AUDIENCE PERCEPTION OF THE USE OF BILLBOARD IN SHOWCASING GOVERNMENT'S SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS: A STUDY OF ANAMBRA STATE INTEGRATED DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY BILLBOARD

By

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Abstract
Billboard are designed to catch a person’s attention and create a memorable impression very quickly, leaving the reader thinking about the advertisement after they have driven past it. In Anambra State, people are confronted with billboards of different kinds depicting the achievements of state government in various areas such Health, Education, Housing, and provision of infrastructures. The focus of this study is to ascertain audience perception of the use of billboard in showcasing government’s social development projects; a study of Anambra State Integrated Development Strategy (ANIDS) billboard. Survey research method was employed and purposive sampling technique was used to select the respondents from the three senatorial zones in Anambra State. Taro Yamani’s formula used in obtaining the samples size of 229 respondents from the population of 2,456,468 literate Anambrians. The study found that significant number of people perceived the use of ANIDS billboard for showcasing social development projects as a wasteful venture by government, they also said that social development projects of government being showcased on the ANIDS billboard is purely a propaganda machinery of government. The study revealed that majority of people does not believe in the message content of the billboards. We therefore recommend that Anambra state government should be initiating people oriented programmes and policies, this will arouse enthusiasm amongst the people and as well make them to read such messages. Government should consider alternative means of showcasing its achievement rather than billboard medium as its cost so much to produce, thus the government should convene a town hall meeting monthly to brief the people on its achievements and developments strides.

Key Words: Audience, Perception, Billboard, Social Development and ANIDS.

INTRODUCTION
Billboard usage has been in existence for some decades now. Before the arrival of automobiles, primitive models of billboards were occasionally employed to inform people travelling on foot, horseback that an inn can be found ahead within a particular distance. The outdoor advertising medium came into existence in 3200BC as means of communication by the Egyptians, Bidemi (1999, p.136). Bovee and Arens (1985) posit that “outdoor advertising is the oldest form of advertisement and a medium with high impact rate. It attracts attention to itself through location, colour and boldness of its copy”. Billboard advertising relates to the usage of signs along the roadways for the purpose of advertising and prompting a range of products and services. It has become a common trend in contemporary Nigeria society to use billboard medium to publicize government’s acclaimed achievements or intended development programme. Even when such
acclaimed achievements were accomplished using public fund like taxes and rates, those in government have often used billboard to create an impression that such development programmes were privileges rather than obligation to the governed. Hitherto, actions of the government spoke for themselves, because they are there for everybody to see them in concrete terms and not through the advertising media.

However, the scenario has changed. The governments in Nigeria both federal, states and local governments have now taken over the billboard media as a veritable avenue to exhibit their achievements to the public. Whether the so called achievements are real or mere propaganda instincts, it appears to be no body’s business since the aims of the sponsors of such messages or programmes are met. Due to the power media wield on its audience and the outdoor advertising media’s strong visual effects coupled with the digital and iconic element for optimum power of convergence, the government of Anambra State presently has seen the billboard medium as strong propaganda tool for showing its governmental programmes. In this regard, the nooks and crannies of major towns and highways in the state are adorned with billboards of various sizes and shapes, depicting different government acclaimed achievements. It is obvious that the sponsors are cashing on the tremendous influence advertising (billboard) has on the audience.

Nonetheless, Skinner (1980) cited in Bidemi (1999, p.5) opines that “advertising is an attempt at controlling human behaviour by appealing to human conscience and emotions”. To government and politicians, advertising is a tool for mass mobilization hence the usage of billboard medium as veritable propaganda tool in showcasing its achievement by the Anambra State Government speaks volumes. It is against this backdrop that this study seeks to find out the perception of respondents on Anambra State government use of Anambra State Integrated Development Strategy (ANIDS) billboard in showcasing social development projects in the State.

Statements of Problem
Advertisers, politicians and advocates of different causes have extensively used billboard to showcase their products, services, ideas and campaigns. In Nigeria and in Anambra State in particular, most of the streets and towns are adorned with different sizes of billboards designed to win public’s attention to different campaigners’ messages. The specific aspect of the campaigns that have been attracted this paper’s attention is the government’s use of billboards to publicize its acclaimed achievements. Most of these billboards often show good roads, hospitals built, renovated schools, transformers and sundry essential infrastructures claimed to have provided by present government.

However, these billboard and their contents cost the government so much, yet nobody can say with any certainty if the citizens are buying into the message. Thus, the paper aims to ascertain the perception of the audience on the use of ANIDS billboards in showcasing Social development projects by Anambra State Government.

Objectives of study
1. To determine whether the respondents read messages of government’s social development projects being showcased on ANIDS billboards.
2. To find out if the respondents perceive the use of ANIDS billboard as a wasteful ventures by Anambra state government for showcasing social development projects.
3. To ascertain whether the respondents would consider Anambra state government’s show of accomplished social infrastructure on the ANIDS billboard as a piece of propaganda.
4. To determine whether the respondents would believe in those projects being showcased by government on the ANIDS’ billboard.

Research Questions
1. Would you read the messages of governments social development projects being showcased on the ANIDS billboard?
2. Would you consider the use of ANIDS billboard as a wasteful venture by Anambra state government in showcasing social development projects?
3. Do you consider those social development projects of government being showcased on the ANIDS billboard as a piece of propaganda?
4. Do you believe in messages of social development projects being showcased on ANIDS billboard by the Anambra state government?

**Theoretical Foundation**

Media audiences have certain behavioural traits which determine how they respond to media and advertising messages, thus study are guided by two theories *individual difference theory* and *persuasion theory*. Individual theory proposes that individuals respond differently to the mass media according to their psychological needs and that individuals consume the mass media to satisfy those needs. The need may be for information, integrative (offering a sense of belonging to a group of similarly interested people). Bittner (1989, P.376) identified individual differences as a reason for different reactions to mass media messages. Okunna (2002, p.20) corroborated Bittner on the issue “even when the evidence is made up of people from the same social category, there are individual, unique characteristics which affect the extent of a reaction to a message. Okunna (1994, p.169), elaborated on individual characteristics and how it affects the interpretation of mass media messages when argues further “persuasive media messages could fail either partially or totally to have the effect which the mass communicator, an advertiser perhaps intended to have on you”. On the contrary, Okunna concluded that the same could have the intended effect on another member of the audience with a different psychological makeup. Similarly, Defleur et al (1985, p.148) observes that all consuming question that has dominated research and development of contemporary theory in the study of the mass media can be summed up in simple terms namely, what have been their? That is how; have the media influence us as individual in terms of persuading us? Defleur and his co-researchers made two interrelated empirical generalizations in their study of individuals and media effects in this order.

1. That the influence of mass media is rarely direct because it is always mediated by individual differences.
2. That the influence of mass media is rarely direct because, it is almost and always mediated by group membership or relationships”.

From, the ongoing studies, researchers have not exactly arrived at a consensus on media effects. What this portends that, in some cases, the desired effects may be achieved, while under certain conditions, the messages could be mediated upon by some external variables. This has opened an access for more studies on the behavioural patterns of the audience as it relates to the use of media messages. One of such studies hinges on perception. Perception is a way stimuli such as commercial messages, advertisements like the billboard advertisement use in showcasing government achievements by the Anambra State government, news etc, are interpreted.

In addition, Severin et al (1992, p.102) noted that interests, needs and motives determine not only what will arouse attention, but will hold. The duo posit an advertisement for a particular service or product may not have a significant effect in changing attitudes of a majority of that particular audience while some fraction of that same audience may be well disposed of such an advertisement. This is why Anambra state government employs the use of billboards in showcasing development projects. The second theory used in this study is *Persuasion theory*. The theory focus on psychological characteristics that affect a person’s perception and response to messages. According to De Fossard (1997, p.8) the characteristics include:

i. Knowledge and skills
ii. Attitudes towards behaviour and social issues
iii. Predisposition or preference
iv. Beliefs and consequences
v. Attitudes towards the sources of the message.

Many of these are related to demographic characteristics, such as age, gender, ethnic group, income and level of education. Persuasion theory also draws attention to the importance of message factors and source factors in influencing an audience. De Fossard (1997, p.9) opines that Message factors are the characteristics of a message that make it appropriate and effective for a particular audience; how long or complex it should be, what languages is best etc. different audience will have different preferences for message style. Source factors are characteristics of a message’s source that make it interesting, relevant and persuasive for a particular audience member. Among the most influential source are: credibility, attractiveness, similarity, authority and expertise.
Persuasion is the process of changing the attitude and perception of a target audience through the content of mass media messages. Steiner (1972) posits that persuasion is a process in which a communicator attempts to induce the belief, attitude or behaviour of another person or groups. Persuasion is seen as a deliberate attempt to modify the attitude or behaviour of another person or group by transmitting a message through the mass media or any other relevant medium. This portends the reason Anambra State government is using ANIDS billboard as a veritable avenue to change, control and whip up support for its government.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE
AN OVERVIEW OF ANAMBRA STATE
Anambra State was created on 27 of August 1991 from the old Anambra State which hitherto comprised of present day Enugu and Ebonyi States. The State has its capital at Awka. It is one of the five States in the South East of Nigeria. The name Anambra is an anglicized version of the original “Oma Mbala” the native name of the Anambra River which also criss-crosses the length and breadth of the state. The State has boundaries by the west with Delta state, Imo and Rivers States to the South; Enugu State to the East and Kogi State to the North. The indigenous ethnic groups in Anambra state are the Igbo (98% of population) and a small population of Igalas (2% of the population) who live in the North western part of the State. According to 2006 census, Anambra State is the eight most populated States in Nigeria and the second most densely populated State in Nigeria after Lagos with population of 4,177,828. The stretch of more than 45 kilometers between Oba and Amorka contains a cluster of numerous thickly populated villages and small towns giving the area an estimated density of 1500-2000 persons living within every square kilometer of the area. Anambra State is rich in natural gas, crude oil, bauxite, ceramic and has almost 100 percent arable soil. In 2006, foundation stone laying ceremony for the first Nigeria private Refinery (Orient petroleum Refinery) was made at Nsugbe-Umuleri area with a capacity of 55,000 barrels per day and it was commissioned on August 30, 2012 by President Goodluck Jonathan. The State has lots of tourism sites such as The Agulu Crocodile Lake, the Ogbunike cave at Oyi local government area, the Igboukwu museum (ancient town known for astonishing metal crafts and bronze artefacts) and the great metal foundry (Uzuoka) at Awka.

The State boasts of a litany of great men and woman both dead and the living. These include, the first president of Nigeria Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe, first Nigeria Senate president Akwaekwu Nwafor-Orizu, Dim Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu, Cardinal Francis Arinze, Chief Alex Ekueme (Second republic vice president of Nigeria), computer guru, Philip Emeagwali, Professor Chike Obi, Professor Chinua Achebe of “Things fall apart fame” and Chief Emeka Anyaoku.

ANALYSING POLITICAL AND BILLBOARD ADVERTISING
Political advertising is the marketing of ideas, attitudes and concerns about public issues, including political concepts and political candidates. The essential task of political advertising is to gain the confidence of the people for their acceptance of ideas and, in the case of political campaign advertising differs from commercial advertising in that the product is a person or a philosophy rather than goods and services. Also, political advert carries a moral implication, because the results have potentially far-reaching effects on the population at large. Nwosu (2003, p.152-153) defines political advertising as:

Deliberate, systematic and sustained efforts to promote the cause of a political party, political organization, group or individual political actors or other interest groups (including voters or the electorate) involved in any form in the furtherance of the political process or achieving the political objectives of any local government, state, nation or the international community.

Nwosu (supra) further asserts that political advertising may cover very many areas of the political process, party formation, political campaign, membership, public and private political communications, image building, political speeches, an media relations management, lobbying, legislative proceedings, executive relationships with various groups and many more of such spheres of man’s political existence in any society. Political advertising combine all the features of product advertisements to promote candidates and woo voters. The adverts ensure organized dissemination of information about candidates and parties based on their programme and methods of implementing them if they eventually get to power (Inornem, 1995). Just like Anambra State government is using billboard to showcase its achievements.
However, the success of this venture will depend on how effective and persuasive the adverts are in marketing the candidates. West (1984, p.27) observes that communication play an important role in political campaigns, candidates communicate messages to various constituencies, which these audiences receive and interpret. Political advertisements which entered into election campaigns around 1952 (Reece, 2004) have since grown in size and style of presentation both in the print and electronic media. Although, it was not until the 90s that Nigerian politicians became aware of the power and effectiveness of political adverts, it has since been used as a major persuasive strategy in canvassing support during elections and after elections to showcase their achievements especially through the use of billboard.

The term billboard advertising relates to the usage of signs along the waysides for the purpose of advertising and promoting a range of products and services. Billboard advertisements are designed to catch a person’s attention and create a memorable impression very quickly, leaving the reader thinking about the advertisement after they have driven past it. Billboard advertising continues to be an effective method of reaching out to the consumers. Since these advertisements can be viewed by the consumers at any point of time, the principal aspects of its effectiveness are cost saving and greater market coverage. Billboards are surely an efficient method to publicize products and services anywhere and anytime.

More so, technological furtherance has also played a major role in supporting its cost –effectiveness. In earlier days, billboards were generally painted by hand, and this was a high-priced. But, with today’s cutting-edge computer technology, they can now be designed with aid of computers and printed on vinyl paper, and then fixed on to the backcloth. The end result is super ordinate advertisement in very less time and also at an affordable price.

**TYPES OF BILLBOARDS**

There are different kinds of billboards, below are some of them according to Rampur (2012):

1. **Poster billboards:** They are utilized for outdoor advertising. They are impressed on 8 to 30 sheets of heavy paper, according to the size. It could last for about a month, depending on weather conditions, after which it is best to remove them.
2. **Painted boards:** It is known as painted bulletins, are covered with an outdoor paint which is resistant to weather. Some outdoor paints are specially made to withstand fading.
3. **Vinyl boards:** It is one of the latest methods of billboards advertising. They have attractive color, durable life and really fine graphics and artwork. They have a brighter appearance, and look much better than conventional billboards. They are usually sprayed with an UV protective coat and can last for years. There is a possibility of damage from wind, since they are not stuck to the surface, instead are attracted to the edges. But of types, vinyl ones contribute largely to advertising effectiveness.
4. **LED billboards:** are from the newer lot of outdoor advertising tools. The bright backlight and use of different colors grab instant attention of the onlookers. The adverts that are displayed are of high quality, as they are generally computer prints, with the addition of animation and other visual effects, the ads are becoming more interactive.
5. **Scrolling advert:** Is also a good way of putting the world across. If the advertiser pays for the entire board, he or she has the advantage of displaying about 10-30 ads on the same billboards.

**STRENGTHS OF BILLBOARD**

Even though billboards are the most basic outdoor media used in reaching potential and actual consumers outside their homes. It has some advantages and disadvantages. Below are some of the benefits;

1. Messages on billboards can be viewed and reviewed as many times as possible. Nwabueze (2006, p.77) postulates that this provide high frequency of audience exposure to the message which is necessary in order to make an impression on the audience.
2. The billboard is a cost effective medium. It cost less to reach a greater number of people over a period of time than it would cost in other media. Just like other outdoor media, billboards offer the lowest cost per exposure of any major advertising medium (Arens and Bovee, 1994, p.471).
3. They are used to target consumers at odd times or during “unrelaxed” periods i.e. while they are on their way. This is different from other media which messages are consumed while the audiences are relatively relaxed.
4. Billboards are often large and intimidating, especially when placed in strategic places in middle of cities. This ensures that the message makes a quick but persuasive impression in the minds of the audience.

5. It ensures customized placement: you can place your billboard advertisement wherever you feel it will have impact the most.

**Weaknesses of Billboards**

1. Billboards targets only mobile audience. This means that if the target audience and not always on the road, its usage may become ineffective.

2. It is basically a reminder medium, i.e. reminds the audience of what they have watched, heard or listened to as carried by other media. Thus, if the audiences have not yet been exposed to a message through other media, they may find it difficult to understand a billboard message which is often short does not contain enough messages.

3. It could be expensive to produce a billboard message initially and the huge cost may discourage their usage.

4. Long-term commitment: billboards companies often have business enter into contracts that involve long-term commitment mainly, this is because it takes a lot of time, energy and money to constantly change billboards advert. According to Robertson (2012), billboard contracts usually cover duration of three months. This makes billboard advertising less conducive to business that frequently change their advertising companies on a weekly and monthly basis.

**ANIDS PHILOSOPHY**

After nearly three years at the election petitions tribunal and the court of appeal, Mr. Peter Greg obi was, on March 15th, 2006, declared the duly elected candidate in the April 2003 governorship election in Anambra State. He was sworn into office on Friday March 17, 2006. On May 1st 2006, governor Obi released a publication he termed my contract with the people of Anambra State for the next 12 months. 30th April, 2006 to 30th April, 2007. This signaled high hope and spontaneous exultation among Anambraians as well as great expectations. Anambra State was born a new dawn.

However, for the critical realists, anxiety welled up as they weighed the scary implications should Obi renege on his avowed social contract with the people. Awake to his responsibilities, Mr. Obi deployed all in his armoury towards a comprehensive enhancement of the State. He started first by exhorting Anambraians to rediscover themselves and wriggle out of the psychological quagmire they had lived within the years past. A structural reorientation programme was instituted to cleansed contaminated world view of Anambra people and enable them both appreciate unfolding development strides of the State government. In other to achieve some of its developmental goals, the State government adopted the millennium Development Goals (M.D.G) as its vision, and because the M.D.G is multisectoral, the State adopted a multisectoral approach towards achieving it. This gave birth to Anambra State Integrated Development Strategy (ANIDS) as the vehicle for driving the vision simultaneously in every sphere. According to Obi he adopted M.D.G goals as the state vision and ANIDS as a vehicle to reach that. “ANIDS help us to plan properly, budget properly and execute our plans while receiving adequate feedback from the people, through ANIDS, we are working on all sectors simultaneously” (www.nigeriamasterweb.com)

**METHODOLOGY**

This study used survey research method. It is the study of a group of people (respondents) by asking them questions, which extract answers that will be used in providing an analytical and empirical solution to a problem. The outcome is generalized on the entire population where a sample is studied. Nwabueze (2008, p.180) notes that “Survey research studies both large and small population by selecting and studying samples chosen from the population”. Supporting this stance, Ohaja (2003, p.74), states succinctly, “Topics concerning public perception of or responses to issues require survey”.

**POPULATION OF STUDY**

The population of this study consists of the entire literate Anambra State indigenes between the ages of 20-69, residents in the State whose population figure stood at 4,177828 based on the 2006 National population Census. Below are the figures from each of the Local government areas.
A. Anambra Central

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NO</th>
<th>LOCAL GOVERNMENTS</th>
<th>POPULATION FIGURES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Anaocha</td>
<td>284, 215</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Awka North</td>
<td>112, 192</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Awka South</td>
<td>189, 654</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Dunukofia</td>
<td>96, 517</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Idemili North</td>
<td>431, 005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Idemili South</td>
<td>206, 816</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Njikoka</td>
<td>148, 394</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>1,468,793</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: 2006 population and housing census of the Federal Republic of Nigeria*

B. Anambra North

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NO</th>
<th>LOCAL GOVERNMENTS</th>
<th>POPULATION FIGURES</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Anambra East</td>
<td>152,149</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Anambra West</td>
<td>167,303</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Ayamelum</td>
<td>158, 152</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Ogbaru</td>
<td>223,317</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Onitsha North</td>
<td>125, 918</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Onitsha South</td>
<td>137,191</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Oyi</td>
<td>168,201</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>1,132,231</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: 2006 population and housing census of the Federal Republic of Nigeria*

C. Anambra South

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NO</th>
<th>LOCAL GOVERNMENTS</th>
<th>POPULATION FIGURES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Aguaata</td>
<td>369,972</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Ekwusigo</td>
<td>158, 429</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Ihiala</td>
<td>302, 277</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Nnewi North</td>
<td>155, 443</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Nnewi South</td>
<td>233, 362</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Orumba North</td>
<td>172, 772</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Orumba South</td>
<td>184, 548</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>1,576,804</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: 2006 population and housing census of the Federal Republic of Nigeria*

**Sample size and Sampling Technique**
A sample size is an individual portion by which the quality of more of the same sort is to be deduced or judged. Social Scientists agree that when a population is defined, the Taro Yamani’s formula can be used to determine the sample size, thus the researcher decided to use the formula. Below is the formula.

\[ n = \frac{N}{1+N(e)^2} \]

Where \( n \) = Sample Size
\( N \) = Population
\( I \) = Constant
E = Error margin

Since the researcher cannot reach out to all the 177 communities that make up Anambra State, a purposive sampling technique was adopted, in this method, the researcher selected sample subjects to confirm to some control measures dictated by some inherent characteristics of the population of interest. In choosing such samples, the researcher was guided by what he considers typical cases that are mostly likely to provide him with the requisite data or information that is representative of the entire population of interest. For example the educational background of the population of study as well as their age bracket.

Ohaja (2003, p.82) asserts that “purposive sampling is used when the researcher seeks certain characteristics in his sampling elements and wants to ensure that those chosen have the characteristics.” Similarly, Ikeagwu (1998, p.189) observed “the basic assumption behind purposive sampling is that with good judgment and an appropriate strategy, one can hand pick the cases to be included in the sample and thus develop samples that are satisfactory in relation to one’s needs” In this study, two local government areas were purposively selected from each of the three senatorial zones in the state owing to their strategic nature as well as their collated estimated adult literate population of ages between 20-69 for effective representation. Here are the selected local governments.

1. Anambra Central

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NO</th>
<th>LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA</th>
<th>POPULATION</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>AWKA SOUTH</td>
<td>189,654</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>IDEMILI NORTH</td>
<td>431,654</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. Anambra North

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NO</th>
<th>LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA</th>
<th>POPULATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>ONITSHA NORTH</td>
<td>125,918</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>ONITSHA SOUTH</td>
<td>137,191</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. Anambra South

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NO</th>
<th>LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA</th>
<th>POPULATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>AGUATA</td>
<td>369,972</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>NNEWI NORTH</td>
<td>155,443</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

However, in determining the number of respondents to be administered with questionnaires in each local government area that were purposively selected, the researcher applied the Taro Yamani’s formula stated above in getting the sample size of 6142. The population of each of the selected local government areas from the three senatorial zones of Anambra State is divided by the sample size figure of 6142 as shown below.

\[
N = \frac{2456,468}{1+2,456,468 \times 0.0025}
\]

\[
= \frac{2456,468}{6,141 + 1}
\]

\[\text{Therefore, the sample size is 6,142}\]

Hence, the workings:

1 Anambra Central

A Awka South

Population 189,654

\[
6142 \div 189,654 = 31
\]

B Idemili North

Population 431,005

\[
6142 \div 431,005 = 70
\]
2 Anambra North

A Onitsha North
Population 125,918
Sample Size 6142 = 21

B Onitsha South
Population 137,191
Sample Size 6142 = 22

3 Anambra South

A Aguata
Population 369,972
Sample Size 6142 = 60

B Nnewi North
Population 155,443
Sample Size 6142 = 25

TOTAL 229

DATA ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION

For the purpose of this study, two hundred and twenty nine (229) questionnaires were distributed to respondents, but 220 were filled, returned and found usable, yielding to 96 percent response rate.

4.2 Answers to Research Questions.

Research Question 1: Do you actually read the messages of government Social Development projects being showcased on the ANIDS billboard?

Table 1: Respondent readership level of government message on Social development project showcased on ANIDS billboard.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>14.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>183</td>
<td>83.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can’t say</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>220</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: 2013 field survey

From the table above, it is deducible that a total of 32 (14.5%) of the respondents read the messages of government Social development projects being showcased on the ANIDS billboard, 183 (83.2%) said no, while 5 (2.3%) of the respondents could not decide on the issue.

Research Question 2: Would the respondents perceive the use of ANIDS billboard as a wasteful venture for showcasing governments Social development projects by Anambra State government?

Table 2: Respondents perceives the use of ANIDS billboard as wasteful venture for showcasing government Social development projects.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>197</td>
<td>87.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>12.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can’t say</td>
<td>_</td>
<td>_</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>220</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: 2013 field survey

Table 2 showed that a total of 193(87.7%) respondents agreed that it is a wasteful venture to use ANIDS billboard to showcase government Social development projects by Anambra state government, 27 (12.3%) respondents said no and can’t say have nil.
Research Question 3: Would you consider those social development projects of government being showcased on the ANIDS billboard as a piece of propaganda?

**Table 3: Respondents perceives the social development projects of government on ANIDS billboard as a piece of propaganda.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>189</td>
<td>85.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>12.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can’t say</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>220</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: field survey 2013

From the table, 189 (85.9%) respondents agreed that the social development project of government being showcased on the ANIDS billboard is purely a propaganda machinery of government, 27 (12.3%) disagreed to this notion, while 4 (1.8%) could not say whether yes or no.

Research Question 4: Do you believe in the message content about the social development projects being showcased on ANIDS billboard by Anambra State government?

**Table 4: Respondents view on the message content about the social development projects being showcased on ANIDS billboard.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>152</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can’t say</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>220</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: field survey 2013

The information on the table above suggests that 52 (24%) of the sampled respondents believed in the message content of social development projects being showcased on ANIDS billboard by Anambra State government, 152 (72%) of the respondents does not believe in the message content, while 9 (4%) can’t say.

**DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**

The findings suggests that 32 or 14.5% of the respondents said they read messages of government social development projects being showcased on the ANIDS billboard, 183 (83.2%) respondents said they do not read the messages, while 5 (2.3%) respondents can’t say. Contrary to the findings above, Nwabueze (2006, p.76) posits that “intimidating nature of these billboards in the middle of cities and on highways, including the high fidelity of images/messages on them, make a quick but persuasive impression in the minds of mobile audience”. Also, the analysis indicates that a significant 193 (87.7%) respondents perceived the use of ANIDS billboard for showcasing governments social development projects by Anambra State government as a wasteful venture, 27 (12.3%) said it is not a wasteful venture.

In addition, 189 (85.9%) respondents agreed that social development projects of government being showcased on the ANIDS billboard is purely a propaganda machinery of government, 27 (12.3%) disagreed to this notion, while 4 (1.8%) can’t say. This finding is related to Ibe (2009) findings on “Newspapers coverage of infrastructural development in Anambra State under Peter Obis’s administration (a study of Vanguard and National Lights). Ibe (2009, p.43) asserted that “coverage of the infrastructural development in Anambra State under Peter Obi’s administration were mostly covered by national light newspaper (owned by Anambra state government) considering the fact that the ownership influence affected it, because its circulation and coverage is mostly based in Anambra State.

Also, 52 or 24 percent of the respondents believed firmly in the message content about the social development projects being showcased on ANIDS billboard by Anambra State government, 152 (72%) said they do not believe in the message content, while 9 (4%) could not decide on the issue.
CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this study, it is concluded that significant number of people in Anambra State does not read messages of government social development projects being showcased on the ANIDS billboards, while few of them barely read the messages. Majority of the people perceived the use of ANIDS billboard for showcasing government’s social development projects by Anambra State government as wasteful venture. On the contrary some of them think otherwise. They study found that most people considered those social development projects of government being showcased on the ANIDS billboard as a piece of propaganda, while some of them said is not a propaganda. Similarly, few respondents believed in the message content of social development projects being showcased on ANIDS billboard, while majority said they do not believed on such messages.

It is therefore, recommended that Anambra State government should be initiating peoples oriented programmes and policies, this will arouse enthusiasm amongst the people and as well makes them to read such messages. As the adage suggests “good market sells itself”. The government should do away with the idea of using billboard as propaganda tools for its governance, through showcasing of those acclaimed achievements on ANIDS billboard, rather if at all it wants to highlight its social development projects through billboard, proper measure must be taken to ensure that projects being exposed can be quantified.

Also, government should consider alternative means of showcasing its achievement rather than billboard medium as its cost so much to produce, thus government should convene a town hall meeting monthly to brief the people on its achievements strides. They can also use radio medium, it has potential of reaching numerous people.

In as much as publicity is a welcome development in every endeavour, the government should combine the mechanism of billboard advertising of its achievements with good democracy dividend, these are surest way possible for it to win back the peoples’ loyalty and acceptance. The relevant advertising regulatory agencies such as Outdoor Advertising Association of Nigeria (OAAN), Advertising practitioners’ council of Nigeria (APCON) etc should scrutinize the messages on the billboards being sponsored by the various governments as well as the political parties and their candidates to ensure that they comply with the advertising codes.

REFERENCES


APPENDIX

Unity Kapital Assurance plc,
41, New Market Road Onitsha,
Anambra State,
March, 2013.

Dear Respondent,

This study is designed to ascertain “Audience perception of the use of billboard in showcasing government’s social development projects: a study of Anambra state integrated development strategy billboard” (ANIDS). This is an issue of great importance to Anambraians and general public. Kindly assist us by completing the attached questionnaires. All the information you give will be totally confidential. Thank you and God bless.

Yours truly,

Ezegwu Daniel / Mbonu Alfred

SECTION A

1. Sex (i) male (ii) Female
2. Age Bracket (a) 20-29 (b) 30-39 (c) 40-49 (d) 50-59 (e) 60-69
3. Occupation (a) Civil servant/paid Employment (b) Student (c) Business (d) Others
4. Educational Background (a) First School Leaving Certificate (b) SSCE, GCE, WAEC (c) OND, NCE (d) BSC, HND (e) MSC MA, PHD (f) Others

SECTION B

1. Does the Anambra State government make use of billboard to showcase its governmental achievements? (a) Yes (b) No (c) Can’t say
2. Do you actually read the messages of government social development projects being showcased on the ANIDS billboard? (a) Yes (b) No (c) Can’t say
3. If yes, do you believe in the message content about the social development projects being showcased on ANIDS billboard by Anambra State government? (a) Yes (b) No (c) Can’t say
4. Do the peoples’ exposure to the ANIDS billboard advert messages of governmental achievements significantly shored up the governments image and acceptance by the governed? (a) Yes (b) No (c) Can’t say
5. Would you advice the government to continue with its ideas of using ANIDS billboard in showcasing its social development projects? (a) Yes (b) No (c) Can’t say
6. Is the use of ANIDS billboard in showcasing of its social development projects by the Anambra state government a wasteful venture? (a) Yes (b) No (c) Can’t say
7. Do you see those billboard messages of the state government as mere propaganda machinery? (a) Yes (b) No (c) Can’t say
8. Would you advice the government to continue with its idea of using ANIDS billboard in showcasing its social development projects? (a) Yes (b) No (c) Can’t say
9. What advice would you proffer to the government on the issue of ANIDS billboard advertisement? (a) To discard the use of billboard as propaganda tools and initiate people oriented projects. (b) To be convening town hall meetings periodically and be listening to the popular opinions as regards to good governance. (c) To go ahead with the billboard and media propaganda. (d) A and B above.
10. What do you appreciate most about those expose of government s social development projects on billboards?
(a) Glossy and colourful designs
(b) Strong visuals effects /Appeal
(c) All of the above.