

**Building People's Awareness on Using the Outdoor Advertising for Tourism  
Promotion**  
**Case Study: Tourism-Content Billboards in Yogyakarta, Indonesia**

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**Abstract**

The out-of-home (outdoor) advertising is still used as a media campaign that gives many advantages for advertisers because of its benefits. Because of this, the use of out-of-home advertising can be maximized on its potential use for the tourism promotion in Yogyakarta, which is famous as the city of arts and culture. The purpose of this study was to evaluate the use of outdoor advertising for promoting products and tourist attractions of Yogyakarta city, as well as providing education for people in the messages of visual communication, from marketing communications perspective. It is well-acknowledged as well for giving advertisers and local government the educative parameter on appropriate concept of promotion. This is a qualitative research using a case study method. The technique used was observation and library research. The object of this study is the billboard which products and tourist's places of interest in Yogyakarta becomes its content. The result of this study is that billboard's content and design still need to be maximally integrated as media for tourism promotion.

**Keywords**

Out-of-home Advertising, Outdoor Advertising, Billboards, Tourism Promotion, Persuasive Communication

**Introduction**

The development of tourism in Indonesia, particularly in the area of Daerah Istimewa Yogyakarta (Special Region of Yogyakarta), greatly increases. Currently, some places of interest emerge as tourist destinations for domestic (local) and foreign tourists. This also gives effects on a redressing of some existing places of interest in order to attract tourists to visit. From the data of hotel room occupancy, Yogyakarta Central Bureau of Statistics (Statistics of Yogyakarta) presented that the number of domestic and foreign travelers who stayed in hotel in 2015 were 4,056,916 people. It increased 4.62% compared to 2014 as 3,877,771 people. From the figures of 2015, the bureau also added that the percentage of domestic tourists reached 94.62% and foreign tourists were 5.38% ([www.yogyakarta.bps.go.id](http://www.yogyakarta.bps.go.id), accessed on August 5, 2016).

The data showed that the growth of number of tourists to visit Yogyakarta certainly refers to its high potentiality for tourism.

Yogyakarta has a diversity of art and culture to attract tourists to visit. There are many places of interest with their unique characters. Some commonly tourist attractions visited are the Sultan's Palace, Taman Sari Water Castle, Malioboro street, some temples (Prambanan, Ratu Boko, Plaosan), GembiraLoka Zoo, waterfalls, natural

attractions of Mount Merapi and Kaliurang. As an educational tourist destination, Yogyakarta also has several museums that describe the history, such as Ulen Sentanu, Yogy Kembali Monument and Fort Vredeburgh. Besides, Yogyakarta is also famous for handy-craft, like silversmith, ceramics, and *batik*. Moreover, it has strong potentials for beautiful beaches like Parangtritis, Parangkusumo, Krakal, Baron, Kukup, and many more.

Therefore, promotion deserves to be encouraged. Tourism promotion must be improved well. One form of promotion that can be executed is by using advertising media. Tourists and other people know the products and excellent tourist destinations by advertising. In addition to providing information, advertising media also gives the power to persuade consumer and attract tourists to come and visit. One is out-of-home advertising that can be viewed directly by the tourists while they are in the city.

The purpose of this study was to analyze the use of outdoor advertising for promoting products and places of interest in Yogyakarta. Moreover, this research is conducted as a media of evaluation for making billboards more effective so that it can be a learning or educational tool as well for people, advertisers and local government on how to have a good tourism-content billboard in Yogyakarta. This hopefully can be an educative parameter for appropriate concept of promotion from marketing communication perspective.

### **Literature Review**

Out-of-Home (OOH) or outdoor advertising is "any advertising done outdoors that publicizes your business' products and services" (Gurumoorthy, 2015: 92). Furthermore he said that OOH is a form of marketing communication that focuses on consumers when they are "on the go", one of them while in public places. OOH leads and remains to the purchase of products and services. Aligned with this research on OOH and the potential of tourism in Yogyakarta, products and services refer to arts, culture and places of interests Yogyakarta has. Consumers here are tourists, both foreign and domestic.

Why OOH becomes a great potential for promoting products and services? Outdoor Advertising Association of America says that "consumers spend more than 70% of their waking hours outside of the home, and on average, more than 18 hours per week in a vehicle. Nine out of ten of those trips are in personal vehicles. Sixty percent of vehicle travel is dedicated to regular consumer tasks, common routines, such as shopping, commuting to work, socializing, and eating outside the home."([www.oaaa.org](http://www.oaaa.org), accessed on August 5, 2016). Not only in America, Negm and Tantawi declared that print ads are more popular among Egyptians. In a research, they also mention that "billboards, fliers, and ads found in magazines and newspaper are common due to the long hours spent during reviews their daily commute." (2015: 4). Strengthening what mentioned before, Gurumoorthy adds that "your audience cannot zap, discard, or even click away from it." (2015: 94)

Another research said that OOH reaches consumers in a wide range. As quoted by Franch, Albiol, and Rutherford (2013: 94), "the most significant characteristic of outdoor advertising is its capacity to deliver a targeted message to the target markets in specific geographic areas (spatial reach)." (Lichtenthala et. al 2006, Bahrgava & Donthu 1999, Kaufman 1989). Duncan also adds the same thing that OOH is a good

way to expand the reach. The exposure performed by OOH is 24-hours a day, day and night, rain, heat (Ogunlade, 2015: 7). To be more specific, OOH can "attract people with certain commonalities." (Duncan, 2002: 435). Quoted by Hussain & Nizamani (2011: 61), Mustafa, Sukran, and Olgun (2007) also put another understanding on advantages of advertising through OOH. They said that "out-of-doors promotions generate various ideas; successful updating, influencing customers that are responsive to the situation. Outdoor commercials are attractive, outstanding, and their visibility is increasing."

From all types of OOH like street furniture, alternative media, and transit (Belch and Belch, 2009: 427), billboard is one type of OOH mostly known by people. Shimp (2010: 578) says that billboard spent as much as "two-thirds of total OOH advertising expenditures in the United States." This shows that the billboard has a big role as media campaign for the world of marketing communications.

In terms of emotion, quoted by Hussain & Nizamani (2011: 61), Meurs and Aristoff (2009) stated that "billboard advertisement determines the creative appeal in the favor of the brand / product credit. It develops more understandable branding and an addition of a new product in order to improve product recognition."

Shimp also conveys about the strengths of billboard that advertisers may consider. He mentions that that the billboard has an element of "broad reach and high frequency levels, geographic flexibility, low cost per thousand, and brand identification" (2010: 581-582). In addition, Shimp says that billboards can also be a last reminder before purchasing. These all strengths can be utilized by advertisers, business owners and the government, to be able to promote products and services by billboard. Apart from a few shortcomings, billboard still provides high benefits of providing information to consumers.

On May 2015, a survey on outdoor media in Jakarta showed that 53% of outdoor advertising is by using billboard ([www.fakta.or.id](http://www.fakta.or.id)). Based on the observation, Yogyakarta also experiences the same thing that most of outdoor advertising media used is billboard. "Billboards are big structure placed in public position which presents advertisement to passing passerby. Most often, they are located on main roads with a large amount of passing motor and pedestrian traffic." (Azad & Boushehri, 2014: 147). In Yogyakarta, people can also find many billboards. Unfortunately, by the issue of Regional Government Regulations of Yogyakarta No. 2, 2015 on the implementation of outdoor advertising, the number of billboards reduces. This is a kind of evaluative program by government on cleanliness and city layout regarding with many billboards placed. (Wicaksono, 2016 on <https://m.tempo.co/read/news/>).

Apart of talking about reduced number of billboards because of government regulations, the number of billboards having content on tourism products (including places of interest) are quite little. There is a contrast ratio between the number of billboard containing products of private business and those containing tourism destinations in Yogyakarta. People seldom find these tourism-content billboards on main roads. It is not easy for domestic and foreign tourists to know the existence of tourist attractions. On the contrary, as explained before, there are a lot of places of interest tourist can visit in this city of culture and arts.

## Methodology and methods

This is a qualitative research using case study method. The technique used was observation and library research. Observation was conducted in July-August 2016. The object of this study is the billboard (as one type of out-of-home advertising) in Yogyakarta which local products and places of interest become its content.

This study analyzes four (4) billboards that have a content of tourism, like places of interest, traditional art performances, as well as typical products of Yogyakarta. These billboards are those placed on some main streets of Yogyakarta. This is importantly discussed because of some strength mentioned before. Besides, a research by Thomas (2015: 5) puts an emphasis on its benefits from economical sides becomes one logical thinking for the researchers. He states that

"On-average, medium-sized billboards receive 10,000 to 20,000 views per location per day ... Those who spend thousands to millions of dollars on billboards in the popular advertising locations should want to make them as effective as possible. In all, it is great importance to understand the economics and features that make an unbelievably profitable billboard."

## Discussion

Regarding with some advantages of promoting products by billboard, it is necessary to have the content and concept of billboard as effective as possible for the success of the promotion. This section will explain the theory taken to analyze some tourism-content billboards in Yogyakarta.

As quoted by Thomas (2015: 12), Suggett presents theories on basic rules of billboard advertising. There are six elements that must be considered, namely:

- a. Fewer than seven words displayed.  
In a normal vehicle speed, consumers only have about 6 seconds to read the billboard. Thus, the words that appear to describe the advertised brand should be simple and short, only about 6 words.
- b. Happy medium: Attract attention, not cause any harm.  
It is associated with a creativity developed by the advertisers. This point refers to the creativity of design and art to attract attention in a positive way, and not to create a distraction or even harms. This should be considered as the majority of readers of this advertisement are the drivers of motor vehicles and bicycles, or pedestrians. Also, billboards are only for brand building.
- c. Billboard is not a direct-response medium  
Summarizing what Suggett says, "billboards are meant to supplement other forms of advertising with a quick message." (Thomas, 2015: 13). Billboard is just a secondary medium. Strongly recommended not to include a contact number and address (including website address) for 99.9% of people will not call or visit the website. If we hope to have a direct response, promotions in other forms are recommended.
- d. Be smart, but not too clever.  
"Smart billboard will grab the attention and leave a lasting impression .... You are in the business of advertising, not showing off how clever you are," (Suggett, 2016, <https://www.thebalance.com>, accessed on August 6, 2016). Billboard content should not make the reader dizzy, but more on solving problems and meeting needs.
- e. The more the better billboards  
Each billboard has a rating, called Gross Rating Points (GRP) based on traffic, visibility, location, size, and more. We should have more than one billboard

placed because we want more numbers of consumers read the billboard in a wider range.

- f. Do not say it, show it  
Billboard will have more effect if it is delivered not just like mostly flat billboards, but it can be in the form of 3D, have moving parts and lighting. This makes consumers interested to see; for a more eye-catching and memorable billboards for consumers or readers. It might look like a cost, but this is more to an investment.

Reinforcing what has been described by Suggett, Kenechukwu SA, Ezekiel S Asemah, and Leon ON Edegoh (2013: 956) mention the techniques of persuasion that must be there in advertising, namely:

- a. Advertising message and audience.  
As an advertiser, we must know what the message will be delivered accurately and to whom. This can be related to the demographic and geographic.
- b. The use of persuasive techniques in advertising messages.  
It is about who the role model in advertising is and his or her credibility, as well as the content of the message: logical or emotional.
- c. Understanding the desired effect on the target audience.

Based on the theory presented above, the evaluation of tourism-content billboards in Yogyakarta is as follows:

#### 1. Billboard Ramayana Ballet



Figure 1: Ramayana Ballet Billboard.

This billboard is located on Jalan Brigjend Katamso. The size is 6x2.5 meters. It is close to the location of Ramayana Ballet venue, Purawisata. The following is the analysis given:

- a. There are a lot of information presented, from the price, address, reservation information, achievements, the number of years of performing, and photos. Billboard is too full of information, so that the message becomes blurred. It

seems that the advertiser wants to put as many information as possible on an available space.

- b. In terms of attracting attention, this billboard can represent an attractive billboard only in terms of color and text by contrasting the dominant colors: black, yellow and gold. Positively, there is no distraction or harms impression emerged that may endanger the drivers and pedestrians.
- c. Related with point A above, this billboard precisely conveys detailed information about the contact numbers and website addresses. The advertiser obviously wants to have a direct response. This is not what Suggett suggests as it's not what billboard means to.
- d. The main purpose of this billboard to deliver information on a promotional price to see Ramayana ballet performance is actually good. The key word is actually on promotional price. But because the billboard is full with other information, 'smart' does not appear.
- e. Billboard is only placed on one spot. Researchers did not find any similar billboards on another road.
- f. The advertiser still uses the standard form, flat billboard.
- g. Persuasive language used is: domestic promo.

## 2. Billboard Welcome to Jogja-by Yogyakarta Tourism Board



Figure 2: Welcome to Jogja Billboard.

This billboard is located on Jalan Mataram. One important note of this billboard is that the local government plays a significant role in the promotion of tourism in Yogyakarta. Participation of local government is what can be an example to improve. The following is the analysis and evaluation:

- a. Talking about 'less words', words on a billboard consists of only three words: Welcome to Yogya. This is good in accordance with the theory presented by Suggett. This billboard is literally just a welcoming board for the tourists. By 80% of images, billboard tries to emphasize on tourism products in Yogyakarta. This can be seen from the pictures and writing: the Kraton

- (King's Palace), Prambanan (temple), Tugu (Yogyakarta Statue), Kalibiru (natural tour), and Nglanggeran (mountain). Unfortunately, at the top of the billboard, there are many information and messages displayed, from name of sponsor or advertiser (tourism board), website address, the words 'wonderful Indonesia', 'Jogja Istimewa' (distinguished Jogja), and 'welcome to Jogja', to logo. On the other hand, the space available is very small.
- b. In terms of attracting attention, the 2x4meter billboard tries to attract people's attention by showing many images or pictures. However, this little billboard does not give much attraction because of many images displayed. Many images may lead reader or tourist to be less focused and confusion on what images they are. Therefore, the images give less persuasion for tourists to visit. Positively, there is no distraction or harms impression emerged that may endanger the drivers and pedestrians.
  - c. Related with point A above, this billboard precisely conveys information about the contact numbers and website addresses. The advertiser requires a direct response which Suggett does not suggest because it is not the purpose of advertising product by billboard. Even, the website address is written for twice. Writing website for twice is a kind of waste.
  - d. Billboard has not conveyed the needs of readers or tourists on the information about tourist attractions to be visited. Not all pictures can explain clearly about the interesting places there. Therefore, we can conclude that this billboard is not 'smart' yet. One thing to consider is that the billboard should be able to persuade and encourage tourists to come and visit the places. This 2 meter-high billboard is too full to show more than 3 images. We should consider about how tourists can examine detail of images only in 6 seconds.
  - e. Billboard is only placed on one spot. Researchers did not find a similar billboard on another road.
  - f. The advertiser still uses a conventionally flat billboard. If the purpose is to show the tourist attractions in a real way, billboard should be digitalized, or by movie or 3D images.

### 3. Billboard *Batik Jumput*



Figure 3: *Batik Jumput* Billboard.

The billboard is located on Jalan Veteran. It is a 1.5x1.5 meter billboard. Here is the analysis and evaluation:

- a. There are a lot of information presented, from the advertiser's name and logo, the words 'welcome', type of *batik* (Jumput), tagline (lebih gaul memakai batik buatan sendiri-- be more modern wearing homemade/local *batik*), the location, and email. The billboard is full of information. The advertiser seems to maximize the space available on the billboard. The advertiser does not fully understand how to use a billboard as a media of promotion. Moreover, billboard is also very simple. The simplicity of billboard can be seen by dominant colors of green and white. Other color on this billboard is just a small motif of *Batik Jumput*. For people who know about batik motif, they can recognize that this billboard is featured with a small batik motif at the top. But for tourists or people who do not know about batik motives, the shape and color of image on top do not give any understanding. It's just like giving a design on an available space.
- b. In terms of attracting attention, a simple billboard has not attracted people yet. Simply saying, it's only a billboard that is clearly-seen about the writing. Persuasive messages for people do not appear. This billboard does not create a deep impression that encourages people or tourists to come. This is because of the simplicity of its contents and design that makes it less persuasive. It's just to inform. Positively, there is no distraction or harms impression emerged that may endanger the drivers and pedestrians.
- c. In relation with point A above, this billboard precisely conveys information about website addresses. The advertiser seems to hope a direct response by giving the email address.
- d. This billboard has not conveyed what travelers/tourists need. All information conveyed makes this billboard monotonous and boring. The message is not clear. Therefore, it is not yet a smart billboard. Billboard has no promotional concepts that can arouse people's curiosity to find and buy *Batik Jumput*. This billboard simply gives different types of letters for each piece of information, not yet persuade.
- e. Billboard is only placed on one spot. Researchers did not find a similar billboard on another road.
- f. The advertiser still uses the standard form, flat billboard.

#### 4. Billboard Welcome to the Yogyakarta-A Lovely City





Figure 4: Welcome to Yogyakarta Billboard.

This billboard is located on Jalan Senopati. Based on the theories, here is the analysis:

- a. Billboard shows its creativity and uniqueness by having a design of 'triangle', where most of billboards are in square design. Talking about the meaning of using triangle design, Frutiger (1989) says that "The triangle with horizontal base conveys an impression of stability and permanence." This has a positive meaning for Yogyakarta. People in Yogyakarta really know much this triangle design since this reflects to *Gunungan*. *Gunungan* is mostly used in a leather puppet show in Yogyakarta. As quoted by Muhajirin (2010:42), it has a philosophy that refers to a mountain, a symbol of life. There is a symbol of human, animals, and plants living there. Similarly with triangle's positive point that at the top point of *Gunungan*, it refers to God. This billboard design has a good meaning, reminding people of Yogyakarta's culture. This design presents some human's activities on it.
- b. From having less words, words on a billboard consists of only three words: Welcome to Yogyakarta. It is completed with a tagline 'a lovely city'. This is in line with what the theory presented before. The words used should be short and clear. This 'welcoming' billboard, unfortunately, is also completed with other writings: *Yogyakarta Berhati Nyaman*. *Berhati Nyaman* is the acronym of *Bersih* (clean), *Sehat* (healthy), *Indah* (beautiful), *Nyaman* (comfortable). Many words presented make this billboard lost from 'short and clear' point. This billboard is 90% image-presented, showing the Kraton (King's Palace), Tugu (Yogyakarta Statue), some art-work activities (mask maker and players of traditional music instrument), women dressed in traditional clothes, and Malioboro Street.
- c. On the other hand, by having many images, it does not help people to find out more about the city of Yogyakarta since the images are not clearly seen by distance.
  - Billboard theme is less clear. All human activities and places of interests are there.
  - There is no explanation or writing on the images. This may create confusion. People have to think much to analyze the images. Consequently, there will be various and different perceptions of the tourists towards the images.
  - The size is about 1.5x2.5 meters, small space. However, there are many images displayed.

- d. In terms of attracting attention, this billboard has not represented much attraction because the theme is lack of clarity. Thus, this billboard is less persuasive, since the message of the picture is less clear. Positively, there is no distraction or harms impression emerged that may endanger the drivers and pedestrians.
- e. This billboard does not give any information on the contact number and website address. This point is very well to be developed.
- f. This billboard has not conveyed what the people or tourists need, places of interest. This is not yet smart in advertising world. One point to consider is that not all images clearly explain about what they are doing.
- g. Billboard is only placed on one spot. Researchers did not find a similar billboard on another road.
- h. The advertiser still takes standard form, flat billboard. Though, the design is unique. If the purpose is to show the tourist attractions in a real way, billboard should better be digitalized or by movie.

These tourism-content billboards in Yogyakarta above are generally characterized as follows:

- a. Most of billboards put much information on it (web address, location, phone number, etc.). The advertiser seems to give information in details, wishing to help people or tourists see and record all the information. Consequently, focus and attraction grab are less.
- b. Billboard is only placed on one spot, not at some other roads.
- c. Billboards still take standard form, flat billboard, static images, not in digital way. And the most of them are in square design. Only one billboard takes a unique design.
- d. Most billboards use colorful images of activity or attraction. Unfortunately, many images there do not explain much on the places of interest to visit. It may lead into questions and confusion.
- e. We talk about how to promote to attract tourists. Billboard's content and great idea have not yet appeared. Billboard is only limited to presenting images of tourist attractions and art activities, and writings. All of them are in colors.
- f. Communication techniques of persuasive advertising appear less. The advertising messages have not been strong yet.
- g. There are no billboards leading into distraction and harms for drivers or pedestrians.

## **Conclusion**

Seeing about the potentials of the city for its culture, arts, and nature, tourism-content billboards in Yogyakarta still need a lot of improvement in order to bring a lot of tourists to visit various attractions of the city. We need some encouragements on ideas and persuasive messages to present. Although we are now in digital age, the presence of an out-of-home advertising (billboard) as above-the-line media is needed because of great ideas, creativity and idea we can put down here on promotion.

From all the above evaluation, advertisers, local government and people may consider the following ideas or suggestions:

- a. 'No distraction and harms' images that may interfere pedestrians, drivers, and cyclists can be maintained and developed.

- b. It is suggested not to put much information on an empty space which tends to be full of information presented. We cannot hope for a direct response on billboard advertising. Full information makes advertising messages blurred. If we want to have a direct response, another form of promotion media will be suitable.
- c. Focus. If images should be there, single image is recommended for having a focus. It would be better not to have many images on one display that may lead into confusion. Besides, not many words and sentences displayed as well.
- d. Smart advertising. Promotion and attention grab are the points to create interest and curiosity. Therefore, we would be better to provide unique and interesting ideas (words or pictures), short and clear, that could represent places of interests to visit. Smart advertising messages have to be there. In addition, persuasive communication (advertising technique) in advertising should emerge.
- e. A unique billboard design is recommended. We may consider about designing a 3D or 4D billboard, or even a movie and digital version of the billboard. Being digital may give more interests and attention to give a better knowledge of Yogyakarta's potentials on arts, cultures and nature.
- f. The more billboards the better. To reach a wider range of tourists or people to see tourism potentials in Yogyakarta, the same billboard can be placed at some other spots.
- g. If possible, advertisers do periodic changes to the billboard. This avoids boredom or malfunction of information for tourists who always see it. "Billboards need to be changed out frequently, both to keep them fresh and to catch the eye of frequent travelers." (Klebanow, 2004: 39).

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