourist attraction and is visited by thousands of tourists every year. The main touristic places include Vilakazi Street precinct, where the houses of two Nobel Peace Prize winners, Nelson Mandela and Bishop Tutu, are located; the Hector Pieterse Memorial and Museum; and the Regina Mundi Parish Church. Other popular attractions include Credo Mutwa Cultural Village, the Oppenheimer Tower and the iconic, colourfully-painted

Orlando Towers. The location hosts a variety of different events: the Soweto marathon, the Soweto Open tennis tournament and the Soweto Wine Festival, among other regular events that draw crowds of thousands. The once desperate and dusty streets of Soweto have turned into a livable area, filled with all the facilities needed for modern life (Naidoo, 2018).

4.3.2 Observation

The observation took place in April 2018. Soweto does not offer a lot of pleasing sights, but is very rich in terms of heritage. It is a cultural destination with meaningful focal objects, such as the home of Nelson Mandela, Kliptown and the Hector Peterson Memorial site in Orlando neighbourhood. These touristic places create public interest and boost business activity with many shops and bars available in the vicinity. Soweto offers some popular venues with good music, food and a vibrant atmosphere. Dube and Orlando areas are the busiest in terms of variety of places. Shebeens, local drinking bars, are very popular in the township.

There is an influence of Afro-American culture in Soweto, adapted to local conditions. Soweto has become a melting pot for many cultures. People speak many languages in the area and often mix them, constantly evolving a local lingo. This street slang is usually spoken by the youngsters. This vibrant metropolitan township is setting the trends in music, fashion and dance. Despite high unemployment, people are mostly friendly and cheerful. There are many people walking or trading on the streets.

There is a wonderful panoramic view of Soweto from the Chris Hani Baragwanath Hospital bridge. Soweto township looks urban and streetwise but it is also an area of contrasts. Piles of garbage lie next to the green fields and pitted roads are found next to luxurious mansions. There are different types of housing in Soweto. Small, grey dwellings, called 'matchbox houses', are one type. There are several camp communities or informal settlements, where deep poverty and unemployment are prevalent. The inhabitants build illegal shelters out of iron sheets and there are no basic amenities like electricity and water

there. The Mandela squatter camp, which is seven kilometres away from Baragwanath hospital, is a good example. In contrast, there are new developments to accommodate the middle class, such as Diepkloof Extension. In this area, the roads are in a good condition and there are schools, hospitals and playgrounds for the children.

There are three types of public transport in Soweto: buses, trains and, the most affordable and convenient, minibus taxis. The quality of in Soweto differs greatly. The main roads are in good condition, while the small roads are not well maintained. Outdoor advertising is everywhere. It is present in the form of billboards, towers and other small signs.

4.3.3 Semi-Structured Interview

The interview was conducted on 5 March 2018. The participant's name was Precious³. She was from Meadowlands, Soweto. Precious worked as a nanny in Melrose Arch, an upmarket neighbourhood in the north of Johannesburg. Although she spent a lot of time in traffic, she was not considering moving from Soweto due to, as she described, an emotional connection to the location, where she had been living since 2001. Most of her friends were also from Soweto, mainly selling food and twisting hair.

The first question was about what Precious liked the most about Soweto. Her answer was safety and feeling of home. Precious did not drive and enjoyed walking in the streets, meeting new people. She said that she could easily find everything in Soweto. She described the inhabitants of Soweto as mainly black. Despite the prevailing poverty, the streets were clean and the area was safe.

The next question was about the characteristics, which make Soweto unique. Precious explained that Soweto proudly hosted different cultures. There were Zulu, Venda, Tsonga and other nationalities sharing the space. Each tribe had a strong presence and lived in a community. Every culture had different traditions. There were significant differences in language, food, clothing and dancing.

³ Not her real name

Food was one of the most important parts of the culture. People were tolerant to each other's cultures and even organised special events showcasing them. A dance competition was one of them, where people dressed up in their traditional wear, cooked food to sell and danced to win some money prizes. The whole event was usually managed in a very friendly manner. Although the area was multicultural, the Zulu language and culture was dominant. Precious said that, despite their origin, all citizens needed to be able to speak Zulu and understand Zulu culture.

The last questions were about the outdoor advertising. Precious said that the concept was very familiar to her. She was exposed to outdoor advertising every day when she travelled. The main purpose of them she saw in navigation and giving directions where to buy a certain product. Different Coca Cola advertisements were shown to her. Precious picked up a few with only a logo on it saying that it made more sense to her as she understood exactly what was being advertised.

4.3 THIRD LOCATION - MABONENG

4.3.1 Documentation

Maboneng is a district in the eastern side of the downtown area of Johannesburg, which is very special in terms of business, culture and lifestyle. The district is a vibrant mixture of entertainment venues, including a rooftop events venue, art galleries, retail stores, coffee shops, restaurants, industrial, office, residential spaces appealing to a wide variety of people. With a rich heritage, it can be proudly called a centre of the inner-city renaissance. Maboneng is an area celebrated through art. It is a place where people live, collaborate and create, where a new generation of thinkers is born. Maboneng begins at Fox Street and expands to the Work & Art Building and a flagship Hallmark House on Siemert Street. The neighbourhood celebrates art in all different expressions, from art galleries to the only independent South African cinema, The Bioscope. The goal of the precinct is to revolutionise Johannesburg's inner city and incorporate housing, business and creative

spaces, where all sorts of people can engage and interact with the space and each other (Maboneng, 2018). As a result, it promotes a sense of urban togetherness.

Demographic analysis shows that 34% of the properties are occupied by the owners. Mostly young people are entering the local property market - 50% of Maboneng's residents are between 25 and 34 years old. Another 31% belongs to the 35 to 49-year-old age group. Approximately 85% of Maboneng's property ownership is in South African hands while 15% is owned by foreigners (Maboneng, 2018).

The precinct's vibrant culture plays a big role in supporting the local community. Market on Main is a good example of opportunities for young entrepreneurs. It is a Sunday market that trades in local designs and various top street foods. The project was launched in 2011 and has already established itself as a beautiful and creative space with leading designs and a variety of cuisine, which provides a relaxed place for visitors and locals to spend their Sunday time (Market on Main, 2018). The event also drives city tourism.

Maboneng project is a part of the regeneration programme in Johannesburg, which aims to transform formerly "no-go" crime zones into something completely opposite that attracts people of different cultures, background and wealth. The word 'maboneng' means 'place of light' in Sotho. It all started in 2008 when Jonathan Liebmann bought warehouses and offices dating from 1900s and converted them into a single cultural space, Arts on Main. It still has an historical feel and look that stands out in the urban landscape. The older buildings filled with the charm and character were given a second life, bringing out the heart and the soul of the city. With this development, there was a fundamental change in people's engagement with this public space. It encouraged people to reconnect with the streets and brought back the walkability. Now advertising agencies, art galleries and studios are sharing this space. The list of creative enterprises is long: a record store, a printmaking studio, a photographic studio, a video production company, a talent agency,

among others. There is also a wide variety of different events every week in Maboneng: Run Maboneng community, jazz sessions, dance evenings, rooftop parties, storytelling and many more (Gauteng Tourism Authority, 2018).

A property development group, Propertuity, the creator of this creative urban space, has a vision to create the most dynamic and diverse neighbourhood, which can connect people to the heart of the city and where people can live, play and work. From 2016 onwards, Propertuity group planned to focus on the enhancement of the existing assets rather than development of new properties (Propertuity, 2018).

4.3.2 Observation

The observation took place in April 2018. Maboneng stretches over two suburbs, City and Suburban and the oldest suburb in the town, namely, Jeppestown. There is an immediate artistic feel in the air when stepping into the precinct.

Old buildings are giving the area a special distinctive heritage feel. Some are covered with numerous public art works. Maboneng includes all human needs within the urban environment. This includes safety, greening and pedestrian sidewalks. The grid street system makes it easy for people to navigate and orientate on their own.

The area is very diverse in terms of race and social status. People are also part of the cultural experience in Maboneng with many residents being young, artistic and hipster-looking.

The precinct consists of about 40 buildings. They are different in size and appeal. The buildings vary in height from 1 to 10 floors. They facilitate a broad spectrum of offerings, such as residential development, bachelor studios, loft apartments and upmarket penthouses, industrial and entertainment space, and commercial offices, adding a new dimension to the lifestyle. Huge spaces with open floor plans and high ceilings have an industrial look combined with the new innovative designs. The buildings are placed very close to one another with

only few small gaps in between for water drains. Short walking distances between developments allow for a more integrated community, which is a key feature of the precinct.

Maboneng is presented as a food lovers' destination with a wide variety of restaurant offerings, typically with an African twist. The number of the restaurants on the streets creates a street culture similar to many European cities.

The retail component is also big in the area – shops offer a wide spectrum of products. The selection can vary from trendy clothing shops to book stores, from tobacconists to hair salons. They are located on the ground floors of the commercial or residential developments and add character to them. The rest of the area consist of galleries, a hotel, a museum and numerous entertainment places, such as PopArt theatre and The Bioscope cinema.

Outdoor advertising is not big in the precinct. There are some small signs on the walls and no presence of big billboards. The signs advertise the precinct or some local businesses.

4.3.3 Semi-Structured Interview

The interview took place on 20 March 2018. The participant's name was Joseph⁴. He was Xhosa, living in Alexandra. Joseph spent all his childhood in the Eastern Cape, the poorest province in the whole of South Africa. He moved to Johannesburg after he passed his Matric in 2000. While working as a bodyguard for ten years he fell in love with art. He was self-taught from the beginning, and later he managed to enrol in an art course. It took him three years to complete a one-year programme due to financial problems. After finishing the course, he felt stronger about his skills and started an art project in 2011, eventually creating the first gallery in Alexandra. Joseph said that it was a very successful project, which inspired all the people in the area, and he became a beacon of light for them. In 2015, he was called by a charity project,

⁴ Not his real name

which was launching in Johannesburg, to be a manager and a leader. Joseph accepted the offer as he saw an opportunity for personal growth. Now Joseph is a manager of the project, an art centre which provides education for at-risk young people through unleashing their creativity and their entrepreneurial spirit. The project strives to make a positive change in young people's lives and as a result in the future of society. The organisation is based in the centre of Maboneng.

Joseph was asked to describe Maboneng in his own words. Maboneng for him was something not real, a bubble and a mirage, where people came, plugged in, played and left. Joseph saw two sides: the 'glory' side and the side of real people who live there. First, it was a prime business location, where three things were mixed together: modern property, people involved in art and a very successful precinct management, which succeeded in creation of a special aura which attracted people. From another viewpoint, the people who stayed around the area did not know what was happening and felt isolated. These people did not experience any sense of connection with Maboneng.

Joseph understood the concept of outdoor advertising as messages that come through billboards, banners and displays. The main purpose of the outdoor advertising, in his view, was in getting a message across as many times as possible.

The next questions were about outdoor advertisements in a particular location – Maboneng. An interesting fact was that Joseph, being in the area every day, could not recall seeing any of such advertising. He said that there was a lot of "public art" in the location, which was naturally absorbed by the environment. The area was rich in terms of street art and Joseph enjoyed looking at creative artworks. The next question was what was art for him? His answer was: "Everything that is hand-drawn is art for me".

4.4 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter has attempted to examine how various sites can differ from each other by exploring their specific characteristics, such as geographical location, history, inhabitants, and attractions. This was demonstrated through the analysis of three locations in Johannesburg, South Africa: Sandton, Soweto and Maboneng. Historically, mainly the geographical aspects, such as distance from the city centre, played a major role in establishment of those areas. Now there are many other characteristics involved in the process of establishing a place, such as local cultural aspects, history, dominant occupation of inhabitants, infrastructure and locally available activities. A combination of those characteristics is what makes a site unique and constitutes its identity.

Although the researched sites are all in Johannesburg, the study shows how diverse they are. Sandton is known as a non-violent privileged area, very upmarket, business-focused, with modern rising infrastructure and long traffic queues. Soweto is a busy African township with a rich history, big cultural diversity and strong sense of community. Maboneng is a very dynamic precinct and a centre of creative energy, where various types of trade and art connect people.

These locations attract people with different social status, background and occupation. This determines their way of thinking and perceiving the information. Since these people (inhabitants, workers and visitors) constitute the potential target audience for the brands, to effectively reach these audiences, brand managers need to consider the differences between them to be able to connect with them.

Understanding of specific local context of the advertising site during the conceptualisation phase increases the chances for success of the campaign. This study provides examples of how advertising can fit organically into the environment, and explains why it is important.

CHAPTER 5: SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This research project was dedicated to proving that brands can benefit from diligence in advertisement placement planning and “customisation” of their advertising approach to a specific location. The study investigated how locations differ from each other and what characteristics brand managers need to consider when placing their outdoor advertisements.

The research study began with a literature review about the concept of outdoor advertising, the current situation and South African market in particular. The research study applied a combination of qualitative approaches to reveal new paradigms using triangulation method. Documentation, observation and semi-structured interviews were used. Three very different locations in Johannesburg were researched and semi-structured interviews with key informants from those areas were conducted. Empirical analysis was done to establish the main characteristics of the selected locations: geographical position, history, culture, specific functions, such as education, entertainment or business, as well as signature activities in the area, profiles of the main inhabitants and visitors, in order to establish how these factors would possibly impact placement of outdoor advertisements there. A qualitative analysis approach was applied to interpret the data.

The scope of the investigation comprised three sites in the same city, very different in their nature, to demonstrate that those differences may play a crucial role in terms of perception of advertising by the people who live, work and visit these sites and who constitute the target audience for the brands, and that cognisance thereof will have a strong impact on success of the advertising.

The basic research question was formulated as follows: “How the cultural landscape of a particular area may influence perception of outdoor advertising and impact efficiency of communication”.

5.2 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

5.2.1 First Location – Sandton Central Area

This location is a high LSM neighbourhood. It is primarily a business district, where business, apartments, hotels and leisure establishments come together to create the urban fabric. The findings, according to the interview, show that people notice advertisements with a focus on lifestyle, such as fashion or different events. Life in Sandton is busy not only during the day, but also during the night. It means that outdoor advertising can gain extra efficiency by focusing on creative lighting solutions. Use of light boxes and digital screens, installed on the facades and roofs of buildings, can deliver information to the consumer efficiently, by creating a sense of movement and animation. The backlight ensures the work of the advertising structure at night, thereby increasing the reach and the number of contacts with the audience. Digital screens during day hours act similarly to static advertisements and do not attract extra attention, but the interesting fact is that the situation changes completely at night. At night, people tend to ignore the static print while enjoying watching digital advertisements on the screens.

Sandton central development is currently booming. Construction continues today, with cutting-edge architectural solutions. New buildings appear to be modern, aesthetically attractive, with extraordinary shapes and a lot of glass. For advertisements to work efficiently, even their structures, quality of build and look must blend into the overall architectural and spatial environment of the precinct.

5.2.2 Second Location – Soweto

Soweto is a place of tremendous significance for South Africa, with many historical monuments and a strong sensitivity to the memories of anti-apartheid struggle. The advertising must therefore be extra sensitive not include any visuals which can remind viewers about the tragic past, be taken as racist or glorifying white culture.

Soweto is also well-known for its cultural diversity that manifests itself in language, food, clothing, crafts and festivals. Cultural, ethnic or religious differences, nevertheless, do not lead to separation, isolation or antagonism – Sowetan people have strong connections in terms of belonging to the area and being proudly black Africans. Here the sense of community is very strong. The brand managers can benefit from understanding the people's strong connections to traditions and cultural diversity, and even build their campaigns around that.

Soweto is a place of middle and low-income groups, and interview findings demonstrate that there are some peculiar features about the local inhabitants and how they perceive advertising. One of those findings is that the outdoor advertising is perceived to serve a navigation purpose – locals expect to have physical access to the promoted products and services in the vicinity of the ads. It means that choice of placement must be based at a relatively close distance to the place of sale of the advertised object.

Another conclusion is that the advertisements must be not complicated for them to be easily understood and recognised by the local people. The advertising must have a company logo and a product image/logo to be clear to the audience and avoid miscommunication. All elements must be understood by common people in the street, who usually do not want to be involved in decoding a symbol on the billboard. The use of archetypes (intuitive symbols) and clichés is welcomed. For example, a baby's photo automatically signals the locals that advertising is related to children's products, and not, for instance, to financial services.

The use of photography could be argued to be more appropriate than illustration, as it is more familiar to the eye, is recognised and analysed by our brain much faster. A photo looks much more natural and creates quick associations, so it can ensure rapid identification of the product. Consequently, in this environment, there is a better chance that people will be more interested

in the product if photography is used. Also, a large image of a particular product is more likely to attract attention.

5.2.3 Third Location – Maboneng

Maboneng is a district in downtown of Johannesburg that stands out in terms of business, culture and lifestyle. The district as it exists now does not have a long history but started to develop in 2008 by transforming industrial space into unusual office and exhibition centres. The area has re-emerged from a generally depressed and poor downtown environment, which still surrounds Maboneng, into a super-trendy neighbourhood, an art cluster with a vibrant mixture of entertainment venues, retail stores, restaurants, office and residential spaces, where the pulse of the creative life of Johannesburg, a major African city, is beating today. The ground floors of the buildings are given to commercial operators and catering establishments; the upper floors are for offices. Companies based in Maboneng are usually associated with creativity and media, and people who work there have a cosmopolitan view of the things. The district attracts a specific group of people – they can have a very different social status and be miles apart in terms of wealth levels, but they all share the same love for the city vibe and desire to be “on trend”. Industrial aesthetics of the area – high ceilings, huge windows, rough brick walls, lack of decor and somewhat shabby structures – play an important role in setting of the scene and mood of this bustling neighbourhood.

It means that for the outdoor advertising to succeed here, it must be also “on trend”, creative and not very obviously selling something. Sophisticated locals and visitors will welcome creative content, indirect, subtle messaging, or use of unique advertising media.

The findings of the interview indicated that outdoor advertisements must have organic integration in the urban landscape – for example, things which are hand-drawn seem more appealing to the audience because they are naturally absorbed by the environment. The best solution for Maboneng would be a combination of art-like advertising and commercial information. Advertising that

appears as an art object can achieve a unique, eye-pleasing experience and attract interest from the creative public. Hidden graffiti advertising could be an unusual advertising move for Maboneng, where objects are painted in the corporate style of the customer, but without commercial information. The recognition effect is achieved through the use of brand colours or other elements consistent with the brand personality.

5.2 CONCLUSIONS

Outdoor advertising, especially in large cities, such as Johannesburg, is one of the most effective ways to attract the attention of consumers, potential customers, and to convey new information to the existing ones. The success of outdoor advertising is largely determined by the decisions made in the strategic marketing plan, research, media elements and the execution of its creative process. Strength of the link between research, planning and execution and effective communication between the professionals involved, including the design team, would define the quality of the creative process.

The graphic part of outdoor advertising should convey the essence of the message to the consumer. Therefore, the image in outdoor advertising is not just a 'beautiful picture', but a symbol expressing the main message. Any advertising should cause a positive emotion toward the brand. A positive brand association could lead to the fact that a potential consumer will eventually become a loyal or even permanent customer. In order for advertising to be perceived with positive emotions toward the brand, it is necessary that the information is easily understandable and connects well with a specific viewer. If this information is perceived wrongly, then the consumer will have a negative emotional reaction, which can spread to the brand.

The study confirms that good outdoor advertisements are not only about content and size, but also about the location. There must be a good fit between the form, content, creative approach and placement of the advertisements to establish a good connection between the brand and the target audience, to cover generally a larger audience and communicate better to a particular target

population group from a particular geographical area. It is becoming more effective as marketers realise the benefits of personalising messages. The literature review revealed that many scholars agree that brands, in order to succeed, must avoid generalising, gain market insight, and tailor their approach to local reality. It is well-known that a generic approach to advertising can be inefficient due to cultural differences, and international brands usually take national differences into account.

What is less obvious and what the study reveals is that perceptions and ultimately the impact of advertisements may differ significantly even within one city, so brand managers must take even finer cognisance of even smaller local context and tailor their approach accordingly. The content of an outdoor advertisement must be quickly understandable to the public from that neighbourhood as typically the viewer spends approximately only three seconds on watching the billboard. Smart outdoor advertising solutions can gain extra efficiency if they have a good fit with the spirit of the neighbourhood and blend well with local infrastructural context. New advertising strategies that involve the use of some interactive elements and generally lead to convergence of traditional and digital advertising can help targeting the audience more effectively.

While it was argued that sensitivity to the local context is an important component for success of an advertising campaign, designers must be not just aware of it, but take responsibility for the final outcome. New design thinking needs to focus on human needs and values. Designers must first understand what the target audience is, what the needs of the consumers are and only thereafter come up with solutions. They need to get more detailed information in order to more accurately create messages. The aim is to create solutions that appear desirable for the end users. A good practical tool to gain those insights would be semi-structured interviews, such as those undertaken within the scope of this research project. During this research project, those interviews led to some important discoveries which otherwise would not be available if only top-down thinking was used. The designer failing to gain good understanding of the

specifics of the location where an advertisement is placed, risks to trigger wrong perception of the advertisement, unplanned reactions, and, as a result, may lead to undesired outcomes.

The principle of consideration for the user's culture and need for tailoring the message to the target audience, which is argued for in this research paper, is in line with the concept of Human-Centred Design, which places the user at the centre of the design process.

5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

The literature study and research conducted within the framework of this project, despite the scope and size limitations of this study, suggest that "customisation" approach in advertising campaigns would contribute to their efficiency. Geographical segmentation is an important part of the outdoor advertising strategy. For outdoor advertisements to be efficient, during the planning phase of an advertising campaign one should carefully consider the choice of location through evaluation of its specific characteristics.

5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

There is not much scientific research on the topic, so it should perhaps be explored in greater depth, further studies being broadly based to provide statistically meaningful data and provide for generalisation. This will allow brand managers to derive practical strategies to further enhance brand communication.

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APPENDIX A



Internal Research Ethics checklist and route plan

BA Honours in Graphic Design (Vega)

To be completed by the student and supervisor.

Student name

Study leader.....

Module Coordinator/Campus anchor.....

Date.....

- 1 Are human subject used as sources of information? Yes ☐ No ☐

If human subjects are used proceed with the following checklist.

- 2 Where and how will subjects be recruited?

.....

- 3 List proposed procedures to be carried out with subject to obtain data by marking the applicable box:

Recorded interview ☐ Interview schedule ☐

Questionnaire ☐ Procedures (e.g. workshop) ☐

Other ☐

Explain.....

- 4 Are interview/workshop schedules/questionnaires attached and checked for contents?

Yes ☐ No ☐

If not, when will these be available?.....

Please note: a student may not proceed if interview/workshop schedules/ questionnaires were not checked by the supervisor and approved in writing.

5 How many subjects are used?.....

6 Gender?

7 Age range?

In the case of minors (under 18), or mentally/legally incompetent permission must also be obtained from the relevant authorities (schools, department, parents, legal guardian). All research done with minors are seen as high risk and by default need to go to the IIE for approval.

9 Is an example of the letter that will be used to obtain consent attached?

Yes ☐ No ☐

Are the final signed letters of consent/assent attached?

Yes ☐ No ☐

If not, when will they be submitted?.....

Please note: a student may not proceed with the interviews/focus groups/ workshops if these letters are not obtained.

10 Is it made clear that subjects may withdraw form the study at any stage?

Yes ☐ No ☐

11 If the researcher is not competent in the mother tongue of the subjects, how will full comprehension of the content of the consent form by the subjects be ensured?

Please specify

- 12 Does the subject risk any potential harm (Physical, psychological, legal, social) by participating in the research?

Yes ☐ No ☐

If yes, please explain the safeguards taken to reduce the risk.....

- 13 Are there any aspects of the research about which the subjects are not to be informed

Yes ☐ No ☐

If yes, please explain.

.....

- 14 How will confidentiality and/or anonymity be assured?

Please describe.....

- 15 Storage of research data and material: how will the data be stored?

Route:

☐ High risk: Proposal and IIE Ethical application need to go to IIE for approval

☐ Low risk: Vega Internal Ethical committee to approve.

No research may proceed until a student received a final letter of approval.

Please hand this sheet back to the student and keep a copy on file.

Date:..... Signed by student:.....

APPENDIX B

Semi structured interview questions

General questions:

1. Can you tell me a little bit more about yourself?
2. What is your connection with the location?

Questions with a connection to a location:

1. Which characteristics of the location can you highlight?
2. Of these characteristics, which one stands out for you?
3. What makes this location unique?

Questions in connection with outdoor advertising:

1. Explain your understanding of the concept of outdoor advertising?
2. What do you think is the purpose of outdoor advertising?

APPENDIX C

Participant Consent Form 1

RESEARCH TITLE: LOCAL CONTEXT: AN EXPLORATION OF THE ROLE OF GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATIONS IN OUTDOOR ADVERTISING

1. INTRODUCTION

You are invited to participate in a research study about an exploration of the role of geographical locations in outdoor advertising. The main purpose of this study is to bring visibility to this new approach to urban outdoor advertising, as well as to contribute additional information to the current body of knowledge.

The information in this consent form is provided to assist you in deciding whether you would like to participate in this study. If you decide to participate, you will be required to take part in a semi structured interview regarding this research topic. You will be asked questions about your opinion and views on a location for outdoor advertising.

It is important that you fully understand what is involved if you agree to participate in this study. If you have any questions that you feel are not addressed or explained fully in this consent form, please do not hesitate to ask the researcher for more information. You should not agree to participate unless you are completely comfortable with the procedures followed. The contact details of the researcher are as follows:

Email address: sadovnikksenia@gmail.com

Contact number: 071 549 45 75

2. THE NATURE AND PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The primary goal of this study is to investigate how cultural landscape of a particular area influences perceptions of outdoor advertising.

3. EXPLANATION OF PROCEDURES TO BE FOLLOWED

The semi structured interview will take place at a given time and location that is convenient for the participant and will take approximately one hour. You will be asked various questions related to your knowledge of a specific location.

4. RISK(S) OR DISCOMFORT INVOLVED

There is no risk or discomfort involved in this interview.

5. POSSIBLE BENEFITS OF THE STUDY

The results of this study will show the importance of unique characteristics of various geographical locations of outdoor advertising, to which brand managers need to pay more attention, in order to be able to adjust their campaigns to the local markets and thus be successful.

Should brands take this study into account, the perception from society will be that they take the feelings, experiences and lifestyle of people in specific geographical locations into consideration when they create advertising campaigns, which in turn benefits society and includes them on a personal level.

6. WITHDRAWAL CLAUSE

- Your inclusion in this study is purely voluntary;
- If you do not wish to participate in this study, you have every right to abstain;
- Even if you agree to participate in this study, you may withdraw at any time without having to provide an explanation for your decision.

7. CONFIDENTIALITY

All information gathered in this study will be treated as confidential and only the researcher will have access to the original data. Results will only be retained for as long as required for the research purpose and will thereafter be depersonalised and presented in such a way that you will not be identifiable.

8. CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY

I have read the information presented to me in a language that I understand and I understand the implications of participating in this study. The content and meaning of this information have been explained to me. I have been given the opportunity to ask questions and I am satisfied that they have been adequately addressed. I understand that I am under no obligation to participate in this study and that I can withdraw from this study at any stage without having to provide an explanation for my withdrawal. I hereby volunteer to take part in this study.

The primary researcher, Ksenia Sadovnik can be contacted during office hours at 071 549 45 75 / sadovnikksenia@gmail.com. The study leader, Mrs Lizette Carstens, can be contacted during office hours at 082 566 5986 / lcarstens@vegaschool.com

I hereby voluntarily agree to participate in the above-mentioned research project and declare that I am 18 years or older and that I have read and understood all the information and conditions pertaining to this interview. I have also received a signed copy of this informed consent agreement.

.....

Signature of participant

.....

Date

APPENDIX D

Participant Consent Form 1

RESEARCH TITLE: LOCAL CONTEXT: AN EXPLORATION OF THE ROLE OF GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATIONS IN OUTDOOR ADVERTISING

1. INTRODUCTION

You are invited to participate in a research study about an exploration of the role of geographical locations in outdoor advertising. The main purpose of this study is to bring visibility to this new approach to urban outdoor advertising, as well as to contribute additional information to the current body of knowledge.

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Email address: sadovnikksenia@gmail.com

Contact number: 071 549 45 75

2. THE NATURE AND PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The primary goal of this study is to investigate how cultural landscape of a particular area influences perceptions of outdoor advertising.

3. EXPLANATION OF PROCEDURES TO BE FOLLOWED

The semi structured interview will take place at a given time and location that is convenient for the participant and will take approximately one hour. You will be asked various questions related to your knowledge of a specific location.

4. RISK(S) OR DISCOMFORT INVOLVED

There is no risk or discomfort involved in this interview.

5. POSSIBLE BENEFITS OF THE STUDY

The results of this study will show the importance of unique characteristics of various geographical locations of outdoor advertising, to which brand managers need to pay more attention, in order to be able to adjust their campaigns to the local markets and thus be successful.

Should brands take this study into account, the perception from society will be that they take the feelings, experiences and lifestyle of people in specific geographical locations into consideration when they create advertising campaigns, which in turn benefits society and includes them on a personal level.

6. WITHDRAWAL CLAUSE

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8. CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY

I have read the information presented to me in a language that I understand and I understand the implications of participating in this study. The content and meaning of this information have been explained to me. I have been given the opportunity to ask questions and I am satisfied that they have been adequately addressed. I understand that I am under no obligation to participate in this study and that I can withdraw from this study at any stage without having to provide an explanation for my withdrawal. I hereby volunteer to take part in this study.

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I hereby voluntarily agree to participate in the above-mentioned research project and declare that I am 18 years or older and that I have read and understood all the information and conditions pertaining to this interview. I have also received a signed copy of this informed consent agreement.

.....

Signature of participant

.....

Date

APPENDIX E

Participant Consent Form 1

RESEARCH TITLE: LOCAL CONTEXT: AN EXPLORATION OF THE ROLE OF GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATIONS IN OUTDOOR ADVERTISING

1. INTRODUCTION

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The information in this consent form is provided to assist you in deciding whether you would like to participate in this study. If you decide to participate, you will be required to take part in a semi structured interview regarding this research topic. You will be asked questions about your opinion and views on a location for outdoor advertising.

It is important that you fully understand what is involved if you agree to participate in this study. If you have any questions that you feel are not addressed or explained fully in this consent form, please do not hesitate to ask the researcher for more information. You should not agree to participate unless you are completely comfortable with the procedures followed. The contact details of the researcher are as follows:

Email address: sadovnikksenia@gmail.com

Contact number: 071 549 45 75

2. THE NATURE AND PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The primary goal of this study is to investigate how cultural landscape of a particular area influences perceptions of outdoor advertising.

3. EXPLANATION OF PROCEDURES TO BE FOLLOWED

The semi structured interview will take place at a given time and location that is convenient for the participant and will take approximately one hour. You will be asked various questions related to your knowledge of a specific location.

4. RISK(S) OR DISCOMFORT INVOLVED

There is no risk or discomfort involved in this interview.

5. POSSIBLE BENEFITS OF THE STUDY

The results of this study will show the importance of unique characteristics of various geographical locations of outdoor advertising, to which brand managers need to pay more attention, in order to be able to adjust their campaigns to the local markets and thus be successful.

Should brands take this study into account, the perception from society will be that they take the feelings, experiences and lifestyle of people in specific geographical locations into consideration when they create advertising campaigns, which in turn benefits society and includes them on a personal level.

6. WITHDRAWAL CLAUSE

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- Even if you agree to participate in this study, you may withdraw at any time without having to provide an explanation for your decision.

7. CONFIDENTIALITY

All information gathered in this study will be treated as confidential and only the researcher will have access to the original data. Results will only be retained for as long as required for the research purpose and will thereafter be depersonalised and presented in such a way that you will not be identifiable.

8. CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY

I have read the information presented to me in a language that I understand and I understand the implications of participating in this study. The content and meaning of this information have been explained to me. I have been given the opportunity to ask questions and I am satisfied that they have been adequately addressed. I understand that I am under no obligation to participate in this study and that I can withdraw from this study at any stage without having to provide an explanation for my withdrawal. I hereby volunteer to take part in this study.

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I hereby voluntarily agree to participate in the above-mentioned research project and declare that I am 18 years or older and that I have read and understood all the information and conditions pertaining to this interview. I have also received a signed copy of this informed consent agreement.

.....

Signature of participant

.....

Date

