



# Is Billboard Advertising an Effective Tool in The Marketing of Home Appliances?

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## Abstract

In an attempt to create awareness, inform, educate and persuade marketing audience to patronize products, retail companies adopt diverse forms marketing communication to send messages across to their targets. Billboard ads are not left out of the mix of above-the-line communication tools used by home appliance marketers to achieve the above objectives. The aim of this study is to explore the importance of billboards advertisements in the marketing of home appliances. Many researchers have studied and reported widely on Billboards ads but none has so far addressed the importance of this creative form of marketing promotion in the marketing of home appliances. This study will help pull out some of the unique ways that billboard can help advertise home appliances to a wide audience with its ripple effects of increased sales revenue. Data for the study was collected with questionnaires administered on 500 respondents in the study area. Simple frequency tables and bar graphs were used to analyze and report the findings of the study. Findings of the study revealed that most respondents are of the view that billboard advertising is a good tool for creating awareness and persuading customer to choose appliances of their choice.

**Keywords:** Billboard, Home appliances, Outdoor advertising, Selective perception, Media, Marketing.



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## **1. Introduction**

Increasing global competition has made many companies want to find more innovative ways of promoting their goods and services. This has contributed to the increased use of billboard advertisement (an example of outdoor advertisement) as a communication tool to enhance the promotional efforts of many organizations and by extension sales revenue in many industries. Billboard advertisement is however an initiative undertaken by many organizations to increase sales and ultimately create awareness of their products. The overriding aim of this study is to gain a deeper understanding of the ‘importance of billboard advertising in the marketing of home appliances’.

It is obvious that the influence of billboard advertisements on promotional audiences impacts their decisions to either purchase a product or not. This happens in different ways which also affect the advertising organization by impacting on the image of the organization and the product or service being advertised. Billboard ads influence the way a product is perceived and consequently affects audience preferences. In a time when traditional media is often ignored or tuned out, smart marketers have the opportunity to benefit from the results-driven ads that billboard can offer. Despite the fact that billboards are our latter-day town criers that announce what’s hot and what’s not, it has been observed that billboard advertisements of home appliances has not been strategically placed by most home appliance retailers in the Ho Municipality of Ghana, West Africa.

This could also be informed by the misconception of some marketers that due to the emergence of several other advertising techniques in the market, the effectiveness of billboard advertising has lessened. However, such a strategy has certainly proven to be beneficial for several businesses around the globe. Although a majority of advertisers employ electronic and other kinds of advertising and marketing strategies, billboard advertising continues to be an effective method of reaching out to a large section of marketing audience. Since these advertisements can be viewed by targets at any point in time, this type of advertising works very efficaciously in conjunction with other advertisement alternatives.

### **1.1. Objectives of the Study**

The purpose of this paper is to explore the importance of this innovative form of advertising by reporting the results of a survey of audience who have or have not been influenced in their choice of a home appliance by a billboard advert. This study first examines why companies use billboards, and then considers how to use them effectively. It also introduces two theoretical perspectives, based on gravity models and selective perception, to aid in a better understanding of what drives the effectiveness of outdoor advertising followed by a review of academic research on the characteristics of billboard advertising, followed by a description of the conceptual framework guiding the study. The study's methods are then described, results are discussed, and implications and conclusions are drawn. The specific objectives to this research study are to:

- i. explore the effects of billboard advertisements of home appliances on customer purchasing decision.
- ii. identify the essence of billboard advertisement in the marketing of home appliances.
- iii. identify the effects of billboard ads on the decisions and choices of home appliance buyers.
- iv. proffer recommendations that would help marketers of home appliances to appreciate and understand the relevance of billboard ads.

## **2. Literature Review**

Various scholars and researchers have come up with theories in their attempt to explain how advertising messages are received, processed and acted on by their target audience. These theories also explain the possible effects that these messages have on their target audience as far as the intent of the advertiser is concern. One of such studies looked at the Information Processing Model (IPM) which is discussed extensively by [Belch and Belch \(2001\)](#) and [Shimp \(2000\)](#).

The IPM discusses how consumers process and respond to advertising information. With the IPM, the ultimate objective of the advertiser is to encourage the target audience to choose his, (the advertiser’s) brand or products rather than competing ones, ([Shimp, 2000](#)). This means that advertiser’s main aim is to direct their audiences’ attentions towards their brand or products and subsequently encourage them patronize them. The model sees the consumer as someone in a complex buying situation and looking for information relevant to his/her buying decision ([Belch and Belch, 2001](#)). Marketers and advertisers being aware of this will then flood the consumer with his – the advertiser’s information that are considered relevant to the consumer’s buying needs ([Shimp, 2000](#)). This then leaves the consumer with numerous information competing for his/her attention and choice. To avoid being in a confused state, the consumer, according to [Belch and Belch \(2001\)](#) passes through five stages in an attempt to process the information and finally make a choice.

The first stage, according to [Belch and Belch \(2001\)](#) is Exposure. It means consumers coming into contact with the advertiser’s message through radio, television, newspaper or billboard ads ([Shimp, 2000](#)). In their daily routines; in the house, office, on the road, etc, consumers intermittently hear, see or read radio, television, newspaper or billboard ads on varied kinds of products. But this – exposing consumers to advertising messages is not enough to gain their patronage. In the opinion of [Shimp \(2000\)](#) “gaining information is a necessary but insufficient condition for communication”.

As a result, the consumers’ attention needs to be hooked to the message and be caused to engage in selective attention – focusing on, and considering a specific message out of the many that he/she was exposed to. This will cause the consumer to attempt to comprehend – make meaning out of the messages that he/she had attended to. In doing so, the consumer would have moved to the second stage, Comprehension, according to [Belch and Belch \(2001\)](#). To comprehend means to understand and create meaning out of symbols and sounds ([Shimp, 2000](#)). But ads are a mixture of words, pictures, colors and/or sound yet aimed at sending a united message. This means that the target audiences need to see and understand the ads as they are intended by the advertiser. This, corroborated meaning of the ads by the advertiser and the audience) can only be successful if the target audiences understand the

ads and their contents very well. Thus, advertising contents need to compliment the central theme of the ad in other for it to communicate one meaning to all the varied audiences. After the comprehension, the consumer then tries to accept or reject what he/she had interpreted and understood. This will then lead him/her to the Yielding stage – the third stage as indicated by [Belch and Belch \(2001\)](#).

Yielding to or agreeing with what has been comprehended means whether or not the consumer will agree with the message argument put forward by the advertiser ([Shimp, 2000](#)). This means that consumers do not only comprehend (understand) advertisers' messages but they reject or accept them based on the importance those messages have on their choices and needs at the time of delivery and reception. Should the consumer yield to, (agree with) the advertiser's message, the comprehended messages are then retained, searched for and retrieved at the appropriate time, according to [Shimp \(2000\)](#). In that case, the consumer would have moved to the fourth stage which is the Retention stage ([Belch and Belch, 2001](#)). At the retention stage, the consumer stores the processed information and uses it to make choices when in need. This means that stored information about a product, service or brand can remain in the consumer's mind for a while and be relied on at the appropriate time and place. Thus, in making purchase decision, a consumer then relies on the stored information and this manifests in his/her actions towards the various competing brands or products that are available. At that point, the consumer will be expected to retrieve the stored information and subsequently act on it. This is seen when he/she put up a positive behavior towards the needed product or brand out of the numerous. This action according to [Belch and Belch \(2001\)](#) is the last stage in the IPM.

From this model, one can infer that the actions or inactions of a consumer towards a product, service or brand at any particular time are due to how successful the said product's ad(s) have being able to take such a consumer through the above stages. It further indicates that advertiser's audiences consciously or unconsciously process the messages that they are exposed to and subsequently act on them. Thus, adverts when well packaged and delivered through the right media to the target audience will have positive impact on customer attraction, retention and loyalty. In conclusion, this theory's assertions will guide this study's data collections, its analysis and discussions and the conclusions to be drawn from the findings.

## **2.1. Related Issues about Billboards**

Billboards have existed and being used by many institutions, organizations, companies and individuals to advertise their products, services and/or promotions to their target audience over a period of time. As a result, many researchers how these audiences perceive the billboards ads and the impact they have on them. Recent years have seen growth in outdoor advertising revenues. According to the Outdoor Advertising Association of America, annual revenues were \$2.8 billion in 1993; over the following 10 years, expenditures almost doubled, increasing to \$5.5 billion in 2003. This rise has occurred in spite of the loss of cigarette advertising on billboards due to the Master Settlement Agreement of 1998 and a decline in the relative proportion of billboards for alcoholic beverage (<https://www.oaaa.org/NewsEvents/News/PressReleases/tabid/327/archive/true/Default.aspx>). In recent years, a broader range of product categories has been advertised on billboards, led by a variety of retail and service businesses. Zenith Optimedia classifies outdoor advertising as a "major medium," along with television, radio, newspapers, magazines, the Internet, and cinema. Zenith Optimedia projects continued growth in outdoor advertising expenditures, and ranks outdoor as the fifth largest advertising medium worldwide, behind only television, newspapers, magazines, and radio (<http://www.advertolog.com/agencies/zenithoptimedia-londonyear-2005media-billboard>). Despite revenue growth, however, outdoor advertising remains "one of the least researched of any mass medium" ([Katz, 2003](#)). Even among the limited number of studies that have been conducted, few have focused on what factors drive its effectiveness ([Donthu et al., 1993](#)).

The growth of outdoor advertising has included a considerable increase in the use of nontraditional formats, including street furniture (e.g., bus shelters, kiosks), alternative media (e.g., arenas and stadiums, airborne, marine), and transit (e.g., buses, airports). The focus of this study is on billboards, however, which remain the most common form of outdoor advertising. Numerous academic articles, textbooks, and industry publications list key advantages and disadvantages of outdoor advertising/billboards in comparison to other media. No prior study has examined managerial perceptions of the primary reasons for using billboards, however. Moreover, despite numerous discussions of factors associated with billboard advertising success, the literature does not address the attributes of the medium that users see as the primary factors associated with successful billboard advertising. Textbook authors and academic researchers have identified a variety of distinctive characteristics of billboards and outdoor advertising ([Kelley and Jugenheimer, 2004](#)), ([Sissors and Baron, 2002](#)), ([Taylor, 1997](#)), ([Vanden Bergh and Katz, 1999](#)), and [Woodside \(1990\)](#)). According to these authors, the advantages of using billboards include, among other things:

- i. potential placement of the advertisement close to the point of sale
- ii. high frequency of exposure to regular commuters
- iii. high reach
- iv. 24-hour presence
- v. geographic flexibility for local advertisers
- vi. economic efficiency in terms of low production costs and low cost per thousand exposures
- vii. visual impact from advertisement size and message creativity
- viii. brand awareness

Some noted disadvantages in using billboards include:

- i. the need to limit the number of words in the message
- ii. short exposure to the advertisement
- iii. low demographic selectivity
- iv. measurement problems

A recent study of billboard users found that compared with other media, billboards were rated higher in terms of ability to communicate information affordably, attract new customers, and increase sales ([Taylor and Franke, 2003](#)).

While many advantages of billboards have been identified anecdotally, from experience, or through academic study, there is a need to investigate whether frequently listed advantages overlap with each other, and to examine whether they truly are advantages that are important to billboard users.

## **2.2. Executional Factors Associated with the Success of Billboards**

Relatively few studies have attempted to examine executional factors associated with the effectiveness of billboard advertising. However, a few have provided very specific advice for outdoor advertisers. In examining the outcomes of outdoor advertising, some studies found that a novel or very creative execution could improve recall or attention to billboards (Fitts and Hewett, 1977). Thus, use of a clever creative execution is one factor that has been hypothesized to correlate with effective outdoor advertising. In a content analysis of billboards, (Blasko, 1985) examined whether advertisers were following accepted creative principles associated with outdoor advertising. (Blasko, 1985) listed five main principles of effective billboard advertising:

- i. short copy (eight or fewer words in copy),
- ii. simple background,
- iii. product identification (billboard clearly identifies product or advertiser),
- iv. simple message (single message communicated), and
- v. creative (use of clever phrases and/or illustrations).

Studies conducted by Donthu *et al.* (1993) and Bhargava *et al.* (1994) found recall of billboards to be positively related to a variety of factors, including brand differentiation, emphasis on product performance, inclusion of price, use of a photograph, use of humor, use of color, and a good location for the billboard. The 1993 study emphasized that advertising recall can be enhanced by using fewer words or unusual executions. As with the key advantages of outdoor advertising, there have been many discussions of strategic and executional factors related to the success of billboards, but little systematic investigation of the underlying factors that drive successful billboard advertising. Below, we offer some insight on these factors by providing two theoretical perspectives on the promotional role of billboards. Two theoretical perspectives are used as a basis for hypotheses in this study.

First, because humans have limited information-processing capacity, part of the attraction of billboards involves their ability to cut through clutter. To deal with the large volume of advertisements shown, people engage in selective perception, which involves screening out advertisements that are less relevant to them (Celsi and Olson (1988) and Mowen and Minor (1998).

Second, because a billboard appears at a specific location, many of its advantages are linked to geographic factors. As is suggested by gravity models in retailing (Allaway *et al.*, 2003); (Bell *et al.*, 1998), in the absence of a compelling stimulus such as substantially larger floor space for selling, consumers are more prone to shop closer to home. Selective Perception and Clutter, a key obstacle to advertising effectiveness, is the volume of advertising to which consumers are exposed. Godin (1999) reports that an average consumer is exposed to approximately one million marketing messages every year. To help manage this volume of information, consumers control their own information processing and engage in selective perception, which leads to processing only a limited number of advertisements and ignoring many others.

Selective perception has been conceptualized as a four-part process consisting of selective exposure, attention, comprehension, and retention. In an advertising context, selective exposure refers to people limiting the communications they see and hear to those that conform to their preexisting ideas and attitudes (Burgoon *et al.*, 1994). Selective attention refers to actually paying attention to the advertisement once exposed to it. Selective comprehension involves the process by which the consumer reconciles the advertisement's content with preexisting beliefs. Finally, selective retention is defined as remembering messages that are more consistent with one's prior beliefs and one's own self-image. When related to advertising, these four stages generally must occur before the advertisement reaches the consumer. At a minimum, attention and retention must take place (Assael, 1981). As a result, advertisers must consider how selective perception is affecting their ability to get a message through to consumers.

Because of the heavy volume of advertising to which consumers are exposed, they must decide which advertisements to screen out and which to process. As media-planning expert Erwin Ephron has observed, outdoor advertising is unique in that people are not involved in the medium as they would be when watching a television program or reading the newspaper. As a result, (Ephron, 2004) has described outdoor advertising as a unique case in which the "medium is the message." When driving by a billboard, a motorist is not bombarded with other media options, so selective perception is not as much of an obstacle as in some other media. Although the short exposure time and lack of involvement in the medium mandate that higher frequency of exposure is necessary for billboards to have the same impact as other media (Cannon and Riordan, 1994); (Murray and Jenkins, 1992), the ability to cut through a cluttered advertising environment is a key benefit of billboards. In short, billboards have a special advantage in that they are generally seen in a setting where there is less competition for people's attention. As a result, they may appeal to advertisers because of their ability to get noticed, especially at times and places when consumers are considering a purchase or are ready to buy (e.g., billboards for tourist attractions, retail stores, and restaurants). There are, of course, some contexts in which billboards are used for brand building and/or supplementing other media, but the recent shift toward local retail and service businesses accounting for a high proportion of billboards is indicative of the applicability of billboards being present at the right time (e.g., when a motorist is looking to stop for a meal). Gravity Models Dating back to Reilly's law of retail gravitation (Reilly, 1931), it has been theorized that in the absence of a known major advantage of an alternative (such as larger floor space), consumers will shop closer to home. Building on Reilly's law, (Huff, 1964) focused on the spatial behavior of shoppers. At the heart of Huff's law is the notion that travel time to a shopping center is inversely related to the likelihood of shopping there. In other words, the greater the distance to the shopping area, the less likely the consumer is to make a trip there. Huff and subsequent modelers (Bell *et al.*, 1998) have examined factors that can

induce consumers to travel further. The overriding assumption of these models is that some additional attraction must be present to offset distance, thereby making close location proximity an advantage in most retail contexts.

Because gravity models suggest that consumers have a natural preference for traveling shorter distances and shopping at nearby places, it follows that billboards that point the consumer to a nearby location will have a stronger influence on store traffic and sales. The idea that billboards located in close proximity to the store are advantageous from a gravity perspective is also consistent with the media-planning advantages of billboards, namely, high reach and frequency in a local trade area. A study by [Allaway et al. \(2003\)](#) supports the notion that the billboards in close proximity to a store enhance gravity effects. In examining the spatial diffusion of a loyalty card for a major U.S. retailer, the authors found a relationship between distance from the store and likelihood of signing up quickly. They also found a significant billboard effect, stating, "Even within the 0-3-mile ring nearest the store, non-adopters were significantly further from the nearest billboard than adopters". [Allaway et al. \(2003\)](#), further found that residents who lived within two miles of a billboard advertising the program had a 26% higher probability of adoption during the launch period, and that the speed of adoption was influenced by the number of billboards within two miles of the resident. Additional evidence for the influence of location elements on billboard effectiveness is provided by [Bhargava and Donthu \(1999\)](#), who found that sales response to billboards is influenced by location of exposure.

In addition to academic research suggesting that billboard effectiveness is related to location, the well-documented fact that most retail businesses draw most of their customers from a limited geographic area supports the application of gravity models to billboards. While the primary trade area for retailers and service business can range from very small for small businesses such as independent restaurants, gas stations, and convenience stores, to being considerably larger, as in the case of amusement parks or large shopping malls, the need to reach consumers in the local area is readily apparent. The locational advantages of outdoor advertising are consistent with the need to engage in "recency planning" ([Ephron, 1997](#)). In the modern environment, advertising works by influencing those who are ready to buy. In this new model, "consumers control messages by screening-out most and selecting only a few that are relevant to them at the time. The new model accepts the relevance that "what makes ads work is provided by what is happening in the consumer's life and seldom by the advertising" ([Ephron, 1997](#)). The ability to avoid being screened out via selective perception processes allows many billboards to get noticed at the point at which the driver is considering a purchase.

Billboard characteristics that influence a business to use the medium may pertain, in part, to both gravity and selective-perception issues. In terms of providing advantages for billboard users, however, two broad factors can be categorized as being more closely associated with gravity, while two others are more closely associated with selective perception. The factors more closely linked to gravity are tangible response and local presence. Tangible response refers to the ability of billboards to bring in customers, increase traffic, and build sales. There is widespread agreement that a billboard's ability to attract customers is closely linked to its proximity to the place of business ([Taylor and Franke, 2003](#)), thereby linking this factor to gravity models. The ability to build a local presence based on providing a "last hit" close to the place of business is also linked to retail gravity. Furthermore, the gravity model is linked to Ephron's concept of recency planning, in that a billboard's proximity to the place of business enhances the likelihood of a stop at a time when the consumer is ready to buy. Thus, gravity helps explain the place advantage that billboards have over other media.

Two factors that are more closely tied to selective-perception theory are visibility and media efficiency. Visibility, which refers to the ability of a billboard to make a strong visual impression, allows billboards to break through the clutter. Media efficiency, such as broad and frequent exposure to the target audience, suggests that the medium is effective and cost-efficient since it is being noticed even in a competitive environment. Although the literature indicates that both the gravity and selective-perception factors are important advantages of billboards, it is not clear which factors are more important to businesses in terms of their reasons for continuing to use the medium. An a priori case can be made for a prediction in either direction, indicating that neither an exploratory approach nor the specification of a single dominant hypothesis is appropriate ([Armstrong et al., 2001](#)). Therefore, we develop alternative competing hypotheses without choosing one over the other.

Findings of gravity models have consistently verified the importance of location in retailing ([Allaway et al., 2003](#)); ([Bell et al., 1998](#)); ([Huff, 1964](#)); ([Reilly, 1931](#)). As a result, it can be argued that exposure to an advertisement in close proximity to a retail outlet can be more valuable than exposures that take place farther away. In essence, because of the tendency for consumers not to drive farther than they deem necessary to get to a retail location, exposure to the advertisement in close proximity to the store may be of key importance. Thus, one reasonable hypothesis is: Gravity-related factors are more important than selective-perception factors in the decision to use billboards.

An alternative case can be made for the central importance of overcoming selective perception. In a cluttered environment, where many advertisements compete for attention, it is critical for advertising to get noticed and, in turn, processed by the consumer. Because advertisements that are not noticed will not be effective, high visibility and frequency of exposure at an affordable price may be key contributors to the message being perceived and in it having an impact. We therefore hypothesize that; Selective-perception factors are more important than gravity-related factors as a reason for using billboards. Prior research has suggested that many smaller businesses and travel-related retailers, such as hotels, restaurants, and tourist attractions, often use billboards as a central part of their media mix ([Taylor and Franke, 2003](#)). Therefore, in conjunction with testing these hypotheses, we will also address the following research question: Do the reasons for using billboards vary by number of billboards used per month, company size, or company type?

The literature suggests that for a billboard to be effective, it must communicate a relevant message in a clear, interesting, and readable manner to the appropriate audience. It must also be at an appropriate location in order to be seen by the target audience. Therefore, a straightforward expectation is that message, format, and location are important factors associated with the effectiveness of billboard advertising. Relevant message factors include name identification and other information about the company or its products, the creativity of execution, and the

integration of the billboard content with the company's other promotional messages. Format factors include the readability of the verbal message, the brevity and simplicity with which the message is presented, and support of the verbal message with effective visuals. Location involves the appropriateness of where the billboard is placed.

### 3. Methodology

This study is exploratory in design in order to help develop a better understanding of the concept of billboard advertising. The study was conducted within the township of Ho in the Volta Region of Ghana. Sample for the study were drawn from Ho Polytechnic Campus using multistage sampling method to select respondents. Ho Polytechnic has a population of approximately 6500 people (comprising 5000 students from all parts of the world and about 1500 staff and other inhabitants of the polytechnic campus). This study area was chosen because of its cosmopolitan nature: playing host to diverse inhabitants from many walks of life.

First, a total of Five Hundred (500) respondents were chosen purposively for the study. At the second stage, accidental sampling technique was used in the distribution of questionnaires to sample the opinions of respondents. In the use of accidental sampling, respondents were selected on the basis of chance; respondents were sampled based on the probability of meeting them on campus, lecture rooms or their places of residence. Some respondent were not immediately willing to complete questionnaires administered on them due to diverse constraints. Due to this, the questionnaires were left for them to fill at their convenience. Some respondents were also not familiar with some of terminologies and questions; this required the research team to explain to them.

Both qualitative and quantitative data were collected from respondents. Data gathered were checked for clarity, organized and analyzed in line with the research objectives. The analysis of data was done with descriptive statistics in the form of simple frequency tables and bar graphs for easy comprehension.

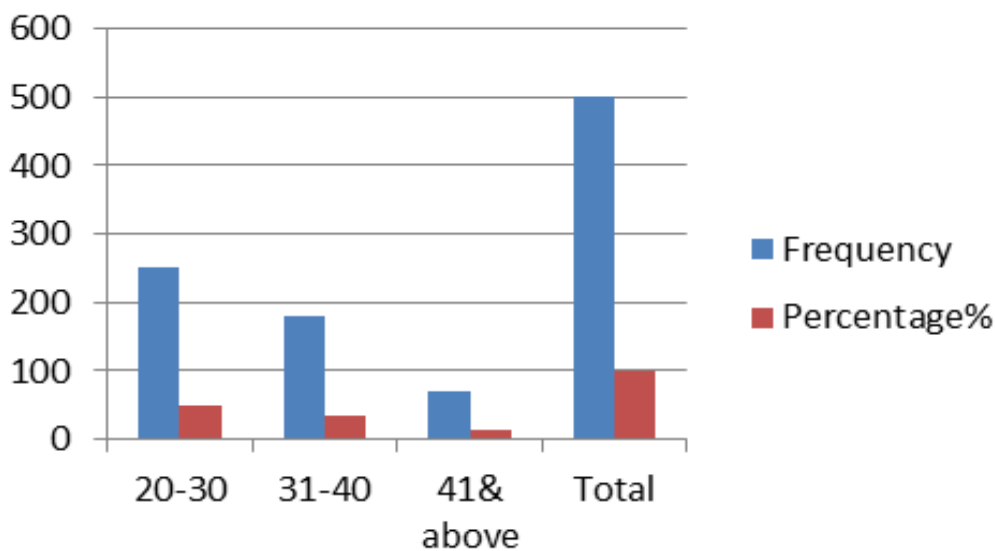
### 4. Results and Discussions

In all, questionnaires were administered on 500 respondents in Ho, capital city of Volta Region, Ghana. The findings and analysis are presented under the various objective of this study.

**Table-1.** Respondents Gender Distribution

Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	210	42
Female	290	58
Total	500	100

Table 1 indicates that 42% of respondents were male and 58% were female. Responses for this study therefore are partially skewed towards females' perspectives. This could perhaps be an indication that females are more attracted to billboards than men.



**Figure-1.** Respondents Age Distribution

The ages of respondents ranged from 20 to 41years and above. It is significant to note that 50 percent of respondent were between the ages of 20-30 years where as 36 percent were between the ages of 31-40 years and a marginal 14 percent were between the ages of 41 and above. This is to say that majority of respondent were young people or youth. This is a signal that people of this age brackets are usually fond of electronic gadgets, particularly home appliances.

**Table-2.** Number of Billboards on Home Appliances seen in Ho in the last 1 month

No. of billboards	Frequency	Percentage %
More than 10	305	61
Between 5 and 10	100	20
Less than 5	50	10
None	45	9
Total	500	100

Results of the survey revealed that 61 % of respondents have seen ten billboards or more advertising electronic appliances in the last one month as against 20% who indicated that they had seen between 5 to 10 billboard ads during the same period. A cumulative percentage of 91 have seen a billboard ad during the period under study whereas a significant 9% of the sampled population (45 respondents) indicated they had not seen any billboard ad during the period.

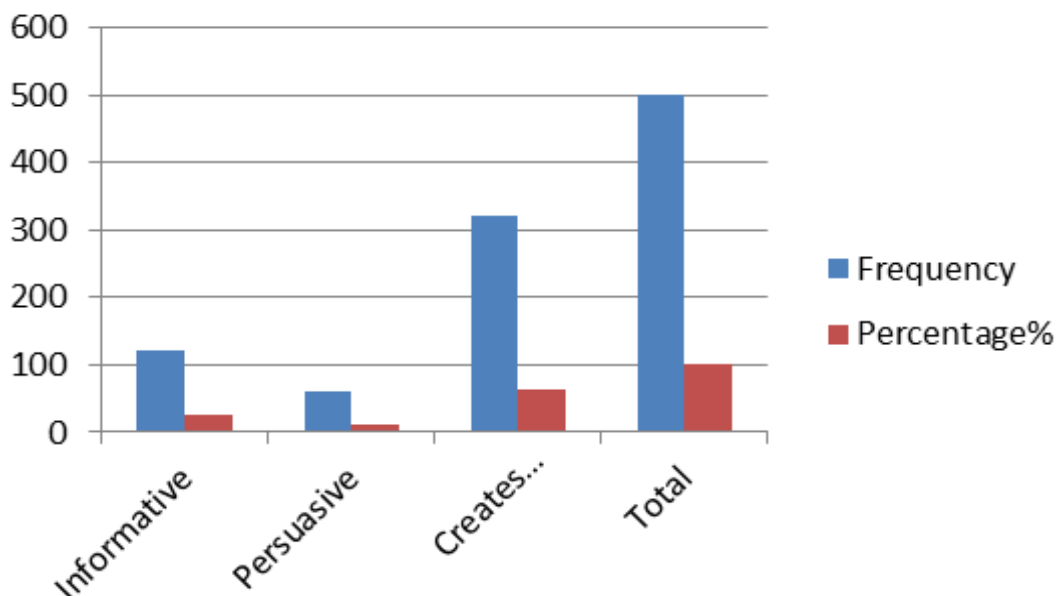


Figure-2. Effects of Billboard Ads on Respondents

The survey revealed that all 91% of respondents who had seen a billboard ad during the period under study were positively impacted by the ads they saw. 64% of the total respondents attributed the effect billboard ads had on them to awareness creation; 24% hinted that the ads they saw were informative and 12% responded that they were persuaded by the billboard ads they saw to make a choice or decision on a product. It is therefore instructive to note that the overriding impact of billboard ads per this study is awareness creation. Billboard advertisements are therefore effective for creating awareness in the marketing of electronic home appliances.

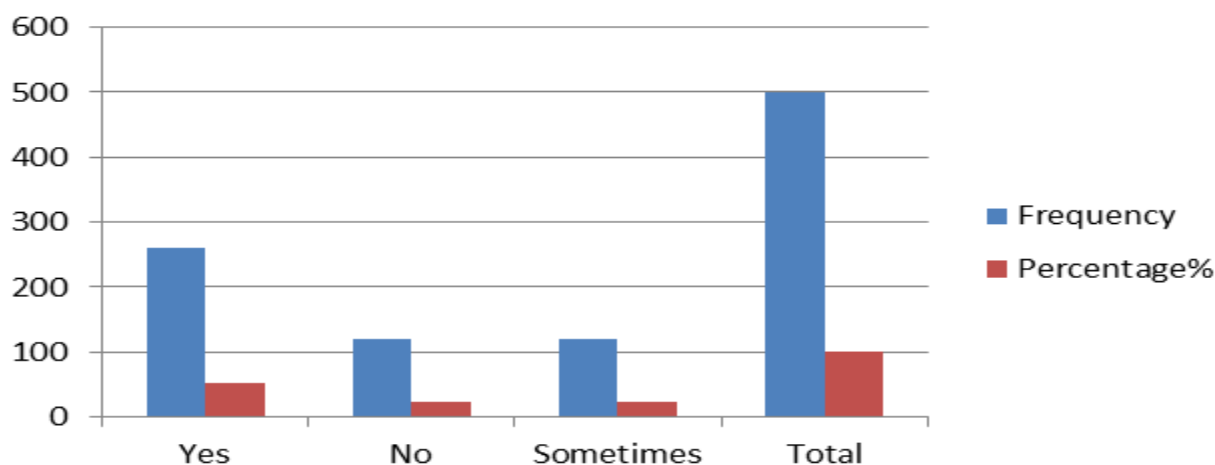


Figure-3. Respondents who Discussed Billboards with Friends and Family

Figure 3 indicates that 52% of respondents who said they had seen billboard ads discussed the impact of the ads with family and friends. 24% representing 120 respondents did not discuss their experiences with anyone whereas another significant 24% of respondents said they sometimes discussed their experiences with friends and family but not always. It is important to note that one of the effects of billboard ads is word of mouth referral. Getting people to talk positively about your company is a big advantage of word-of-mouth marketing. Before printing and broadcasting transformed communications, people relied on word-of-mouth to tell others about their goods. Today, many companies employ word-of-mouth marketing tactics to build their customer base. The advantages of overcoming customer resistance and the ease of using social media on the Internet make word-of-mouth marketing an important tool for businesses desiring to grow while spending fewer marketing dollars. It can be concluded from the findings that;

- i. billboard advertising helps targets audience to decide on the type and brand of home appliance to purchase
- ii. most respondents are of the view that billboard advertising is a good tool for creating awareness
- iii. billboard advertising as one of integrated marketing communication tools really draws the attention of customers to existing and new products

## 5. Conclusions and Recommendations

This study has actually shown that billboard advertising in the marketing of home appliances has been a major contributing factor towards the success of marketing electronic home appliances. It should be noted that even though billboard advertising plays a vital role in the operations of the company yet it does not function on its own. But rather, it also depends on the other elements of Integrated Marketing Communication like sales promotion, public relation, personal selling and others to succeed. It was concluded that billboard advertising has the ability to

influence customers in their decision making. It is evident that though billboard advertising has the ability to influence the decisions of customers, yet there are still some loopholes. In view of this, the following cures are suggested:

1. home appliance marketers should strategically place billboards along high ways, busy roads and high traffic areas where they can easily be seen by pedestrians and or potential customers.
2. firms should lay more emphasis on the attributes of products in their billboard ads. in other words, billboard ads should easily offer information on the benefits of products being advertised.
3. attractive pictorials and simple fonts should be used for the designs and write-ups on billboards.
4. though quite expensive, marketers should consider mounting more billboards at strategic locations to create more awareness for their products; in this case, electronic home appliances.

## **6. Contribution to Knowledge**

The attempt of this study is to examine the contributions billboard advertising makes to the promotional efforts of electronic home appliance marketers. The merits of billboard ads were revealed by the study. This study serves as a source of vital information on one of the above-the-line promotional strategy suitable for the marketing electronic home appliances. The findings provide a good lead to home appliance companies who want to pursue business opportunities in Ghana or West African markets.

## **7. Acknowledgements**

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## **8. Competing Interests**

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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