Cape Peninsula
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THE INTERPRETATION OF VISUAL CUES ON BILLBOARDS IN URBAN AND PERI-URBAN AREAS: A SEMIOTIC ANALYSIS

by

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# DECLARATION

I, Olivia deBarry, declare that the contents of this thesis represent my own unaided work, and that the thesis has not previously been submitted for academic examination towards any qualification. Furthermore, it represents my own opinions and not necessarily those of the Cape Peninsula University of Technology.

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**Signed**                                                              **Date**

# ABSTRACT

In the South African advertising industry, blame is often cast on the designer for a failed campaign. However, human interactions are multi-faceted and deserve further exploration, particularly if the designer is expected to be socially responsible. If this is the case, one has to consider society as a whole if potentially life-saving or socially transformative advertising campaigns are going to be impactful. This study focuses on a specific public awareness campaign related to HIV/Aids education, the loveLife campaign, and how its billboards were interpreted. This study employs a qualitative research design and semiotic analysis with student participants from schools in Cape Town, South Africa, to investigate how the target audience understands and interprets campaign billboards.

This study looks at both the designers' work and the audience's responses to it. This study employs a two-pronged approach. The first is that of focus groups, which were held with the target audience (adolescents between the ages of 12-17), of the loveLife campaign. The second is that of interviews which were conducted with design professionals. The focus group participants were asked to interpret pre-sampled billboards from the loveLife campaign. The designers were asked about design industry processes that take place within an advertising agency, which enable advertising agencies to create campaigns like loveLife. One of the designers was selected specifically because she worked on the loveLife campaign.

Various themes emerged from the findings, including that colour symbolism, stereotypes, insufficient information, the effect of HIV/Aids stigma on design, design discourse, and ethical design all played a role in the interpretation of the campaign.

A semiotic analysis of the qualitative data revealed that both designers and advertising clients should be involved in the research process. The client should, however, trust the design agency to use their expertise to choose applicable visual cues. Making use of co-design and participatory design principles, such as including the target audience in the design process, could create context and enable the target audience to relate, and as such, to lessen the chance of misinterpretation.

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| Acronyms | Definition/Explanation |
|---|---|
| **Aids** | Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome |
| **ARV's** | Oral antiretroviral drugs |
| **BBM** | Blackberry Messenger |
| **BW** | Black and White |
| **CADRE** | The Centre for Aids and Development Research and Evaluation |
| **CEO** | Chief Executive Officer |
| **HIV** | Human Immunodeficiency Virus |
| **NGO** | Non-Governmental Organisation |
| **PLWHA** | People living with HIV/Aids |
| **WHO** | World Health Organisation |

**1.1    Introduction**

A visual message has the ability to persuade people to think in a specific way, buy a particular product, or to learn, and it can stimulate both intellectual and emotional response. However, there is always a chance of misunderstanding a visual message or its purpose, if one does not engage with it intellectually (Lester, 2013).

In this study, the role of visual communication in creating awareness around HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus) and Aids (Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome) in South Africa is explored. For the purpose of this study, visual communication refers to the use of billboards in public awareness campaigns. South Africa's diverse cultural heritage, multiple languages, social-cultural backgrounds and religious environments should be considered when attempting to communicate via a public awareness campaign (Vollenhoven, 2008). Different cultural groupings create and interpret visual cues from constantly changing perspectives, cultural idioms and semiotic systems (Lemanski, 2007).

So why focus on billboards? There are numerous studies and articles on (mis)interpretation of public awareness campaigns on billboards. These campaigns, which focused on HIV/Aids education, used billboards as a method of advertising (Vollenhoven, 2008). This was concerning, as research on the spread of the disease showed that it was especially prevalent amongst young people. By using billboards, advertisers can reach a huge amount of people with only one medium and this is where the misinterpretation could take place. A billboard is usually on the side of a road or on a building, where many people with different socio/cultural backgrounds are able to see it.

According to Haberland (2015), internationally, young people have a high risk of sexually transmitted diseases, unintended pregnancy and HIV/Aids. In 2014, Leubolt et al. (2014) noted that although the rest of the world experienced a steady decline in the spread of the disease, South Africa, in stark contrast, witnessed a steady increase of HIV/Aids prevalence, Aids-related deaths and the total number of people infected with the disease. According to Bradshaw et al. (2016:472), South Africa has "among the highest rates of HIV/Aids infection" worldwide and women are the most strongly affected by the epidemic.

In South Africa, the spread of the disease has been a big concern for many years, which is why in 1999; the philanthropic Hendry J Kaiser Family Foundation established the loveLife campaign. The hope was that this public awareness campaign would educate South African adolescents by making use of billboards, TV programmes and other media (Robbins, 2010). Tomaselli and Chasi (2011) argue that because no cure exists, the media viewed public education as having a crucial role in creating awareness.

In spite of the proliferation of HIV/Aids awareness campaigns like loveLife, HIV infections in South Africa were increasing at an alarming rate. According to Martins-Hausiku (2007:83), the loveLife billboards revealed that, although most respondents regarded themselves as the target audience of the campaign, the "intended youth was clearly open to misinterpretation".

However, in a study conducted by Brown et al. (2006:69), HIV/Aids stigma is rife in South Africa and affected people become "othered" (treated differently because of their HIV status) in apparent, potentially interconnected ways. These forms of 'othering' included race bias, culture bias, gender bias, religion bias, homophobia and xenophobia. Brown et al. (2006) study showed that people in South Africa from various cultural backgrounds accuse one another of spreading HIV/Aids. It also showed that women carry the "burden of the disease" (Brown et al., 2006:69) as well and the associated blame, despite the fact that HIV/Aids infection rates for men and women vary.

In light of the above, Cape Town was selected as the location of the research. It is the second biggest metropolis in South Africa and as a global city; it exhibits many different cultural groupings, languages and beliefs. Cape Town also constitutes urban and peri-urban environments, where urban meets informal and/or partly rural areas, as well as residential areas.

## 1.2 Background to the research problem

Given ideological sensitivities across the world, misinterpretation could affect more than just public awareness advertisements. For example, "the dry American sense of humour does not always translate effectively into Chinese language" (Emery & Tian, 2010:55). With simply translating an advert into a different language, there is no consideration for the cultural identity of the viewer.

Simply translating an advert is found to be unreliable because of many different

factors, including violation of coherence, lack of functional words, and the position of the adjective, misspelling and wrong word choice. The linguistic system of each language affects the translation because translation transforms information from one language to another (Shehab, 2011). South Africa is a multilingual nation, which means that when designing an awareness campaign for a metropolis, the product needs to be placed in context.

"Despite the provision for multilingualism in the South African Constitution, very little application of the principle is found in the advertising public" (Cawood & Du Toit, 2006). As a result, public awareness advertising on billboards in Cape Town needs to be contextualised to communicate to the target audience, especially when the message is of importance, such as educating people about changing their behaviours in an effort to decrease the spread of a life-threatening disease (Lemanski, 2007).

Cultural and medical anthropologist Leclerc-Madlala (2009) argues that South Africa lacks culturally informed approaches to HIV prevention campaigns. Indeed, cultural factors may hasten or slow the spread of the disease; prevention campaigns need to take heed of the significance of such factors (ibid.). However, it is important to note that culture is not the only phenomenon that influences the dissemination of HIV/Aids related information.

The political influence on Aids policy-making in South Africa has been described as highly controversial (Martin-Tuite, 2011). The history of HIV/Aids education has been tainted by ignorance on part of the national government. In the late 1990s and early 2000s, the government was labelled as being in a state of 'denialism'. Then, the Presidency famously questioned the link between HIV and Aids. Another well-known example of this was in 2004, when the then Minister of Health proposed foodstuffs such as garlic and beetroot as natural remedies for HIV/Aids (Boseley, 2008).

With the government's failure to provide a suitable answer to the spread of the disease in 1999, a HIV/Aids awareness campaign – loveLife – was launched. Local investigations were supplemented by international research, including countries such as Uganda, the Philippines, Mexico and Brazil who had run similar projects. After completing market research, the creators of the loveLife campaign decided raise awareness using the brand name. According to their website, loveLife's core message was to encourage young people to "talk about it", which was the name of one of their campaigns. The loveLife campaign's intention was to get young people to talk openly about sex and tried to promote specific behavioural values aimed at

encouraging behaviour change (Francis & Rimensberger, 2005). The values were as follows (adapted from 2005:12-23):

- Love - self-esteem and confidence in oneself, love for one's partner based on mutual understanding and commitment.
- Respect - for one's elders. Respect for one's self and others.
- Dignity - pride in being whom and what one is, never degrading oneself through irresponsible behaviour, protecting the dignity of others.
- Responsibility - knowing that responsibility is a shared commodity and recognising one's own share, behaving as if one wants the world to be a better place, and as if it is not someone else's responsibility (ibid.).

Francis and Rimensberger (2005) revealed that the campaign contained a number of mixed messages and that therefore; the messaging diluted the core values. Their study on loveLife magazines concluded that the messaging both contradicted and reinforced the values and therefore no clear message was apparent.

Existing literature about the campaign shows clear limitations in how the intended message was interpreted and concludes that due to the limited understanding of the loveLife brand, the decoding of the meaning of messages was inhibited. To understand why the billboards were misinterpreted, we must understand how advertisements like these are put together (Vollenhoven, 2008).

Generally, advertisements are made up of "picture, text and brand name" (Schmitt et al., 1993:56). The design process starts with market research, once completed the information is given to the designer or design team who uses the information to create the advertisement. In 1999, Ambler and Vakratsas reviewed more than 250 journal articles and books to understand advertising; and formulated the following framework (Figure 1.1).
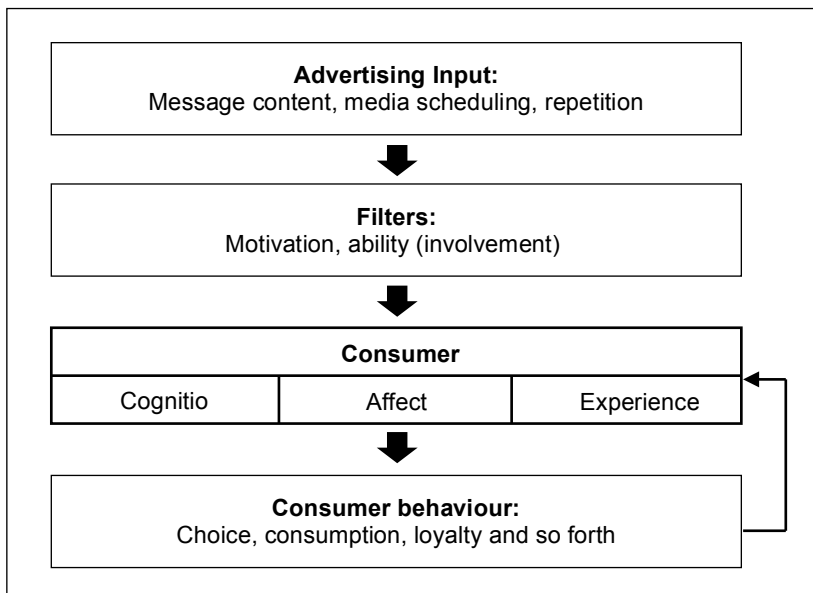
**Figure 1.1: A framework for studying how advertising works** (Ambler & Vakratsas, 1999).

However, eleven years later, considering cultural values, Mooij & Hofstede (2010) proposed the Hofstede model:
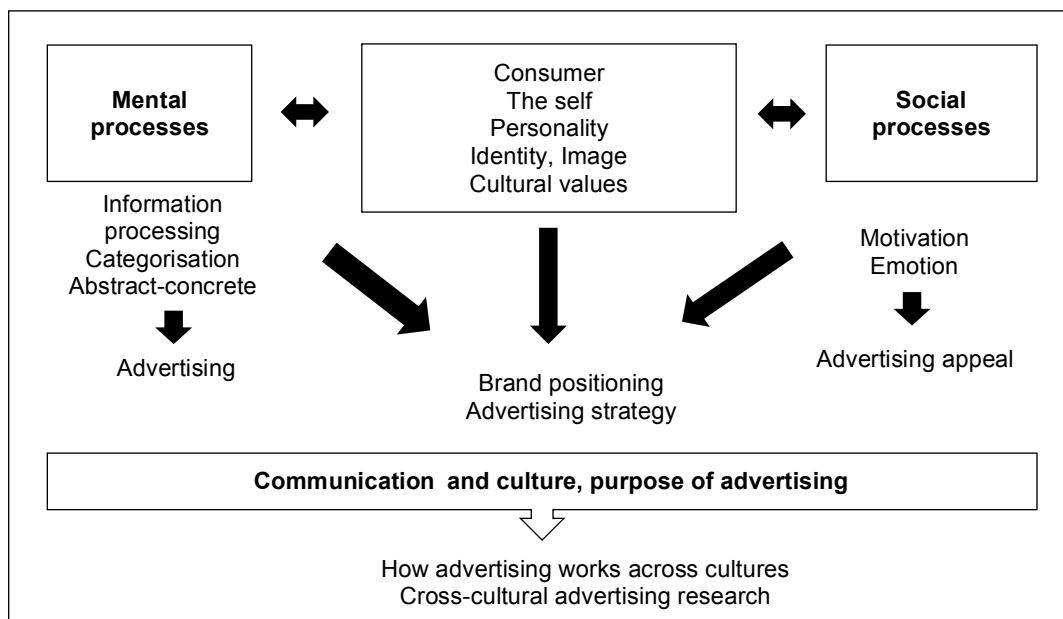


**Figure 1.2: Global advertising research- understanding cultural values of consumers** (Mooij & Hofstede, 2010).

"For most products, and especially the frequently purchased packaged goods in which much research is interested, the consumer's mind is not a blank sheet awaiting advertising but rather already contains conscious and unconscious memories of product purchasing and usage" (Ambler & Vakratsas, 1999:27). The authors hereby concluded that the viewers' cultural history has to be taken into consideration when designing an advertisement.

Designers make use of design theory to create advertisements. "Having a vocabulary for designing a certain set of basic aspects through which artwork is analysed, understood, or praised has a long tradition, especially in cultures where art is institutionalised" (Kim, 2006:13). However, depending on a certain culture's art, components such as those listed and their relative importance are not universal. The teaching of design principles and elements for the first time is credited to Arthur Wesley Dow.

In 1902, Dow formulated a theory called Composition. It was comprised of three major elements, line "notan" (dark light in Japanese); colour and his five main principles of composition (ways of creating harmony) namely subordination, opposition, transition, repetition and symmetry (Kim, 2006:19). Many other theories and concepts developed over the years, including a Bauhaus design theory, which is credited to Gyögy Kepes (1906-2001).

Using concepts borrowed from Gestalt psychology, Kepes (1937) tried to explain design principles for the first time. Later known as Gestalt theory in the field of psychology, it provided the designer with a "scientific" formula for creating work that was considered balanced and aesthetically pleasing (Behrens, 1998:301). Some of these principles are still in use today. The problem with this however, is that is does not make allowances for cultural influences.

## 1.3 Problem statement

Visual communication is embedded in cultural and ideological understandings, which does not always translate effectively when trying to create universal (cross-cultural) awareness. This is especially the case in multi-cultural contexts like South Africa. It is not clear how to improve visual communication in a way that takes into account multiple interpretations, especially from a designer's perspective.

## 1.4 Research question and sub-questions:

How are visual cues on advertising platforms such as billboards (mis)interpreted by their target audiences?

*Research sub-questions*

- How are visual cues created, by whom, and with what intentions?
- What are the implications of different interpretations of visual cues?
- How can designers create visual cues that can accommodate different interpretations?

## 1.5    Aims and objective

The aim of this study is to examine a HIV/Aids visual awareness campaign, which uses billboards as an advertisement medium, to explore the social and cultural interpretations of its target audience in order to unpack the implications of potential misinterpretation.

The objective is to explore the aspects, causes and nuances of potential misinterpretations and to use the findings to contribute to existing literature and make recommendations for improvement of the design processes used to create visual cues on billboards in multicultural contexts.

## 1.6    Rationale and significance

Currently, there is no known cure for HIV/Aids, and therefore public awareness/advertising campaigns are crucial, because educating people to change their behaviour remains essential to the prevention of the spread of the disease. According to Harrison (2008), 15% of the world's HIV-infected people live in South Africa and they are aged between 15-24. It is also asserted that women are more likely to be infected (Harrison, 2008).

Swanepoel (2005:1) noted, "Media-based campaigns are critical tools in changing the behaviours that are perpetuating the HIV/Aids epidemic in South Africa. However, given the absence of an effective behavioural change response in the face of the epidemic, many have come to doubt the efficacy of these campaigns". It is because of this that designers need a clear understanding of how the target audience interprets an advertising campaign, especially public awareness campaigns where misinterpretations could possibly lead to the contraction of a disease.

In this research, the author argues that participatory design needs to be foregrounded and implemented by designers working in multicultural societies, in order to ensure a contextually and culturally sensitive awareness campaign, which will minimise the potential of misinterpretation of visual cues by the target audience. This research thus aims to add to existing knowledge that communication cannot afford to be misleading, as it could be hazardous to the target audience, rather than educational.

The design of advertising public awareness campaigns have important repercussions for the audiences it targets, especially if the campaign has serious social implications such as in the case of educating people about HIV/Aids.

## 1.7 Scope and limitations

The research study is limited to visual cues on billboards in the Cape Town metropolis and not on any other media. The age groups of the participants in the focus group are limited to 12-17 years of age, which is loveLife's stipulated target audience (Delate, 2012).

The target audience here is broad-based, mixed race, class and gender but drawn from the same age group. Not all the interviews could be conducted in person as many of the interviewees live and work in Johannesburg. Two of the focus groups had to be conducted in a short period, as the researcher had to accommodate school schedules.

## 1.8 Theoretical framework

Semiology, which is the study of meaning making, is the basis of the theoretical framework of this study. Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure (1857-1913) first proposed this concept and used it mainly to illustrate how meaning is derived from words. He conceptualised that the basic principles of a sign (or word) were composed of two parts, a 'signifier' (significant) – the form that the sign takes; and the 'signified' (also known as the signifie) – the concept it represents (Saussure, 1966:67).

At around the same time, in America, philosopher Charles Sanders Peirce (1829-1914) developed a similar theory, which he called "semiotics". The main difference between them was that de Saussure focussed mainly on the linguistic attributes of a sign while Peirce's focus was mainly on imagery. At a later stage, semiotician Roland Barthes investigated both "image and text" (Culler, 1986). Through their research, we learn that if the sign-interpretation relationship is reliant on only one image or (sign), the meaning needs to be learned in order to interpret it.

In his writings, Barthes (1972) combined the arguments of Peirce and Saussure by saying that as the interpreter searched for meaning, meaning-making shifts between signified and "interpretant" (Eco, 1976:1457-1472) and thus creates multiple meanings. Italian semiotician, Umberto Eco noted, "A sign only becomes fully meaning[ful] when it is placed within a larger context" (Eco, 1981:37). Eco suggested that the viewer decodes meaning by denotative and connotative processes; this process is influenced by learnt codes. Thus, different people will interpret different messages in different ways (Berger, 2012).

This becomes very apparent when a sign is placed in a foreign country where the cultures and language might be different. However, according to Hall (2007), there

are two basic sources of signs in a society: natural and conventional. Hall therefore argued that creating signs using only a natural source causes misinterpretation, whereas as Chandler (2007) explains that when signs are coded, like road signs, it fixes the meaning of a sign because they are learnt.

Hall argues that signs cannot be interpreted by simply viewing them; you have to know what they mean, or be taught what they mean in advance to understand them. Baring this in mind, when designing advertisements, designers need adequate research that allows them to make design choices that are relatable to the target audience.

## 1.9   Research design and methodology

Authenticity is the aim of qualitative research, meaning that the researcher hopes to gather an "authentic" understanding of people's experiences (Silverman, 2013:444). The epistemological orientation of this study is interpretativist. "Interpretative methods of research adopt the position that our knowledge of reality is a social construction by human actors" (Walsham, 1995:376). Therefore, value-free data cannot be obtained because in order to guide the process of enquiry the researcher makes use of his or her preconceived ideas. Furthermore, the research interacts with the participants of the study and in so doing changes the perceptions of both parties (Walsham, 1995).

According to Silverman (2013), qualitative research methods are flexible, responsive and open to contextual interpretation. In this study, qualitative methods such as interviews, focus groups, observation and analysis of existing texts were used. The Focus group and individual interviews were transcribed, triangulated and analysed with thematic content analysis. Results were verified and contextualised within relevant literature and the underlying theoretical framework.

## 1.10   Ethical considerations

Due to the age of the participants and the sensitive nature of the subject matter, their parents gave their informed consent by signing a consent letter and forms. These outlined what kind of research was being conducted and informed parents that participation was voluntary, did not include payment and that participants were not obligated to answer any questions they were not comfortable with (see Appendix A and B). "Informed consent is when a potential participant freely and with full understanding of the research agrees to be part of the project. It is premised on the notion that the person has a complete and thorough understanding of aims and processes of the research project, what the research will be used for and who will have access to the information gathered" (Scheyvens & Storey, 2003:142).

### 1.11    Chapter overview

Due to South Africa's history, many factors must be considered when designing a public awareness campaign for behavioural change. These include, amongst others, race, religion, culture, fear and stigmatism. Due to the saturation of information about HIV/Aids in the market, one also has to consider that the target audience has developed a sense of apathy concerning the subject matter (Francis & Rimensberger, 2005). According to existing literature, the loveLife campaign failed in terms of communicating the intended message.

The way design is currently taught at tertiary institutions does not necessarily allow for cultural influence (Behrens, 1998). This could be harmful in the case of public awareness campaign that seeks to educate people about behavioural changes that could potentially save their lives. A different design approach needs to be developed, with the aid of the intended target audience in order to facilitate a general understanding of the intended message.

Using a theoretical framework of semiology and research methods such as participatory design, this research study seeks to find the "noise" (obstruction to effective communication) that could potentially lead to misinterpretations of public awareness advertising campaigns, and discover if there are ways in which to avoid it.

### 1.12    Thesis structure

Chapter 1 provided a brief overview of the entire research process; it touched on some of the past and present issues that face designers in South Africa when they design a public awareness campaign. It outlined the research process, by defining the research question, sub-questions and the methodology that were used to answer them. This chapter highlighted the significance of the research as well as addressed ethical considerations.

Chapter 2, the literature review focuses on HIV/AIDS in South Africa and includes the political influences and cultural scripts. The chapter further explores existing Market research techniques and Participatory design research techniques as well as design techniques and cultural influence on design.

*Chapter 3 is the theoretical framework* and elaborates on the concept of meaning making using the theory of semiotics to understand the interpretation of a visual cue.

It further details the study of semiotics, which is the study of meaning making in visual communication.

Chapter 3 also looks at Stuart Hall's "Journey of a message" (2007:8), which proposes a description of how a message is created and includes the process, it goes through in order to reach the intended viewer, the interpretation and possibly, the misinterpretation.

*Chapter 4 outlines the research methodology,* which in this case has an interpretative construct and therefore qualitative methods are used. This chapter makes use of focus group interviews. The participants have the same criteria as the target audience of the loveLife campaigns. Individual interviews were conducted with design professionals. One of the design professionals interviewed actually work on the loveLife campaigns.

*Chapter 5,* unpacks the research findings, categorises them into groups and added to information from the literature review. This research highlighted many different reasons or "noise" which could cause misinterpretation that could be stereotypes or the kind of messaging. It also looks at social responsibility and its place in the design process. This chapter also explores visual rhetoric, which is a new area of research that recognises that visuals communicate more than aesthetic value or emotions.

*Chapter 6* takes the information gathered from the previous chapter and using a semiotic approach, identifies some of the areas in advertising where misinterpretation could take place. This chapter concludes with recommendations for future campaigns, which include different kinds of research methods as well as objectives of public awareness campaigns that could minimise the chance of misinterpretation.

# LITERATURE REVIEW

## 2.1    Introduction

"The most powerful, meaningful and culturally important messages are those that combine words and pictures equally and respectfully" (Lester, 2013:xi). However, according to Lester, educators did not develop a visual grammar in the same way that verbal grammar developed after Gutenberg (ibid.).

Lester explains that visual cues are the colour, the depth and movement of an image or design and the form it takes (Lester, 2013). Considering that print advertising usually makes use of a combination of words and imagery to communicate, not having a visual grammar is a reason for concern. This is a pivotal point in the research, as it had a huge impact on the way the research case study was interpreted by the target audience. This chapter reviews public awareness advertising in South Africa, specifically billboard advertising, and explores its' cultural; social and political influences. Following that, this chapter will describe the design principles and theories used to create these kinds of advertising campaigns and the research techniques used to gather information.

"The term "advertising" derived from the Medieval Latin verb "*adveretere*" referring to "direct one's attention to", which is aimed at swaying and influencing opinions, attitudes, behaviours such as propaganda, publicity, and public relations" (Shu-ping & Li, 2011:1). Shu-ping and Li elaborated that advertising bears significant social influence, and has become a necessity in human life. This is by no means a new opinion, because in 1903, Powers argued that to really understand the effect of advertising, one simply needs to consider soap. Over a hundred years ago, a physician named Pears would make a prescription for soap to wash wounds, but in his era, Pears' soap was more renowned than England itself as the result of advertising (Powers, 1903).

Advertising is an effective way of communicating information to a wide variety of people, so much so, that pharmaceutical companies in America increased their total spending on pharmaceutical promotion from $11,4 billion USD in 1996 to $29,9 billion USD in 2005. In 2013, the World Health Organisation (WHO) reported that the tobacco industry spent about $10 billion USD on advertising campaigns annually. As a result, WHO implemented measures to support countries to implement bans on this kind of advertising (World Health Organization, 2013). Despite years of criticism against direct-to-consumer advertising, it has continued to thrive. Studies conducted

on the industry showed that direct-to-consumer advertising of prescription drugs increases pharmaceutical sales and helps to both avert the underuse of medicines while leading to its potential overuse (Donahue et al., 2007).

Classified as outdoors advertising, billboards have a "long-standing tradition of controversy" (Taylor & Taylor, 1994:97). The oldest debate being the aesthetic one. The argument on the one hand being, billboards are an unwanted intrusion into one's field of vision and on the other (pro-billboard) that billboards provide a useful means of communicating to a mass audience. A modern billboard is an outdoor print advertisement and in order to know how it communicates one has to examine the design principles used to create it (Taylor & Taylor, 1994).

## 2.2    HIV/Aids in South Africa

"The relationship between culture and HIV/Aids, as with all infectious diseases, is never neutral. Synergies from culture can either slow or hasten the spread of disease" (Leclerc-Madlala, 2009:104). In South Africa, there is a pressing demand for improved "culturally informed" attitudes to HIV/Aids prevention due to its historic influences, many customary practices and the inclusion of contemporary trends have diluted the messages in advertising (Leclerc-Madlala, 2009:104).

According to Collard (2010), South Africa manifests substantial cultural-gender inequalities and unequal power relations. She argued that due to international and active statements of dominance by men over women there is a possibility of the inevitable link of male dominance to the act of rape. She argues that due to notions of sexual entitlement in traditional constructions of masculinity and gender, both men and women are often prone to hasty non-consensual sexual encounters (Collard, 2010:9).

In order to understand the perception of HIV/Aids in South Africa, Leclerc-Madlala conducted ethnographic workshops to reveal the framework of decision-making about sexual conduct. His research made use of focus group styled interactions.

The groups were comprised of both rural and urban groups in Southern Africa (Leclerc-Madlala, 2009). There were many shared norms in the rich diversity of sexual cultures, in the research prevalent patterns in cultural ordinance where found to instruct the way people think. Leclerc-Madlala (2009), noted ten widespread scripts that stemmed from a research study of ethnographic discussions that took place between October 2007 and November 2008 and consisted of 228 participants

representing seven countries who were all members of southern African non-government organisations (Leclerc-Madlala, 2009:105-108):

1. *According to the first script, man's sexuality is not suppressible. The script elaborates that men, unlike women, have a biological need to have regular sexual experiences with multiple women. This behaviour, encouraged by traditional myths that take the form of analogies such as "a bull cannot be in a single kraal" In Botswana, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland and Zimbabwe there exists a dominant ideology is the belief that multiple partners is a natural practice and this thinking helps to legitimise polygyny.*
2. *The agreement that sexual behaviour or anything related to it, such as pregnancy or the use of contraception was the responsibility of the woman.*
3. *A partner's infidelity should be expected, endured and forgiven by women. The script highlighted the huge amount of pressure put on young women to get married and stay married if they wanted to attain a certain social standing among their peers. This pressure included tolerating and accepting infidelity, referred to as "good" behaviour.*
4. *Multiple partnering and infidelity was considered as less important than showing respect. In this context, using discretion expressed respect when having an extra marital affair and included not flaunting these affairs. Part of this was that a woman was not expected to question her husbands' behaviour.*
5. *Part of the marital contract is sex on demand. This included a woman's cultural responsibility to not question, but accept her husband's behaviour when insists on not wearing a condom.*
6. *The objective of marital sex is procreation and enjoyable sex happens outside of a marriage. Both men and woman felt that only outside a marriage is one free to experiment because inside a marriage, experimentation is deemed inappropriate.*
7. *A serious relationship includes sex; men and women of all ages agreed on this. "Sex is one of a few ways to show love and get love". A relationship considered strange or trivial does not include a sexual aspect.*
8. *The idea that a woman should tolerate a man's bad behaviour is extended to physical or sexual abuse. This script maintains that the demonstration of caring or passion can include sexual violence in a relationship.*
9. *If a partner is unavailable, there should not be an expectation of faithfulness from the male partner. However, recent findings have shown this to be true for female partners as well. Traditionally unfaithfulness was a male only expectation as a result of the fact that women and children going back to the parental home due to illness.*
10. *For a man to prove his love, willingness to commit, or to prove his affection, he should shower his sexual partner with monetary gifts, possessions or services proportionate to his prestige and financial status. However, for a woman, sex should not "be given for free". The perception is that only a "loose" woman would have a sexual partner who does not give her anything in return. This belief feeds into the notion that it is a woman's duty to reciprocate sexually once she has received a gift.*

According to Leclerc-Madlala, the only long-term sustainable solution to the recent HIV/Aids crisis in South Africa is to change sexual norms and behaviours. In order to exercise control over the social and cultural constraints in HIV prevention one has to address the cultural scripts that endorse certain kinds of sexual behaviour. Leclerc-Madlala argues that in South Africa, the complacent and fatalistic air around HIV/Aids will not change without a greater level of emotional engagement (Leclerc-Madlala, 2009:109). The controversial nature of the South African history surrounding HIV/Aids policy could have affected the attitudes of people.

## 2.3    Political influence on Aids policy in South Africa

The South African post-apartheid Aids policy-making history has been characterised by conflict between the medical profession, government and civil society (Mbali, 2004). In the centre of this conflict is the debate about the "Aids denialism in South Africa" (explained below). This is period took place in South Africa between 2000 and 2004 during President Thabo Mbeki's administration (Stephens, 2007).

According to Koening (2006:1378), the root of the global disapproval of the South African HIV/Aids policy lies within a decade of political miscues and controversy. One of these incidents took place in 1997, when "an attempt to fast track clinical trials of a drug called Virodene ended in disgrace when a review panel found that the substance was toxic and had been prematurely tested on humans" (Koenig, 2006:1378).

Another incident took place in 2000, When president Mbeki posted a letter to the United Nations Secretary-General and the American presidency implying that in his opinion, that not only HIV could cause Aids. He also proclaimed that it would be a "criminal betrayal" to "mimic foreign approaches to treating HIV/Aids" (Koenig, 2006:1378).

Mbali (2004) says that the international scandal grew after the 2000 international Aids conference, hosted in Durban, where the president delivered his speech highlighting his "denialist" views in the opening ceremony. Mbali (2004) elaborates that he was expected to retract his views, when instead, he restated them by saying that poverty kills more people around the world than Aids and that not everything can be "blamed on a single virus" (Mbali, 2004:105).

Mbeki held on to this viewpoint throughout a Time magazine interview and the parliamentary question time, until April 2002, when he formally withdrew from the public debate. It was at this stage that health minister Manto Tshabalala-Msimang, continued where Mbeki left off (Stephens, 2007).

Msimang received the nickname 'Dr Garlic' because she advocated a policy of telling HIV/Aids patients to include "traditional African" foods such as garlic and beetroot (Stephens, 2007) into their daily meals. "It was only after significant pressure from international agencies and South Africa's activist organisation, the Treatment Campaign (TAC), that she launched the Comprehensive Plan for Management, Care, and Treatment of Aids in 2003. It failed however, to reach the goal of providing anti-retrovirals for 53,000 people [infected] by March 2004" (Stephens, 2007:7).

In September 2006, more than 200 000 people participated in publicly funded anti-retro viral programs, a result of then Deputy President Phumzile Mlambo-Ncguka and Nozizwe Madlala-Routledge. Mlambo-Ncguka spearheaded the national response to HIV/Aids, when she took over from Msimang.

Msimang's' deputy, Nozizwe Madlala-Routledge, who received praise for decisive leadership on the HIV/Aids epidemic, took a completely different position to her predecessor by publicly announcing the need for better access to ARV's, especially for pregnant women, tuberculosis patients and children, all of which were considered vulnerable populations (Stephens, 2007).

Stephens (2007) and Mbali (2004) differ on what they believe the cause of denialism was. Mbali asserted that historically African intellectuals like two Zimbabwean tropical medicine experts, Richard and Rosalind Chirimuuta, wrote a book entitled Aids African and Racism (1989) which espoused ideas about the relationship between racism and Aids, had heavily influenced the then government.

They questioned HIV as the cause of Aids as well as Africa as the origin of Aids and the safety of anti-retroviral drugs. Like Mbeki, they too believed that it was a ruse to slander South African culture and sexuality and that HIV prevalence and Aids related deaths in Africa were drastically exaggerated (Mbali, 2004).

Stephens (2007:9) however believes that, there were many factors at hand; scholars disagree on which was the major driving factor. These factors include the cost of drugs, the importance of economic and socio-political factors as well as sensitivity to old colonial stereotypes as stated by Mbali, in which case "the denialist stance was a mechanism for protecting the reputation of South African culture" (Stephens, 2007:9).

The purpose of this information is not to determine the cause of denialism but to reflect on how these political viewpoints affected people in South Africa and it included the stigma experienced people who had the disease and that it added to the sensitivity surrounding how HIV/Aids advertising campaigns were designed. One of the effects of the political views was that it added to the stigma associated with the disease.

When Msimang referred to the ARV's (Antiretroviral treatment's) as "toxic" and advocated traditional foods as antidotes "even though clinical testing has shown them

to have no effect of the HIV virus" (Stephens, 2007:11), the use of the word however could have led to many people not using the ARV's for fear of it being detrimental to their health.

## 2.4  Market research

Market research refers to the insight obtained "about aspects of a market exchange process involving a product (research results), a producer group (researchers), and a consumer group (managers) of a unique interest to the marketing profession" (Deshpande & Zaltman, 1982:14). Market research helps marketers and designers alike to define the target audience, what the need is and how to market to a specific group of people (ibid.). The research is gathered internally by external research companies but these research methods however are usually only related to who the target audience is, not what kind of imagery is more appealing in an advertisement.

### 2.4.1  Participatory design

"Participatory design is an evolving practice among design professionals" (Kensing & Blomberg, 1998:1). Kensing continues by adding that the epistemological stand point of participatory design is that the knowledge gained from this kind of research are advanced most effectively through "active co-operation" between the workers (in this case the viewer) and the designers, in this case the graphic designers that creates the campaigns (Kensing & Blomberg, 1998).

Participatory design principles started in Scandinavia in the 1970's and although it has contributed to a wide array of insights, the first full scale field trials were performed fairly recently (Holmlid, 2009). Co-design is defined as a greatly aided, group based process, "in which teachers, researchers and developers work together in defined roles to design an educational innovation" (Spikol et. al., 2009:1).

Participatory design or co-design projects, have taken on many different forms. From a design perspective, a combination of the skills of the designer and the impression of the viewer used to create an artwork or advertisement that can aid the designer in relating to the target audience. Methods and techniques such as participants being included in the building of prototypes and mock-ups allow the designer and user alike to see many varied ways of approaching a design problem (Holmlid, 2009:3).

In the case of interpreting visual cues, a focus group conducted using participatory design methods could potentially identify the kind of visual cues that could lead to misinterpretation and possibly offer alternative design solutions that could lesson ambiguity. The participatory design process allows the designer to distinguish the

difference between abstract knowledge (which is the overview of design options), with concrete experience, thus enabling the designer to choose options, which are interpreted as they are intended to be (Kensing & Blomberg, 1998).

In South Africa, the government and the donor community invest more in mass media campaigns for HIV/Aids prevention than ever before, as its potential to reach South Africans is widely acknowledged according to (Coulson 2004:1). In 2001, the Department of Health HIV/Aids prevention and care and support campaign tendered what amounts to almost R 100 million (Coulson, 2004:1). It is therefore imperative that the research conducted for these campaigns are comprehensive so that there is little chance of misinterpretation.

## 2.5    Design principles

Generally, a print advertisement consists of three elements, frequently diverse in terms of layout: "visual information (most frequently in the form of a photograph), verbal information (contained in the copy), and the brand name (occasionally accompanied by the name of the product category)" (Schmitt et al., 1993:56).

Though separate in their layout on the page, these elements may be related to one another in different ways, such as thematically related, for example a beach scene with the words "The holidays are here". In most instances, the relation takes the form of an image, the related words and a brand name (logo) or only an image and the logo (Schmitt et al., 1993:56). An example of this is the picture of someone drinking a soft drink and the soft drink logo.

According to Edelson (2002), "Design can be astonishingly complex", as it requires a systematic process and wide range of expertise that insures that the advertisement meets goals and observes constraints. In order to respond to a particular design challenge, or context in which a design has to be constructed, designers must habitually develop a specialised set of processes. "These processes must address the needs for planning and preparation, development, implementation and evaluation, and revision and refinement. To account for the complexity of design, the designers must also assemble a team with the relevant expertise" (Edelson, 2002:110).

The aims and limitations establish which design process or expertise is required to create a design (Edelson, 2002). Unlike a fine artist, the designer, who is also a maker of forms, has to act in the capacity of an interpreter or intercessor when creating an artwork. Depending on how complex or simple the message is, the

designer, based on his or her understanding of the message, will choose a form that he or she feels is most appropriate. Who the target audience is, will play a role in the choice of the form. Unavoidably the designer's skills, attitude, personality and preferences dictate the form (Tomlison & Stevens, 1972).

The design process usually starts with market research. Market research refers to the insight obtained "about aspects of a market exchange process involving a product (research results), a producer group (researchers), and a consumer group (managers) of a unique interest to the marketing profession" (Deshpande & Zaltman,1982:14). The company conducts Research internally or employs external research companies. The research methods used are usually only related to who the target audience is and does not focus on what kind of imagery is more appealing in an advertisement.

In order to analyse, praise or understand an artwork (advertisement), there has to be a designated set of basic aspects – aspects that have "a long tradition, especially in cultures where art is institutionalised" (Kim, 2006:13). The idea that "beauty lies in the harmonious proportion of parts", an idea derived from Pythagoras (c.580-500 BC), combined with Classicism (late 1800-1900), which dominated Western aesthetics for two thousand years and lasted until Romanticism (1800-1850) and the notion of empirical philosophy.

 "However, the components of such an idea and its relative importance are not universal but rather depend on the given culture's art" (Kim, 2006:13). An example of this is that in the Chinese painting tradition, the most important elements are line and value whereas in the West, artists from the Greek period onwards prized symmetry regarding balance (Kim, 2006). Wesley Dow is (1857-1922) credited with initiating the teaching of design elements and principles in an institutional setting as a creative skill in studio practice. Dow voiced his own composition theory of elements and principles published in 1902, known as *Composition.*

A modern-day Dow, known as Denman Ross, also influenced design education with a book called '*A theory of Pure Design'* and it comprised of three principles, namely harmony, balance and rhythm. Following him was Bell Boas who combined Dow and Ross, in which Dow's "notan" (meaning dark-light in Japanese) became "mass" (massing of dark and light). Dows' two other elements namely line and colour remained the same (Kim, 2006). Author Bell Boa's (1924) principles were "unity,

subordination, opposition, balance and rhythm. Based on these, Boas' formulated three usages of the term "design", namely:

1. Design as composition or design fundamentals.
2. Design as ornamentation, deriving from the industrial drawing system.
3. Design as planning executing handicraft and applied art items. All three kinds of design flourished in art education from 1900 to the 1930's" (Kim, 2006:15-16).

Design theory became securely rooted in Art College, through the institutionalisation of foundation design courses, which were initiated by Bauhaus teachers who immigrated to North America. Here it was added to the "new aesthetics of international style (Kim, 2006:19). Bauhaus was established in Weimar by German architect and founder of the Bauhaus School, Walter Gropius in 1999, who wrote 'Bauhaus manifesto" through Germany which set out the programme and aims of the new school (Droste, 2002:37). It was here where Johannes Itten taught design elements such as "point, line, plane, volume, value (light-dark), colour and texture as part of the preliminary course and then Wassily Kandinsky published a book based on those principles (Droste, 2002:19).

Hungarian born graphic designer Gyögy Kerpes, infused Bauhaus theory with a more methodical and systematic approach in North America in his Language of Vision, in which "he heavily incorporated research from Gestalt psychology into his book, with a myriad of new concepts borrowed or translated from Gestalt psychologists, Kepes introduced Gestalt principles to explain design principles for the first time" (Kim, 2006:19-20).

"Gestalt theory, originally described in 1910, attempts to explain the way people perceive and recognise patterns" (Chang et al., 2007). Gestalt created the principles of 'similarity', 'proximity', 'visual' and 'haptic grouping', to explain the way people identify and distinguish patterns (Chang et al., 2007).

Gestalt theory provides the designer with 'scientific validation' of the principles of composition and page layout (Behrens, 1998:301). However, the problem with using only Gestalt theory is that it abstracts, simplifies and isolates the design from much of its historical, linguistic and social context and so doing largely ignores its 'cultural background' (Behrens, 1998:302).

## 2.6 Colour theory

Colour theory used by designers to create the tonal effects in advertisements and other design elements, originated with the idea of bringing harmony to a design,

"harmony" derived from the Greek work "Harmonia", meaning "fitting together" and it is credited to Pythagoras (Westland et al., 2007).

Building on the notion that "colour harmony is colour usage that pleases people", Isaac Newton an English physicist and mathematician, identified seven distinct spectra colours, namely violet, indigo, blue, green, yellow, orange and red. Newton is credited with creating what is known as a "Newton's colour circle" (see Figure 2.1). However, because the colours in the circle cannot be generated by individual wavelengths (i.e. purple can be created by mixing red and blue), the Newton circle is incomplete (Westland et al., 2007).
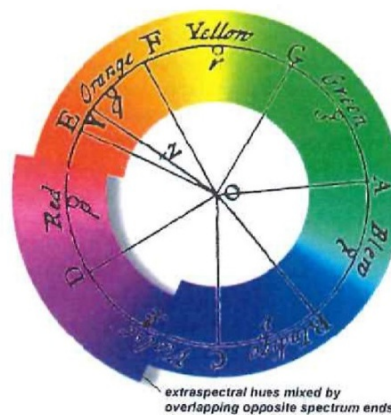


**Figure 2.1: Newton's colour circle** (Adapted from Westland et al., 2012)

In 1889, Eugene Chevreul published a book called "Principles of harmony and the contract of colours and their application to the arts". Chevreul's work revealed that complementary colours brighten when opposed, whereas when non-complimentary colours are mixed they appear "contaminated", this is known as additive and subtractive colour mixing (Westland et al., 2012).

The colours in this visual wheel were based on Da Vinci's work in which four primary colours, red, blue, yellow and green, sometimes known as "psychological primaries" relate to due to the opposing nature of blue, yellow, red, and green. Meaning that red and green would be complimentary and therefore yellow and blue would be complimentary as well (*see figure 2.2*).
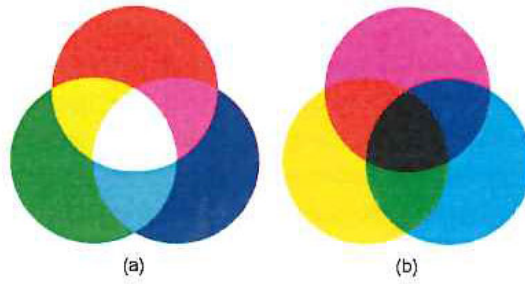
**Figure 2.2: Additive (a) and Subtractive (b) colour mixing** (Adapted from Westland et al., 2012:10)

In later years Johannes Itten, proposed that "all visual perception is the result of seven specific methods of colour contrast which are still used today namely, value, Saturation, Hue, Extension, Warm/cool, compliments and simultaneous contrast" (Westland et al., 2012:10).



**Figure 2.3: Itten's colour wheel** (Adapted from Westland, 2012:3)

Itten's theory is still used today where he referred to the notion that certain colours are associated with feeling i.e. red and yellow are associated with warm feelings and blue and green are associated with cool feeling and emotions (Westland et al., 2012).

These theories about colour are still used to day to create the tone (emotion and feeling) of advertisements by designers all over the world (Gage, 1982). Whereas, when marketing managers create, maintain, or modify brand images in consumers' minds, they must understand that different colour combinations are associated with different meanings. "Many times, brands and their packaging and collateral are specific combinations of colour" (Madden et al., 2000:91).

## 2.7    Colour symbolism

Certain ideologies and traditions considered culturally bound to colour combinations (Madden et al, 2000). In Zulu Zionist churches, for example, the most noticeable aspect of the religious experience use bright colours, which are worn (Kiernan, 1991).

"Typically, a Zionist will have an all-white covering, which are draped or tied additional accessories in either blue or green. The fact that these colours are the standard dress of Zionists and that the single variation, blue or green, could possibly be employed to differentiate between so many Churches, suggests that they carry a symbolic meaning" (Keirnan, 1991:26).

The reliance on colour symbolism in African societies in therapeutic and other ritual is documented in a body of literature as the table illustrates:

**Table 2.1: The meaning of colours according to different authorities (Adapted from Kiernan, 1991)**

| Source | Blue | Green | Blue-green |
|--------|------|-------|------------|
| Becken | Health | Salvation | [Wholeness] |
| Daneel | Rain | Heaven | Well-being |
| Fogelqvist | Health, good fortune | Heaven | Inhlanla (luck) |
| Sundkler | - | Spirit | - |
| West | Fertility | Mary | Spirit, sky |

However, according to Breidenbach, the "Nakabah people" in Ghana or otherwise known as the "The Twelve Apostles Church" make use of different colour symbolism as illustrated in the following table.

**Table 2.2: Types of interpretations of colour in Twelve Apostles based on dreams and visions (Adapted from Breidenbach, 1976).**

| Location in Relationship to Edwuma, the Work of healing | Colour | Interpretation | Implication |
|--------|--------|----------------|-------------|
| Outside | Black Alone | Immediate Death | The Work is of no avail, need not be performed |
| Inside | Black to * Red | Life can be saved or Danger averted | The Work must be performed and will succeed |
| Inside | * Red to White | Life and Health are Assured | The Work is completed |
| Inside | Black to* Red to White | Immediate death is lessened to danger and then danger is overcome | The full cycle of the Work has been carried out and life and health certain in its most complete form |
| Outside | White Alone | Life and Health are present already | The Work is not really needed, irrelevant |

*Note that Red is the ritual colour of the Edwuma (the Ghanaian Church of latter day saints) and is always present in cases that require healing Work. It is the mediating colour between black and white situations

The colour meaning found in religious-based organisations, as well as in Zulu beadwork, "is known to carry messages encoded in bead colours" (Wickler & Seibt,

1995:391). Beadwork can reflect sex or age-specific information, for example, it can reflect the age and social relationship of a girl and in certain areas, her beadwork could reflect her virginity status. It could even indicate whether or not she has sisters and whether or not they are married.

Beadwork can reflect marital status as well as whether or not a woman has children. However, each community have attached accepted meanings to the various colours within their traditional associations, thus implying that meanings are unique to each community. This applies even to different shades of a colour, although with the change of fashion and time the precise meanings assigned to a given colour may vary across regions (Wickler & Seibt, 1995:392). This does not only apply to colour as it can be noted in brands as well.

## 2.8    Cultural influence on design

Akaka and Alden(2010) argues that a brand can have multiple meanings and when associated with diverse groups of people and cultures. In a research study that focused on cross-cultural, multinational advertising in countries like the United States of America and Asia, simply translating the language used on an advertisement, did not lead to the understanding of an advertisement. The study found that the cultural background of the viewer, affected how the advertisement was interpretated (Sulaini, 2006).

Similarly, gender stereotypes, commonly used in advertisements, could also lead to misinterpretation. Adverts that are meant to empower women actually "re-sexualizes women's bodies, with the alibi of a feisty, empowered postfeminist discourse that makes it very difficult to critique" (Gill, 2007:9). She explains that women are portrayed in adverts with the intention of empowerment, but they actually perpetuate stereotypes and give the impression of women as objects.

Design agencies argue that in order to create an advertisement, one must do market research to understand and effectively communicate with the market. "Before a standardised message can be formulated and dispersed, it is imperative that the advertising agency first be knowledgeable of their consumers" (Hackett, 2008:25). This was the stance taken by the design agencies that drafted the 2008 Tunisian advertising campaigns (Hackett, 2008). They believed that by being knowledgeable of their intended target audience they could convey a message that would appeal to consumers across the globe and that it would work to either shape them into global

consumers or make the target audience want to maintain their global consumer citizenship.

However, the research proved that even in a country with unique and distinct cultures, a collective identity shaped by an equally specific culture such as Tunisia, the billboards are still based on the norms of the Western culture and advertising techniques (Hackett, 2008:25). The case studies also reflected on the indistinctness of the adverts, (e.g. people in the adverts not the same nationality of that of Tunisia) and how it frustrated the local audience because of its lack of authenticity (Hogan, 2009:27).

Tunisia is not the only country that failed to identify with an advert in which the Western culture was portrayed on billboards. With regards to the South African context, author Ruben (2006) notes, "Numerous studies in a variety of African countries highlight aspects of African views of sexual activity and how dramatically they may differ from Western views" (Ruben, 2006:4). He adds that for example "distinctively sub-Saharan African traditions don't emphasize fidelity[1] and monogamy, as is done in the West and with Asia's major religions. Even where Western religions are heavily practiced, these more traditional cultural norms persist." (Ruben, 2006:4)

Similarly, "The South African 'public' can easily be conceptualised as 'publics', with differences of language, age, educational level and tastes" (Tomaselli, 2005:14). The case of loveLife versus SA emerged in South African literature at a mutable time. According to her dissertation, Diko argues, "the messages of the loveLife billboards have generated considerable discussion within the media and amongst communications experts in South Africa. The debate has concentrated on the meanings and interpretations by the intended target audience on the messages being employed by loveLife in support of its campaign" (2005:5)

These campaigns were discredited because both the urban and semi-urban participants in research studies, which focused on the loveLife campaign, showed a limited understanding of the meaning of the billboards. In previous studies, Diko (2005) and Delate (2012) considered the visual cues in the billboard advertisements vague or ambiguous. As a result, they concluded that viewer participation was required as an integral part of the design process.

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[1] Although here he can be challenged in saying that sub-Saharan Africans "don't emphasise fidelity" because that is NOT true, fidelity is at the heart of most African cultures as evidenced in virginity test rituals among the Zulu, Swazi and other cultures (Green et al., 2009).

It was found that the designers of these campaigns failed to relate to or consider the viewer's social and cultural backgrounds (Diko, 2005). In Diko's study, the findings revealed that "in the Western Cape, all the respondents indicated a relative ease in understanding the billboards while they were contradicted by others" (Diko,2005:76). The studies concluded that loveLife had created billboard campaigns that were misinterpreted by the target audience however; they did not give specific design reason as to why it was misinterpreted or recommendations about how misinterpretations could be avoided.

There have been numerous studies analysing misinterpreted campaigns, due to the sensitive nature of the message. One of these arguments highlights the role of westernised design theory, which focuses on attracting the viewer to the content rather than focussing on education (Delate, 2001). However, Richard Delate explains that in interviews conducted with the young people exposed to this advertising, the feedback showed that they felt the imagery could reinforce the very behaviour that the campaigns meant to discourage.

Similarly, in a study conducted by Rehle and Shisana (2003:9), the research showed that these campaign messages confused, rather than clarified messages about HIV/Aids for the viewers. Considering that HIV/Aids is now the leading cause of death worldwide for people aged 15 to 49. "Sub-Saharan Africa is home to 24 of the 25 countries with the world's highest HIV levels" (Ruben, 2006:1-2), which makes the remotest possibility of misinterpretation of advertising campaigns like loveLife a reason for serious concern.

 "The need to explore and establish a distinctive and unique [stylistic] identity in graphic design for South Africa has enjoyed considerable attention in published articles, conference papers and in the work of South African designers during the last decade. The idea of an indigenous design identity essentially has been concerned with the search for and honing, of a characteristic mode or form of expression and stylistic vocabulary peculiar to this country" (Sauthoff, 2004:36)..

Sauthoff observed that South African designers imitated or "slavishly copied international design solutions" and that only with the release of Nelson Mandela in 1990 and his election to president in 1994 did the country start to experience inclusive national and cultural identity as well as emergence from international obscurity. "Designers were forced to reconsider a number of previously entrenched notions." (Sauthoff, 2004:36)

According to Sauthoff (2004), there are three conspicuous attributes to a South African design idiom. The first is moving from outright appropriation of indigenous imagery that represents the prior (pre-aparthied) work of South Africa which has led to "closer observation, underplayed references to indigenous colour combinations and Africa's heritage of shape and pattern; the use of regionalized visual metaphors; and oblique rather than direct allusions" (Sauthoff, 2004:38).

The second attribute Sauthoff (2004) describes is the need to stay linked to global design trends and development that result in a combination of inherent elements and icons with Western aesthetics and format that come together as Euro-African design. The last attribute is the characteristic of emulating theoretical explanation that is more than creative visuals and infers the designer's knowledge inside and outside of culture. Designers draw on the innate scope of design as a rendition of social and political consideration.

South Africa has a controversial history when it comes to HIV/Aids policy and the disease itself and therefore in order to conduct a study on HIV/Aids advertising in South Africa, there needs to be an understanding of the history of the disease within the context of this particular country.

Cultural sensitivity and gender stereotypes need to be taken into account, which are commonly used in South African and International advertIsing campaigns The gender stereotype in particular need careful consideration. In fact, research has found that woman empowerment advertisements often have the opposite effect in that they objectify the women they are meant to empower (Gill, 2007:9).

## 2.9    Summary

This chapter discusses the fact that there are many different styles which can be used to create an advertisement and that there are many design theories when creating the artwork for an advertising campaign. The research shows that internationally, advertising is a good way of promoting a product, selling a service, or creating awareness (Donahue et al, 2007).

This chapter discusses many of the theories related to design and asserts that all of the theories mentioned are based in the Western culture and a very basic understanding of design theory. That all the theory is based on Western culture is problematic as it addresses the problem from a Western point of view and not all of

the viewers share that point of view, particularly not in a South African context. This oversight is what leads to multiple interpretations by a culturally diverse viewership.

Coupled with this is the sensitivity around topics like HIV/Aids on a public platform like a billboard in South Africa, which has a controversial political history. This sensitivity stems from conflicting views among civil society the medical profession and government about the meaning of post-apartheid South Africa HIV/Aids policy. Part of this controversy was the believed correlation between racism and Aids, due to the belief that HIV originated in Africa (Mbali, 2004). This kind of belief and sensitivity led to the widespread stigma associated with the disease as a result sensitivity was needed when designing HIV/Aids advertising campaigns in South Africa.

This chapter highlights how important it is that the research being conducted is relevant to the context in which the artwork is shown, so that there is a real understanding of the target audience when creating an advertisement, particularly in the face of the various cultural backgrounds that exist in South Africa.

# CHAPTER THREE
## THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

**3.1 Introduction**

To understand how visual cues could be interpreted, one should examine how they construct meaning and thereby how the meaning could be different for different people. According to Stuart Hall, the concepts of creating meaning from a visual cue include the Signifier and the Signified, as well as signs, icons, index and symbols. He argues that a message "travels" from sender to receiver in the following way, sender; intention; transmission; noise; receiver and destination (see Figure 3.4) (Hall, 2007:8).

The concepts of Signifier and the Signified were first proposed by Ferdinand de Saussure of Switzerland (1857-1913), he called this theory "Semiology". Charles Saunders Peirce (1829-1914), an American philosopher who developed a parallel study of signs which he called 'Semiotics', as the theory has become more widely known (Crow, 2003:15).

**3.2 Semiotics**

Semiotics is the study of understanding in signs. For the purpose of this study, Semiotics is used to understand how visual cues are interpreted and how to create visual cues that have the least chance of misinterpretation. The theoretical framework of this study is built around the work of four semioticians who have had an impact on how signs are interpreted. They are Ferdinand de Saussaure, a linguist, Charles Sanders Peirce a visual semiologist, who focused on imagery, Roland Barthes, who investigated the combination of both linguistics and imagery in his seminal work "Image and Text" and Umberto Eco a distinguished Italian semiotician (Crow, 2003).

Visual cues can take the form of imagery or copy (text) and therefore we have to analyse both to understand how they are interpreted. According to Culler de Saussure is well-known for being the founder of contemporary linguistics and he restructured the logical study of language that made the realisations of twentieth century-linguistics probable (Culler, 1986).

According to Saussure (1966), relationships give concepts meaning and the rudimentary form of a relationship is oppositional (Berger, 2013). Berger explains this by using the following example: 'rich" has no meaning without "poor", similarly "happy" has no meaning without "sad". He uses these examples to explain what Saussure meant when he said, "concepts are purely differential and defined not by their positive

content but negatively by their relations with the other terms of the system" (Saussure, 1966:117).

Berger argues that meaning can be derived from the relationship, especially the relationship between signs (Berger, 2013:7). To understand this, we must first understand what a sign is. Saussure argues, "the linguistic sign unites not a thing and a name, but a concept and a sound-image a sign, but in current usage the term generally designates only a sound-image" (Saussure, 1966:66-67).

Saussure believed that the basic principles of a sign are made up of "a 'signifier' (significant) – the form which the sign takes; and the 'signified' (*signifie*) – the concept it represents" (Saussure, 1983:67).
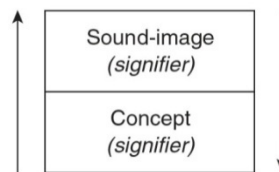


Figure 3.1: Saussure's Diagram of a Sign (Adapted from Berger, 2013:8).

Based on this theory, it is only when the association of the 'signifier' and the 'signified' form an association, which is understood by the viewer, can the sign be interpreted (Windsor, 2004).

According to Saussure (1966), a credible discipline for studying "the life of signs" (Saussure, 1966:16), within a community should be a branch of social psychology and therefore a part of general psychology. Saussure said, "I shall call it Semiology" (Saussure, 1966:16), from the Greek word Semeion that means sign. He elaborated that until then the discipline did not exist and therefore it could not be defined, however due to its importance it must have been predestined (Saussure, 1966).

Saussure used the following diagrams to explain the difference between a symbol and a sign. The first diagram (figure 3.2) displays the signification of a generic sign. Saussure explains the difference between a sign and a symbol by offering a diagram of a sign in general and then a diagram of a tree.
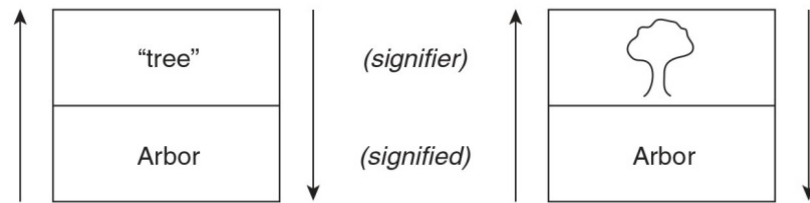
**Figure 3.2: Saussure's Diagram of a Sign and Symbol "Tree"** (Adapted from Berger, 2013:8).

Based on this diagram we learn that if the association of the signifier and the signified is subjective, this means that the signifiers meaning must be taught. This suggests that "certain structured associations" or "codes" we've picked up help us understand signs (Berger, 2013:7). This is shown in the diagram below figure 3.3.



**Figure 3.3: Sign: A combination of Signifier and Signified** (Adapted from Berger, 2013:10).

According to Berger, signifiers become obsolete and can promptly change their connotations (Berger, 2013). Berger posited that this is important to know when it comes to advertising, as the meaning of signs or texts are not always evident to the viewer (Berger, 2013).

### 3.2.1 Signs

The most significant difference between Saussure and Peirce was that Saussure's study was exclusively linguistic, and therefore did not show much interest in the role of the reader, whereas this was an integral part of Peirce's study (Crow, 2003). Based on their theories, Crow notes that there are "three main areas which form what we understand as semiotics; the signs themselves [icon], the way they are organised into systems [index] and the context in which they appear [symbol]" illustrated in table 3.1(Crow, 2003:16).

**Table 3.1: Three Aspects of Signs** (**Adapted from Berger, 2013:4)**

|  | Icon | Index | Symbol |
|---|---|---|---|
| Signify by | Resemblance | Casual connection | Convention |
| Examples | Pictures, statues | Fire/smoke | Flags |
| Process | Can see | Can figure out | Must learn |

Peirce considered everything that we do a message and he argued that the viewer or interpreter supplies part of the meanings of signs. He believed that the natural world

is 'perfused', if not completely made up of signs (Berger, 2013:4). Semiotic analysis spread all over the globe once a movement born from Saussure's and Peirce's points of departure (Berger, 2013).

"We think of signs, most commonly, as connected with advertising some kinds of displays, perhaps with words and images, announcing where businesses are located and the nature of the businesses" (Berger, 2013:10). In the context of this study, the loveLife billboards are the signs, the imagery and text used to communicate the message are the sign systems and the context is HIV/Aids education. Berger asserted that the use of symbols and icons are used by businesses to establish their corporate identity. The design of the colour and form of the symbols and icons are what aid people in understanding what kind of business the corporation is (Berger, 2013).

Umberto Eco argued that semiotics is exercised with all things that could be used as a sign. "A sign is everything which can be taken as significantly substituting for something else. This something else does not necessarily have to exist or to actually be somewhere at the moment in which a sign stands for it" (Eco, 1976:7). Based on this Eco remarked that semiotics is the science of studying everything which can be used in order to lie. He says that if something cannot be used to tell a lie, it also cannot be used to the truth and therefore cannot be used "to tell" at all (Eco, 1976:7).

Eco argued that the definition of the "theory of a lie" could be used as a general basic comprehensive semiotic sign. He emphasised the importance of context for the proper understanding of sign systems. He wrote: "A sign only becomes fully meaning[ful] when it is placed within a larger context" (Eco, 1981:37).

This becomes more apparent when the codes, which we use to interpret meaning, are not in the form of written texts or language. To explain this Berger uses an example of a television programme where a scene is meant to be sad but it "occasion's laughter" from the viewers (2013:16). Berger continues by explaining that many visuals such as spectacles, hairstyles, eyeglasses, fashionable clothing, countenance, demeanour, body language and numerous other odds and ends "signify continually" meaning that they communicate or speak (Berger, 2013:16).

In his early writings on Denotations and Connotations, Roland Barthes explained that meaning making involves a shift between the signified and the *interpretant* as the interpreter searches for meaning. He wrote that this shift takes place at a denotative

level (Crow, 2003). He explained that the signifier and the signified at a denotative level combine to form a connotative signifier, which in turn begins the process of creating several additional meanings. In Table 3.2. An example of a comparison of connotation and denotation is shown.

**Table 3.2: Comparison of Connotation and Denotation (Adapted from Berger, 2013:12)**

| Connotation | Denotation |
|---|---|
| Figurative | Literal |
| Signified(s) | Signifier(s) |
| Inferred | Obvious |
| Suggests meanings | Describes |
| Realm of myth | Realm of existence |

Barthes called the purely literal comprehension of a denoted image as the "first degree of intelligibility", meaning the moment at which we see more than just colour, shape and form, to reveal the "tomato". Barthes (1977) denied the possibility of a purely denoted image, he asserted that an image on it's own will create multiple meanings and that the meaning depends on the viewer. The meaning is also derivative of a lexicon, which is a complete set of concepts within the person viewing it (Barthes, 1977).

### 3.2.2 Codes

Eco however, suggested that the viewer decodes the meaning by a process that involves both denotative (representative) and connotative (attitudes and emotions) processes (Moriarty et al., 2005:235). This is influenced by codes, defined as "a set of rules (formula, ritual, and genre) for usage or behaviour, either stated or unstated". Eco argues against the belief that a code organises a sign, rather he believed it more correct to say that a sign is generated when a code provides the rules (Moriarty et al., 2005:235).

According to Berger, people interpret messages in different ways because people code different messages differently (Berger, 2013:31). Eco said that "codes and sub-codes are applied to the message [read "text"] in the light of a general framework of cultural references, which constitutes the receiver's patrimony of knowledge: his ideological, ethical, religious standpoints, his psychological attitudes, his tastes, his value systems, etc." (1972:115).

Some examples how of abnormal codes might have taken place in the past are offered by Eco, who explains that foreigners in strange countries, with different cultures might not understand the codes of the country they are visiting. "People [who] interpret messages in terms of their own codes, rather than the codes in which

the messages were originally cast" (Berger, 2013:11). Berger (2013) maintains that Eco (1972) offered these examples as the reason before the 'development of mass media', when the abnormal decoding were an exception and not the rule (Berger, 2013).

These codes are what create the need to contextualise advertisements as codes contribute to the meaning of signs. However, based on anthropologist Levi Strauss' study on "coded" messages from a cultural perspective to an individual one, Muffletto explained that codes that can be visual (road signs, sign language, Renaissance art), and can fix the meaning of a sign (Muffletto, quoted in Moriarty et al.,2005:235). He maintains that "if the code of the visual cue is contextualised, the advertisement has less chance of misinterpretation by its' specific target audience". To elaborate on this, Hall's "journey of a message" (2007:8) is a fitting example in figure 3.4 below.
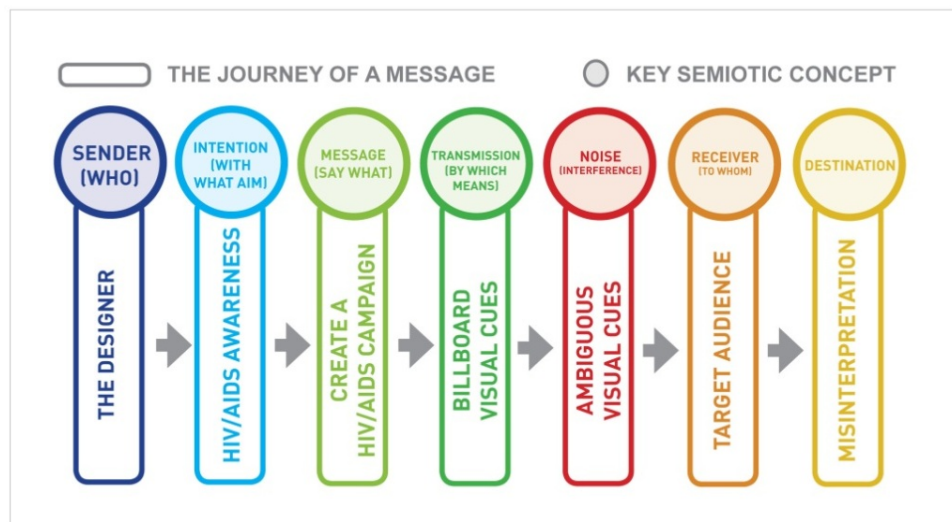


**Figure 3.4: The journey of a message** (Adapted from Hall, 2007:8)

The original journey according to Hall:

**Sender > Intention > Message > Transmission > Noise > Receiver > Destination**
Noise could be anything from modern myths to different attitudes that affect the meaning-making process. According to Hall, there are two basic sources of signing in a society; the first is the natural source, while the second is conventional (Hall, 2007:7). For instance, although we know that it is natural for humans to wear clothes, the kind of clothes we wear and how we wear them is a matter of convention (Hall, 2007:7). This information is important to remember when considering the context of a sign. This means that the same signifier could give rise to different signified.

| Signifier | | Signified |
|-----------|-------|-----------|
| Apple | means | Temptation |
| Apple | means | Healthy |
| Apple | means | Fruit |

**Figure 3.5: Signifier and Signified** (Adapted from Hall, 2007:10).

Hall then argues that creating signs using only the natural source could cause misinterpretation, "because what is often seen as natural is just the product of various cultural habits and prejudices that have become so ingrained that we no longer notice them" (Hall, 2007:12). This becomes more apparent when using symbols in design.

For example, the symbols used when meaning is related to the nature of the object; such as scales that represent justice, a dove that represents peace. However, when the relationship between the symbols is less obvious, such as a sword that represents truth and a lily that represents purity (Hall, 2007); these symbols cannot be interpreted just by viewing, you have to know what they mean in advance to understand them.

Viewer participation in the design process would reveal myths. In his 1972 essays, Roland Barthes focused on a range of misconceptions in French society 'about the properties and meanings we attach to images of the things around us, such as the 'purity' of washing powder, the 'sport' of wrestling (Crow, 2010:60). Today, modern myths are mainly built on the notion of femininity and masculinity, wealth and poverty (Crow, 2010).

In Africa, stereotyping generates myths about Africa, Africans, women, men, and sexuality based on primitive theories, which denotes a group of concepts and perspectives that shows a prevalent penchant of turning down development and improvement in favour of an innate or authentic juncture (Zuidervaart & Luttikhuizen, 2000). These tend to be revealed in advertising, an example of this was the South African Kulula Airways advertisement, in which a group of women were depicted as a superheros. The advertisement strapline 'now anyone can fly' implied an assumption that black women normally would not be able to fly or be depicted as Superheros (Bick & Townsend, 2011:20).

According to Leiss (1990), scientist and adjunct Professor at the University of Ottawa, the explanation of an advertisement doesn't "float on the surface" looking forward to the viewer to internalise it, but rather that the meaning is created by the way that contrasting signs or cues are organised and relate to each other. This happens both

within and through wider belief systems through external references. More precisely for advertising to be interpreted, the viewer has to think about it for it to make sense.

The "meaning is not lying there on the page; one has to make effort to grasp it" (Leiss et al, 1990:201-202). Visual cues can have multiple meanings based on the context they are used in. It is therefore imperative that we find ways to contextualise the information in order to avoid miscommunication in advertising.

"Human semiotic interpretation is both Gestalt and iterative" (Lemke, 2002:304). That is, from a Gestalt perspective "we recognise patterns by the parallel processing of information of different kinds from different sources, where we are not aware of any sequential logic. We also refine our perceptions and interpretations as we notice and integrate new information into prior patterns in ways that depend in part on our having already constructed those prior, now provisional patterns" (Lemke, 2002:304).

Whereas from an iterative perspective, "it is well known in the case of reading a text of some length, that we form expectations about text-to-come and we revise our interpretation of text-already-read in relation both to the new text we read and to the expectations we had already formed before reading it" (Lemke, 2002:304)

Using the example of two signs, a unicorn and a dog, Eco explained that the act of mentioning them is made possible by some indexical devices, like in the dogs' case, where the dog refers to an image of something that actually exists but the unicorn does not. "A sign-function correlates a given expression to a given content" (Eco, 1976:1459). Eco explains that a given culture defines the content regardless of the fact "that the given state of the world corresponds to it or not" (Eco, 1976:1459).

The image of the unicorn is elaborated within a certain culture with a specific content system, which is why signs can be used to lie, as a unicorn is not a real thing. Therefore, what Peirce calls a sign, Eco says can be used in "my mere use of a *representamen* in order to refer to a fictitious state of the world" (Eco, 1976:1459). Eco stresses that extensional semantics can be explained only "because intentional semantics is possible in a self-sufficient cultural construct" (Eco, 1976:1460).

 "In this way it proposes [insinuates] its members to an uninterrupted chain of cultural units composing other cultural units, and thus translating and explaining them" (Eco, 1979:71). According to Eco, signs continuously translate to other signs and definitions

into other definitions because of culture; it also turns words into icons, icons into superficial signs, superficial signs into new definitions, into demonstrating and so on.

"So why semiotics and consumer research? Because consumers behave based on the meanings they ascribe to marketplace stimuli" (Mick, 1986:201). Yet, consumer market research with little exception avoided inquiry into meaning processes. Semiotics can help to define and comprehend the role of meaning therefore we must value the value of a semiotic perspective (Mick, 1986).

According to Lemke, designers appreciate simplicity and offer reprieve from the taxing complications of daily life, resulting in our creativity being increased when we remove ourselves from reality or the mundane. He argues that semiotic products can be designed to be more active resources for creation of further meaning and more passive objects of contemplation (Lemke, 2002). "Good design builds in both functions, in varying combinations, depending on the known purposes of designer and client and the imagined, or fantasized, purposes of a prospective user" (Lemke, 2002: 300).

Research for advertisements should therefore take the cultural diversity of the viewer into consideration and if possible should include viewer participation into the actual design process, especially when the design is meant for a large or mass audience group. This could be implemented by including the Participarty design techniques into the research and design process of the advertisement.

## 3.3    Chapter summary

This chapter highlighted the use of semiotics in advertising, which is the study of meaning making in signs. It elaborated on the founders of semiology, namely Ferdinand de Saussaure, a linguist, Charles Sanders Peirce, a visual semiotician; Roland Barthes, whose' seminal work was "*Image and Text*" (Crow, 2010) and Italian semiotician Umberto Eco.

A description of Stuart Halls' "Journey of a Message" (2007:8) was given, which describes how a message is created and the process it goes through in order to reach the target market, this journey also highlighted what Hall called "Noise" which is the part of the journey where misinterpretation can take place.

This chapter elaborated on Eco's belief that iconic signs look like their referent indexical  sign signal e.g. smoke signals fire and symbolic signs need to be learnt.

Semiotics teaches us that both the image and the copy (text) of an advert attribute to the meaning of an advertisement and how it is interpreted.

This chapter concludes that in order to communicate an intended message, the way meaning is derived should be taken into consideration. It highlights that the viewers background, which draws on societal, political or cultural influences and could influence how the viewer derives meaning from the message.

# CHAPTER FOUR
## RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

**4.1    Introduction**

This study seeks to understand how visual cues on billboards are interpreted by the target audience. The ontology and epistemology used in this study is empirical and interpretive as it relies heavily on qualitative methods such as interviewing, observation and analysis of existing texts. Qualitative methods derive meaning that emerges from the research process (Cohen et al., 2013).

Qualitative research methods are flexible, responsive and open to contextual interpretation. However, quantitative research uses inventory, questionnaires, or numerical data to draw conclusions (Merriam, 2002). Qualitative research can include co-design and participatory design methods, to design for and with the aid of communities (Kensing & Blomberg, 1998).

The following questions formed the basis of the methodological choices:
- How are visual cues created, by whom, and with what intentions?
- What are the implications of different interpretations of visual cues?
- How can designers create visual cues that can accommodate different interpretations?

This chapter will discuss the research design, the research and the research methodology of this study that will include the selection process of participants and the materials and instruments used. It includes the limitations, assumptions, data collection procedures and offers ethical assurances. A research methodology summary will conclude this chapter.

**4.2    Research Design and Methodology**

The construct of the research study is an interpretive approach to qualitative research. According to Crotty, an author from the Flinders University of South Australia, an interpretivist approach emphasises that for an individual, the development of multiple truths is led by the construction of reality, based on personal and life experiences. The interpretive approach initially evolved from the field of sociology as a reaction to the efforts of positivist advocates who explains the actions of human beings in deductive terms (Crotty, 2005).

Yin (2013) explains that qualitative research covers contextual conditions such as the social, environmental and institutional conditions, which take place within a persons' life. It therefore has the ability to represent their personal perspectives and viewpoints. We establish understanding, which allows us to decode these behaviours and change our own actions appropriately (Crotty, 2005). A variety of methods can be used in qualitative research such as interviews and focus group discussions. This research study will use these methods to address the research questions.

### 4.2.1 Design type

This design type was a case study that made use of qualitative methods and semiotic theory. The researcher, as the facilitator, conducted the focus groups. The purpose of these discussions was to understand how the group interpreted the pre-sampled billboards (Stewart & Shamdasani, 2014:124). One advantage of using this kind of research method is that the open-ended questions asked during the session evoke responses that are rich and exploratory in nature. It is effective in obtaining data on the cultural norms of a group and highlights the issues of concern (Stewart & Shamdasani, 2014).

Another advantage of this type of research is that it is an economical way of obtaining the views of a number of people. Participants are interviewed in groups rather than single interviews and it can provide a 'safe' forum to express personal views (Sim, 1997). This however may have had the opposite effect; due to the nature of the discussion, some of the participants might have felt uncomfortable to express their views in public. This could have been the case in one of the focus groups where extra time was needed in order to get the conversation started. The groups were comprised of five to eight participants and although eight to twelve participants is a suitable number, smaller groups such as four to six participants are acceptable (Sim, 1997).

### 4.2.2 Selection of participants

The selection of the participants was different for the focus groups and the interview participants and therefore the study incorporated different sampling methods.

### 4.2.3 Focus group participants

The focus groups selection made use of the "typical case sampling method" (Teddie & Yu, 2007:81). This method makes use of sampling participants because they are most likely to behave as most of their peers (Bamberger et al., 2011). The focus group discussions took place between December 2012 and February 2014.

The selection of the focus groups participants was completed in three ways. Firstly, by accompanying a social worker from Lifeline Childline to a High School in Bellville, Cape Town, for an information session about how students could help in their community, this session lead to the creation of Group A, Once the information session lead by the Social worker was completed, students were asked to volunteer to participate in the study.

The researcher then contacted students who participated in a troupe in Mitchells Plain to volunteer their time to participate in the study that was Group B. Group C and D consisted of volunteers from different schools. The final group that participated was Group E in Kayamandi, the researcher made contact with the principal and sent the consent forms via email to the school, the focus group discussion then took place at the school with the students who volunteered to take part.

The research data identified from various data collection methods, the participants were asked open-ended questions, which were recorded and transcribed. The focus group questions were based on a method for image analysis as described by Bo Bergström (2008:162-163).
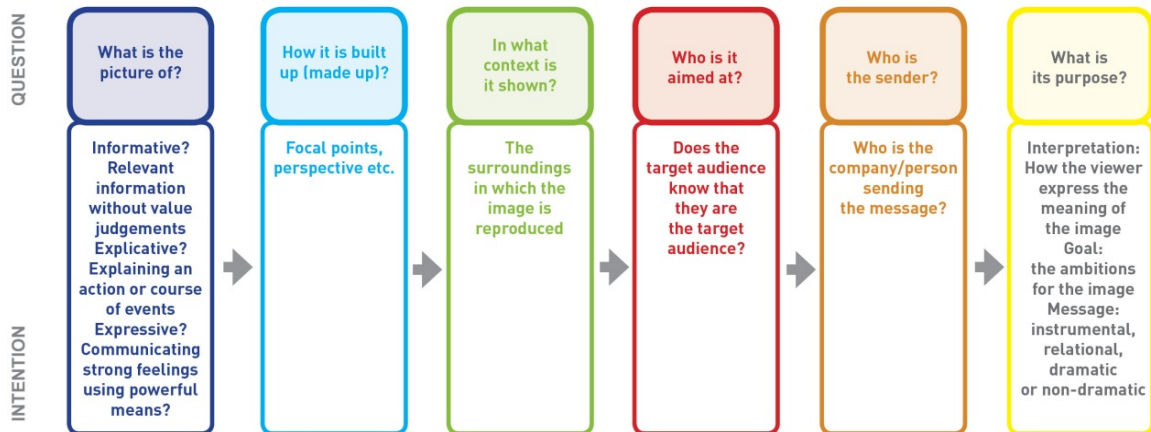


**Figure 4.1 Focus group questions** (Adapted from Bergström,2008).

The questions above were posed to the groups, after they viewed each billboard. The data collected revealed the participant's interpretation of the advertiser's intended core message, it highlighted possible reasons why it was interpreted or misinterpreted.

Although the focus groups were conducted in English, when Afrikaans was used, it was translated into English by the researcher. The researcher made extensive notes during the focus group discussion. The focus groups were asked to create their own

billboards, made of magazine cutouts and used wording that they felt would communicate with less chance of misinterpretation. Only four of the five groups participated in the activity as the first group's venue had a time limit that did not allow for this exercise.

The first group, Group A was used as a pilot study ascertained whether the questions asked would elicit the kind of data the research required. Due to the success of the pilot group, the same questions were posed to all the goups. The groups were comprised of 5 to 8 participants and the research took place from December 2012 to February 2013. It consisted of five group sessions, two of which were from schools, which will be named Group A in Bellville and Group E in Kayamandi, Stellenbosch. The three other groups comprised of participants from different schools in a group (Rabiee, 2004).

**Table 4.1: Focus group 1**

| Group 1 | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Participant | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| Group: | Group A | Group A | Group A | Group A | Group A | Group A |
| Sex: | Female | Female | Female | Female | Female | Male |
| Age | 14 | 12 | 14 | 14 | 14 | 16 |
| Home Language | English | English | English | English | English | English |
| Race | Coloured | Coloured | White | White | Coloured | Indian |

**Table 4.2: Focus group 2**

| Group 2 | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Participant | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Group: | Group B | Group B | Group B | Group B | Group B | Group B | Group B |
| Sex: | Female | Female | Male | Female | Female | Male | Female |
| Age | 17 | 12 | 14 | 17 | 13 | 12 | 12 |
| Home Language | English | English | English | English | English | English | English |
| Race | Coloured | Coloured | Coloured | Coloured | Coloured | Coloured | Coloured |

**Table 4.3: Focus group 3**

| Group 3 | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Participant | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| Group: | Group C | Group C | Group C | Group C | Group C | Group C |
| Sex: | Male | Female | Female | Male | Female | Female |
| Age | 17 | 15 | 17 | 14 | 13 | 12 |
| Home Language | English | English | English | English | English | English |
| Race | White | White | Coloured | Coloured | Coloured | Coloured |

**Table 4.4: Focus group 4**

| Group 4 | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Participant | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Group: | Group D | Group D | Group D | Group D | Group D |
| Sex: | Female | Female | Female | Female | Female |
| Age | 14 | 16 | 12 | 12 | 12 |
| Home Language | Afrikaans | Afrikaans | Afrikaans | English | English |
| Race | Coloured | Coloured | Coloured | Coloured | Coloured |

**Table 4.5: Focus group 5**

| Group 5 | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Participant | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| Group: | Group E | Group E | Group E | Group E | Group E | Group E |
| Sex: | Male | Male | Female | Female | Female | Female |
| Age | 17 | 17 | 17 | 17 | 17 | 17 |
| Home Language | Xhosa | Xhosa | Xhosa | Xhosa | Xhosa | Xhosa |
| Race | Black | Black | Black | Black | Black | Black |

According to Rabiee, Professor of Public Health Promotion at the School of Allied and Public Health Professions, rich data can only be generated with the use of a homogenous group in which the individuals in the group are prepared to engage fully in the discussion (2004). "The uniqueness of a focus group is its ability to generate data based on the synergy of the group interaction" (Rabiee, 2004:656). Rabiee (2004) argued that using a pre-existing group might be advantageous when exploring sensitive or personal issues.

### 4.2.4 Interview participants

It is important to mention that unlike the participants of the focus group, some of the interview participants were adult and willing to give permission to use their names and professional history. An example of the consent form is included as Annexure C. The participants for the interviews were selected using the expert sampling method, which forms part of purposive sampling. In total four interviews were conducted with two creative directors, a graphic designer with experience of both advertising agencies and an in-house design studio. The key informant was a creative director who worked on the loveLife billboards.

The interview participants were selected by approaching the leading design agencies to ask if anyone of the designers or creative directors were willing to participate in an interview regarding the advertising of public awareness advertisements. The key

informant was contacted after her company's name appeared in loveLife history book by Robbins (2007).

The focus of the interviews was to try to address any design issues raised by the focus groups and the interview participants were asked to explain their daily design processes and research methods. The interviews were semi-structured, which means that although the questions were scripted, there was a need for improvisation as new questions resulted from the answers (Myers & Newman, 2006:4).

The interviews included three creative directors, one from advertising agency, *Jupiter Drawing Room* and one from advertising agency, *Infestation*. The other interviews included an in-house graphic designer (a designer who works for a company that has its own in-house design studio) and the key informant. The key informant was the creative director of *Adambele* (formally known as *Freak 451*) who worked on the loveLife campaigns. It is important to note that in order to become a creative director, one must have gained a great deal of experience as a graphic designer.

According to Dilley (2000), a significant stage of interview preparation is the collection and study of the interview participants. This information can be used to provide ideas for questions and helps to understand the respondents' cultural context. With this in mind each interview participants had to elaborate on their working history.

**Interview participant 1:** Monde Lobola, worked as an art director, writer and editor at the *Jupiter Drawing Room*, based in Johannesburg. The *Jupiter Drawing Room* is an above the line advertising agency with offices in Johannesburg and Cape Town and Zimbabwe. He supplied http://www.thejupiterdrawingroom.com for more information about the type of clients they work for, as there are too many to list.

According to Lobola, "an art director, comes up with creative ideas to sell a product or a service through TV ads, radio ads, online and social media, promotions and activations. Lobola elaborated that an art director he is responsible for the idea, the look and feel, as well as the execution of the idea, and the sourcing production of companies. His job is to see an advertising campaign from inception to completion. He writes the copy for radio advertisements and then directs the radio voice-over recording at the recording studio. He mentioned that occasionally he would need to edit videos which are ecorded by the design agency.

**Interview participant 2:** Kurt Ziervogal, a graphic designer who worked for *Capitec Bank* In-house design studio.

**Interview participant 3:** Esti le Roux, worked as a senior graphic designer for the *Jupiter Drawing Room*, based in Cape Town. According to le Roux, creatives are divided into juniors, middleweights and seniors. A senior designer is a designer that has been working in the design industry for more than seven years. Day-to-day duties include responsibilities such as signing off work and helping junior designers.

**Interview participant 4 (key informant):** the key informant worked as a creative director. In 2000, while working on a youth and HIV insert for Independent Newspapers which was funded by loveLife, the key informant was presented with a concept for billboards and asked to design with some creative work for the continuation of the concept of their "love to be there... 2010" campaign.

The key informant said the campaign "dealt with having dreams and ambitions for the future and the actualisation thereof". According to the key informant, at the time, a number of companies were asked to do the creative on the same brief. The key informant designed a series of children's drawings juxtaposed with a photograph of a young person doing the thing depicted in the child's drawing. An example of this is a billboard in which the depicted child's drawing showed a child playing with a paper aeroplane and the photograph depicted a young woman in a pilot's uniform.

## 4.3    Aspects of Delineation

The research study is limited to visual cues on billboards (mostly found in urban and peri-urban areas) and not on any other media. However, it may have implications for wide-ranging visual communications. According to loveLife research, the stipulated target audience of the campaign were ideally metropolitan, people from any race or gender neutral and between twelve to seventeen years of age (Diko, 2005). The participants of the focus group were limited to that specific age group for this reason.

The interview participants had between 5 and 9 years of design experience. They all had worked for a design agency and in some cases an in-house design studio.

## 4.4    Methodology

During the research process, focus groups were conducted with participants who according to the loveLife campaign, were the target audience. They were asked to view pre-sampled billboards and describe their thoughts about what they saw. The

information gathered formed the basis of the semiotic analysis and was used to address the respective research questions of the study.

Interviews were then conducted with design professionals and a key informant; a creative director, who worked on the loveLife campaigns. These interviews were used to obtain the designers' perspective of the creative process and to provide credibility for this study. According to Patton to provide reliability and validity to a research study high quality data more than one source and various data collection techniques is required. (Patton, 1999:1190).

## 4.5    Data collection

The interview participants were asked open-ended questions about designing and creating an advertising campaign and what a typical workday entailed. The key informant was asked the same questions, but with specific reference to the loveLife campaign. These interview sessions were recorded and transcribed. The interviews do not have observational notes to supplement them as most of the interviewees were in Johannesburg and the interviews were conducted over the telephone, the interviews were between 45 minutes to half hour long.

Where clarification was needed in some instances, a second phone call was required. In some cases, the interview was conducted via email, as the participants did not have the time to do an telephone interview. These interviews took place between January and March 2013.

## 4.6    Data analysis

The data was examined by using a combination of thematic and content analysis techniques. Content analysis reduced the information for analysis. According to Rabiee, content analysis is a precise type of research device; however, it has many similarities to different kinds of research tools (Rabiee, 2004). It has the same stages as any other research project and Krippendorff (2004:83) identifies the stages as the following:

- Data making
- Data reduction
- Inference
- Analysis
- Validation
- Testing for correspondence with other methods and testing hypotheses regarding other data.

This particular research project used inductive analysis. Inductive analysis is a process of coding the data with trying to make it fit into a preceding coding frame or the analytic preconceptions of the researcher. However, Braun and Clarke (2006) state that a more explicitly analytic approach is theoretical thematic analysis. Choosing between inductive and theoretical depends on the how and why of the coding.

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- Coding involves noting patterns in the data and labelling these patterns to allow distinctions to be drawn and research questions to be answered.
- The researcher must decide whether to code manifest or latent themes, using deductive or inductive coding categories.
- As coding progresses, categories are refined by splitting, splicing and linking codes.
- The codes are described in a coding frame, which should list their labels, detailed definitions, and one or two example text segments.
- Checking the inter-rater reliability of coding ensures that coding decisions are made explicit and consistent.

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**Figure 4.2 Key features of coding** (Adapted from Joffe & Yardley, 2004:63)

### 4.6.1 Thematic coding

The data collected from the pilot focus group discussion provided information about challenges and factors that could affect the other groups. The main data collection techniques used in this research study was semi-structured group discussion and followed by semi-structured interviews.
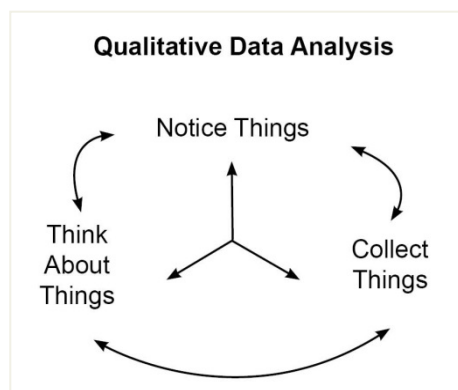


**Figure 4.3 the Data Analysis Process** (Adapted from Seidel, 1998:2)

The researcher makes notes, listens and asks questions in order to attain the participant's thoughts about what they are viewing. Once the data is collected, the next step will be to sort the information into categories. The objective of the categorisation will be to identify any patterns representing concepts the participants denoted during the data collection phase.

### 4.6.2 Explanation-building

This study made use of a semiotic analysis approach within the thematic and content analysis framework. This allowed the research to answer the question of representation, the and how and why an image created meaning and what the "hidden meanings" of the images were (the ideas, values that the people, places and things in the images represented).

The first step is examining the first layer of denotation (i.e. what or who is depicted). The second step is moving on to the second layer of connotation (what ideas or values are expressed or represented) (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2001). The explanation of the data relies heavily on the study's theoretical framework. Thematic analysis encodes qualitative information. The coding process requires the use of an explicit "code" for encoding information. Codes may consist of a list of themes, qualifications that are casually related, indicators or a complex model of themes.

Patterns found in the information that organise possible observations or interpret aspects of a phenomenon are known as themes. Themes emerge two ways, (1) deductively generated from prior research (theory), or (2) inductively generated from the raw data. The collation of a number of codes integrated into a study is a codebook (Boytzis, 1998: 291). The advantages of thematic coding are flexibility; it is accessible to researcher with little or no experience of qualitative research and it is a useful method for working with participants as collaborators, within the participatory paradigm. It can summarise key features of a large body of data and can create unanticipated insights. (Braun & Clarke, 2006:37).

Content analysis is "the primary method of obtaining information from responses to "unstructured" or "open-ended" questions. Therefore, interviews are used in many kinds of research, including communications research, cross-cultural research, life history research, and narrative analysis" (Smith, 2000:317).

By means of content analysis, a large body of qualitative information reduces to a smaller and more manageable form of representation. According to Smith, a content analysis research approach typically involves the following steps described. He also notes that even though the steps are in sequence, they may overlap run concurrently (Smith, 2000:318).

1. State the research problem and the goal of the research. What is to be identified, described, or measured? State hypotheses, if any.
2. Decide whether content analysis will provide the needed information, either by itself or in conjunction with another method.
3. Decide what type of qualitative material will best provide the information needed.
4. Decide how to select the chosen material and the amount needed.
5. Decide on a content analysis (coding) system- either a pre-existing one or one that you developed. What categories or rating dimensions will best yield the information you want?
6. Train coders. Make sure that satisfactory intercoder agreement can be obtained using the pilot material.
7. Code the material with identifying characteristics removed, and determine intercoder agreement; or perform computer-assisted content analysis.
8. Analyse the data; carry out cross validation if appropriate.
9. Interpret the results. Compare your findings with norms, if available.

**Figure 4.4: Content analytic research steps** (Adapted from Smith, 2000:318)

Using the scissor-and-sort-technique, also referred to as the cut-and-paste method, is a fast and economical method for analysing transcripts of focus groups. (Stewart, 2014:124). Chandler (2007) asserts that in semiology, words, pictures, noises, movements and items can be a form of sign. The modern study of how people interpret meaning and how to symbolise actuality becomes part of semiotic sign systems (Chandler, 2007:2).

The first step is to read the transcript, followed by highlighting the information relevant to the questions. The findings will be analysed by filtering the data into the categories based on the interviewee's responses. A compilation (codebook), with of the various phrases used to identify message elements to analyse the intricacies of semiotic meanings is compiled. It contains a complication of phrases and is used to note, explain and describe their meanings.

## 4.7 Transcription

Collected data transcribed; this transcription uncovers incomplete sentences and other characteristics of the spoken word. The completed transcript becomes the basis for analysis. This includes the nonverbal communication, behavioural responses and gestures, not recorded in the transcript (Stewart & Shamdasani, 2014:124).

## 4.8 Issues of validity and reliability

In order to prevent researcher bias, the researcher made use of data triangulation in this study, which concerned the use of different methods of research to get different perspectives from everyone involved in the process of advertising, the research used to create the advertisement, the designers who created the advertisements and the target audience who view the advertisement (Brink, 1993). Using focus groups

created a means of comparison and contrast that allowed a much wider group to be interviewed than would have been possible if in-depth interviews had to be done with the participants who fell into the target group of the loveLife advertisement campaign.

According to Brink (1993), validity is increased by establishing that the participants completely understand the nature of the research, in this study that was done when the researcher explained what the purpose of the research was and how the research would be constructed to the participants. Validity is also increased.

### 4.9    Ethical considerations

Due to the age of the participants of the focus groups and the sensitive nature of the subject matter, in certain instances the participants' parents signed an informed consent letter and consent forms. These forms outlined the kind of research conducted and informed parents that participation was voluntary, did not include payment and participants were not obligated to answer any questions they were not comfortable with, see Appendix A and B. In certain instances, the participants themselves signed the form and in one of focus groups, because a social worker accompanied the researcher, participants consented verbally.

Scheyvens and Storey (2003) state that informed consent is when a willing participant decides to participate in a research study with a complete understanding of what they are doing. Based on the idea that the participant completely compromises the objectives and practises of the study as well as a complete scope of who will have admission to the research data (Scheyvens & Storey, 2003). Participation in the study was voluntary and the participants could end their participation in the study at any time without risk or harm. There was no compensation for participating in the study.

For the interviews, the participant information communicated via e-mail. Interviews were conducted on the telephone or via email as the participants worked through their lunch periods. A Dictaphone recorded data during the focus groups discussions and interviews. After every session, the researcher conducted a data review and once all the fieldwork was completed, the data was analysed.

The respondents needed to sign an informed consent form before the interview. This gave them full assurance of the confidentiality of their responses. Signed documents are stored for five years. The researcher keeps hardcopies of the transcripts, signed consent forms, instrument paper, e-mails and participant feedback. After five years have elapsed, they will be shredded and discarded. The interview questions had the

objective of understanding the creation of visual cues, the people who create them and the intention thereof.

The participants received the researcher's contact details in the event of any of the participants having questions related to the study before, during, or even after the study. The groups spoke in English and Afrikaans; translated into English by the researcher (as some of the participants used Afrikaans as a first language).

### 4.9.1 Confidentiality

The first point of contact with the focus group participants was a telephone call to their teacher, parents, or social worker. On the day of the discussions, participants were made aware that the session was recorded and that the transcripts would be kept for five years. The participants were made aware that participation was voluntary and confidential and that their identities would remain confidential.

In order to keep their identities confidential, during the recording, focus group participants refrained from revealing their names, unless they were comfortable doing so. The interview participants all signed forms that stated that their information could be used for the purpose of this research.

### 4.10 Chapter summary

This study departed from an interpretivist paradigm that made use of semiology as the bases of the qualitative design techniques such as semi-structured focus groups and interviews.

Typical case sampling was used to sample participants of the focus groups (Teddie & Yu 2007:81) The interview participants were sampled by using Purposive sampling method, specifically the Expert sample method (Silverman, 2010:141). The data was coded by using thematic coding and content analysis techniques, which made use of scissor and sort technique, were used to reduce the amount of data. Content and Thematic analysis was used to code the information

The study data was collected between December 2012 and March 2013 and all the data transcribed between April 2013 and May 2013. To ensure that the research was conducted in an ethical way all participants were given consent forms and were given background information such as why the study was taking place and for what purpose, all participants were made aware that they were under no obligation to participate and that there would be no form of remuneration. Different research

methods were used in order to ensure validity and the research was used in conjunction with previous research

# CHAPTER FIVE
## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### 5.1 Introduction

The chapter discusses the qualitative data findings derived from the research and its relevance to existing literature and theory. The research process was flexible and therefore it made contextual interpretation possible. In order to address the questions below in order, the interview findings are discussed first and then the focus group findings.

The main research question was how are visual cues on advertising platforms like billboards (mis) interpreted by their target audiences?

*Research sub-questions*
- How are visual cues created, by whom, and with what intentions?
- What are the implications of different interpretations of visual cues?
- How can designers create visual cues that can accommodate different interpretations?

### 5.2 The loveLife campaign

The loveLife campaign started in August 1999; by the Henry J Kaiser Family Foundation, which was an operating philanthropic foundation with a commitment to improving the health and health care of all South Africans dating back to the 1980's.

The foundation's earlier contributions included a National Household Health survey in 1993. It was the first comprehensive national survey of health status across all racial groups and it established the early scales for HIV awareness. The study's results showed that although 90% of the of the sample survey said they were aware of the disease, awareness was not being translated into modified behaviour (Robbins, 2010).

Kaiser then undertook a two-year process of investigating the international experience in combating HIV/Aids after raising the alarm with the government's senior health officials. Dr Michael Sinclair, who was Kaiser's foundation's South Africa programme senior vice-president, said that no single person could have all the answers and ideas and through listening to many ideas, he amalgamated all the information into a workable and form and that is how the loveLife idea began.

Managing Director of the South African Broadcasting Corporation for Public Broadcasting Services, Judy Nwokedi was commissioned to help organise a series of round-table discussions with people with the objective of formulating a strategy. Local youth organisations like youth club, National Youth Commission, Soul City – an organisation involved in HIV/Aids and governmental health people from provincial and national departments were also invited to discuss an HIV prevention strategy, the target audience, and how it could be rolled out. Local discussions had insights that were supplemented by international research. Countries such as Uganda, the Philippines, Mexico, and Brazil who had HIV programmes were researched (Robbins, 2010).

A market research company was commissioned to research the South African youth "mind-sets" and lifestyles. What emerged from this research was the "conflict between the private world of teenagers, the insecurities and self-realisation, and the expected norms placed upon them by external influences (such as peer pressure and media influence) which led all too often to feelings of bravado, and consequently to behaviour at substantial variance with their private imperatives" (Robbins, 2010:7)

The conclusion of all the research was reached in 1999 and was made clear. A new initiative would make use of a marketing brand-driven approach to platform the outreach and face-to face services. Many design agencies were approached in the search for finding someone to help with the brand development.

The responses from the design agencies varied from outright disinterest to the use of the red ribbon, which was rejected by loveLife because they wanted a campaign that stood out from the rest of the HIV/Aids awareness campaigns. This led Nwokedi to Gordon Cook of the Vega School of Brand Marketing and Communication in Sandton, South Africa. He suggested using his students to create new with brand ideas. After many meetings with the students, the loveLife brand emerged.

Due to the way, that the brand was created the next issue was how to market it. The brand had to be shared on a big scale and had to be sustained. Using these conditions as a base, Nwokedi attained the services of Synapse Marketing and they started the creative work on the first billboards. As the project grew and developed other, agencies were briefed in groups and then collaborated on the artwork that would be used on future billboards for the loveLife campaign. (Robbins, 2010:7) The loveLife campaign was divided into eight parts:

Phase one (1999) - "Foreplay" was created as a teaser to get the target audience to engage in discussion about sexual activity. Phase two (2000) - The campaign covered topics such as "Talk", "Scam to talk" and "Future". Phase three (2001). - This phases' three's topics were "Choices", "Positive sexuality" and "Shared responsibility". Phase four (2002) – Started with a sequence of words like "Bomb", "FFW & REW", "Followers", "Hands", "Heart", "Funeral", "Rape", "Score", "Sex" and "Skin".

Phase five promoted abstinence, monogamy, the use of condoms and the lessening of sexual partners, this was followed by a second part in 2003 where the words were "Pure", "Respect", "Dignity in sexuality" and "love to be there in 2010". Phase six (2004) was about employment, education, family, and a better life. Phase seven (2005) was a campaign called "loveLife and get an attitude" and reflected positive deeds.

Phase eight (2006) was divided into eight different parts and was called the 'HIV: Face it' campaign, the eight parts consisting on "If it's not just me, you're not for me", "You can't pressure me into sex", "Prove your love, protect me", "No till we know" and "If you aren't talking to your child about sex, who is?". The messages behind these campaigns were about expectations in relationships, pressures faced by the target audience, parent and child communication about topics like sex, sexuality and testing as well as issues such as being faithful and protection (Ojo & deLange, 2011).

"Given that misinformation and denial about HIV/Aids has been the order of the day in South Africa, an awareness campaign that does not overtly mention HIV/Aids is bound to meet a critical response" (Thomas, 2004:29). The Centre for Aids Development Research and Evaluation (CADRE) identified two main problems with the loveLife campaign. Poorly conceived messaging and a poor understanding of youth audience, Diko elaborates that according to CADRE, the billboards were "highly problematic" referring to both the content and the reach of the billboard. They questioned messaging like "I only do it skin-on-skin" being seen by six year olds.

The campaigns understanding of the 12- to 17- year old target audience was questionable. According to CADRE 12- to 14-year-old youths and 15- to 17-year-olds are very different emotionally, intellectually and sexually, "they have special different needs in terms of sexuality education and any dialogue around sex requires an informed and framework of support" (Diko, 2005:34). The loveLife way of approaching sex education contradicted the carefully planned Department of Health and

Education's school-based Life Skills programme. It was also said to have contradicted the indigenous value systems of young South Africans (Diko, 2005:34).

Diko asserted that the enquiry, led to other questions about the intended target audience such as the evident psychosocial requirements that adolescents have in relation to HIV/Aids. As a result of the disease, orphaned adolescents had specific problems, such as being traumatised by the loss of family members, parents, and siblings to HIV/Aids. Other questions included sexual intimidation, rape and the legitimate requirements and worries of parents. It also included the question of genuine involvement from communities, parents, teachers, PLWHAs, and community-based organisations (Diko, 2005:34).

In his findings, Delate said that the use of symbols on the billboard campaign showed clear limitations in how the intended message was interpreted, he concluded that due to limited understanding of the brand, the decoding of the meaning of messages were inhibited. He went on to say that the lack of consistency in the meaning associated with the imagery lead to multiple interpretations of the intended message (Delate, 2012).

According to Bok, the problem with the campaign was that the messaging and programmes were only in English and it ignored cultural values and norms, added to the fact that "billboards adopt an overly explicit sexual approach" (Bok, 2009:17).

Significantly, not only public awareness campaigns that have sensitive topics that could be misinterpreted. In a 2007 South African study, Knoesen revealed that the advertising of certain pharmaceuticals was misinterpreted. One such example was the Panado® MedSip advertising campaign, where Knoesen (2007:231) argues that the imagery of ingredients found in nature, such as honey, lemon, and ginger, combined with the text (copy) which describes the medicine as "chicken soup", could give the audience a false impression that this medicinal drink is in fact natural and not a medicine which contains paracetamol as an active ingredient"

Advertising is not created in isolation; there are many layers to the process, which includes the research of the topic being advertised as well as the target audience the advertisement is being designed for. This process is called market research.

## 5.3    Visual Cues

To make sense of the themes that arose from the focus group discussions, one has to observe the "journey of a message". The journey of a message describes how a message travels from concept, to the design and then to the target audience. It highlights the area in the process where misinterpretation is most likely to occur. The original journey of a message according to Hall (2007) is as follows (see Figure 5.1): Sender > Intention > Message > Transmission > Noise > Receiver > Destination. According to Hall (2007), the journey starts with the designer and therefore they are the starting point in the research process.

There were four participants who took part in the interviews, two creative directors, one who worked on the loveLife billboard campaign and two graphic designers. The participants were all asked how a public awareness advertising campaign is created and the consensus was that the design process took place in the following way. (1) A meeting between the designated account executive of the design agency and the client takes place. (2) A design problem is identified between the account executive and the client. (3) The design agency takes responsibility for presenting creative and strategic solutions to the client. (4) The client then selects a suitable solution and a team that usually consists of a creative director, graphic designers, copyeditors, and finishing artist's also known as desktop publishers produces the campaign. In certain instances when the advertising campaign has a digital aspect a digital design team, consisting of digital designer and developers are also included in the production of the advertisement.

The participants were asked if they made use of specific design theories in order to develop the creative advertising campaigns. The participants all answered that they did not make use of specific theory and it became apparent that they all varied in their individual approaches to creating an advertising campaign.

> *Interview participant 3: There are basic design theories like colour theory. Which colours complement each other, etc.? But it's hard to say you use them in a specific way. When you study, you spend hours learning the basics like font sizes, types, leading and kerning [spacing between letters and paragraphs], how to draw the perfect sphere or body [Kinds of paper that I (Esti le Roux) used, even the thickness is considered]. But when you design you don't tend to use a specific theory. It's all practiced and you go on what looks good and works in the format and on the substrate.*

Based on the above, designers use their years of experience and training to create a design and do not make use of one specific design theory. As a result, the design process could be described as intuitive and design decisions are based on personal experience. Colour appeared to have a very strong resonance with this designer, who went on to elaborate that the choice of colour played a big role in the way she designed.

> Interview participant 3: *"There are a few general guidelines. For example, if you do work for a bank you would generally use stronger colours that convey security, strength, and responsibility like a dark blue. People also tend to eat more in place that is painted red. Look at McDonalds, Kentucky etc. It all depends on what client you are working on and what would be best for the brand."*

Another participant, the key informant, had a similar response, however her answer revealed that colour could be used in a symbolic way.

> Key informant: *"It's nothing formal. The corporate identity of [the] loveLife [campaign]. The type needs to be clear as well as youthful, the colours were often a set palette for each campaign…"*

The key informant's use of the terms "be clear" and "youthful" implies that to her and possibly other designers there is a general or perhaps a learned understanding of how colour can be used to create meaning. She also made mention that the client or company brand guidelines play a big role in how imagery is chosen and/or styled.

According to Lawson and Dorst (2013), design is a confusing term in that it is widely used and misused in common jargon and as a result, it has become challenging when developing design professionals. The authors go on to claim that in all the main design disciplines (e.g. architecture, graphic design, mechanical engineering, and the like); the seemingly different design strands have too much in common to make a clear distinction.

To understand design, one has to understand that it is multifaceted in nature and that there is no single way of capturing the "essence" of design without missing some other significant aspect. As a result, conceptual design has been described as "the art of seeing the design situation in multiple ways" (Lawson & Dorst, 2013:26). Although this seems chaotic, designers work in this way "performing this little dance around a problem, taking stabs at it from different sides" (Lawson & Dorst, 2013:26).

According to Lawson and Dorst, design is a mix of rational, analytical thinking and creativity and they call this the "inherent schizophrenia", a defining characteristic of design. Lawson and Dorst say that this characteristic is common practice throughout design professions (Lawson & Dorst, 2013). Their theory explained the statements made by the designers about the theories they used to create advertisements.

Lawson and Dorst theorise that there are many different points of view regarding how a design comes into being. They describe design as follows, (1) a mixture of creativity and analysis, (2) problem solving, (3) learning (from uncertainty) and (4) evolution (also known as the creative leap) (Lawson & Dorst, 2013). Taking this into consideration one can presume that in the case of the key informant participant, the design process that was used to create the loveLife billboard campaign falls into the problem solving approach.

> Key informant: *"Sometimes, during this process we would come up with alternative tag lines that we would incorporate into mock-ups. loveLife would usually have three to four advertisements in a series and we would send them mock-ups of the series*."

Design problem solving combines two fundamentally different thinking styles: problem solving and creativity. This blend of different thinking styles is often hard to understand. It is for this reason that Lawson and Dorst agree that in order to fully understand the reality of a designers working life one should be careful not to descend into too much theoretical description and modelling (Lawson & Dorst, 2013).

The statement above explains why Interview participant 1, an interview participant, had the following to say when asked about how imagery is chosen

> Interview participant 1: *"Well it depends on the campaign, like the campaign that we shooting here in Cape Town for the past week… (The company) is sponsoring it and it's about human spirit, that's the idea. But it's like how do you portray human spirit? Everybody has his or her own interpretation of human spirit you know. So its how do you do that kind of thing?"*

Monde elaborated by offering the following example.

> Interview participant 1: "*So we have like six scenarios of what is the human spirit is. It when you thought you would give up, but you kind of just get up and do it, is it looking at your son taking his first breath. It's your own interpretation of that, so our final conclusion was that no one really knows what the human spirit is, or how it affects you only you would know and that's why we don't sponsor rugby, we don't*

*sponsor soccer, we don't sponsor mountain biking or art, we sponsor the human spirit."*

This implies that designers often have to make use of their own interpretation and draw from their own personal experience and influences, when creating an advertising campaign. This however, could create a gap for stereotypical advertising, especially if the topic of an advertising campaign is abstract. Marian Sautroff (2004) agues that South African designers freely make use of drawing from their rich cultural and ethnic mix.

However due to circumstances such as the development of rural communities that contain people with little political or economic leverage, there is often little or no control in place to stop the trivialization of indigenous forms. It could also lead to the appreciation of historically charged symbols being exploited in mainstream advertising (Sauthoff, 2004).

During her interview, the key informant pointed out that is it not solely the designer who dictates the visual cues in an advertising campaign.

> *Key informant: "After the strategy and campaign meetings we would sit down and start looking for stock imagery[2], combining it with different fonts using the chosen tag line for the ads. Sometimes we would send two or three options. From there, the CEO and role-players would pass them around and revert to us with suggestions or criticisms. And this would keep going until a strong consensus is reached. After that we would choose final imagery".*

The key informant elaborated that in the case of the loveLife billboard campaign, they made use of stock imagery due to budget constraints. However, in the advertisements that she worked on, the imagery used was from a photo shoot. This was the result of the generic stock sites at the time, being very limited in images that portrayed the exact type of imagery they were searching for. It made it difficult for the designers to use stock imagery in a campaign that was meant to portray an authentic South African context in order to resonate with the target audience.

> Key informant: "*When the campaign used photographic imagery, loveLife [representatives] would choose people who worked [for] or were involved with*

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[2] "A stock photo is an electronic photograph used for creative or business purposes in lieu of hiring a photographer for a given project. Users retrieve stock photos from stock photo websites, which often license images for designated one-time uses, or sell royalty-free rights to photos that can be purchased once and used repeatedly" (Technopedia, 2016:1).

*loveLife as the models. Partly because it gave recognition to the people within the organisation and partly because it drastically reduced costs… When a campaign uses graphics instead of photographic images, the graphics need to be very much in line with current youth trends. Sometimes a design process which started out using real people ended up using pictorial graphics instead.*"

The budget of a campaign plays a huge role in the design process of an advertising campaign. It the case of the loveLife billboard campaign, the designers' initial design called for photographic imagery in order to better elaborate on the intended message, but due to budget constraints alterations had to be made to the original concept, which possibly could have affected how the advert was interpreted.

## 5.4 Noise creation (interference of message transmission)

This campaign had many other sources of interference that could have attributed to how the message was interpreted. These include racial profiling, social stigma, stereotypes, and political influence.

To ascertain the implications of the misinterpretation that were caused by the interference, an image analysis method had to be used to elaborate on the data collected. The study used a semiotic analysis method and the questions posed were based on Bo Bergström's questions, in the Essentials of Visual Communication (2008:162-163).

**Table 5.1: Semiotic questions (Bergström, 2008:162-163)**

| Question | Intention |
|---|---|
| What is the picture of? | Informative? Relevant information without value judgements<br>Explicative? Explaining an action or course of events<br>Expressive? Communicating strong feelings using powerful means? |
| How it is built up (made up)? | Focal points, perspective etc. |
| In what context is it shown? | The surroundings in which the image is reproduced |
| Who is it aimed at? | Does the target audience know that they are the target audience? |
| Who is the sender? | Who is the company/person sending the message? |
| What is its purpose? | Interpretation: How the viewer expresses the meaning of the image<br>Goal: the ambitions for the image<br>Message: instrumental, relational, dramatic or non-dramatic |

Budget and social stigma in particular played a role in the design process of the billboards. According to the key informant, the design team often had to make use of stock photography or even use the staff of loveLife as models, due to budget

restrictions. According to focus groups, this had a direct effect on how the images were interpreted.

## 5.5 The design process

Research is the initial part of the design process; this includes information about the audience; what the constraints are, budget time and the goal of the project. Depending on the kind of design agency that a graphic designer works for the information is gathered in different ways.

1. By the designer in a smaller agency, or
2. By marketing professionals in the case of a large firm or design agency.

This research is sometimes included into the final presentation of a designer's concept to the client as part of the designers pitch to prove why the design is a good one. However, research used to dictate the kind of imagery or copy used in the advertising campaign itself, is considered to be completely in the designer's area of expertise. Designers develop a feeling for contemporary work by keeping abreast of design work created locally and nationally as well as studying design annuals, periodicals, and websites (Arnston, 2011).

This is where designers' personal preferences can have an effect on the work as pointed out by Interview participant 1: *"Everybody has their own interpretation of human spirit you know"*.

However, according to the key informant, creating a design that is appropriate for a given product/service does not always mean the designer can exercise his or her own sense of aesthetics. The key informant argues that sound design principles always apply, "in addition to directing the visual to a particular audience, the designer must also consider the individual's client's preferences"

## 5.5.1 Design constraints

This campaign was strongly influenced by social, political policies and budget constraints, which affected the actual design process of the billboards and attributed to the mixed messaging. These factors are essentially, what became the "interference" in the "journey of a message".

Other factors, including the ambiguity of the billboards, which lead to multiple interpretations and even misinterpretations of the campaign, were actually part of a calculated design approach on the part of the design agency.

Part of the interview questions included asking the designers to elaborate on design constraints that they had regarding sensitive campaigns.

> Interview participant 3: "*The constraints are the same as any other campaign. Your idea must be relevant to the problem and take into consideration any taboos regarding the subject. As a rule, one would avoid humour but in certain cases, an unconventional viewpoint can set you apart from the competition*

According to interview participant 3, the taboos referred to, included the use of stereotypical imagery or text. However, the key informant argued that due to the nature of the loveLife campaigns, the design process had many constraints.

## 5.6    Emerging themes: implications of misinterpretation

The focus groups viewed pre-sampled loveLife billboards in order to discuss their interpretations. Due to time constraints from the schools or venue, some of the groups viewed two or three more examples than other groups. The initial finding was that all the groups interpreted the colour, text, also known as copy and image used on the billboards differently.

This did not mean that the intended message was misinterpreted. However, it is important to note that in certain cases it was. Due to the sensitive subject matter, the initial remarks from the groups were reserved. This was despite the participants displaying a sense of a general willingness to want to assist the research process. In one case, the group remained uncomfortably silent and only responded after further probing from the researcher.

The findings from the focus groups contrasted: either all the groups completely interpreted the message in the same way or they interpreted the billboards completely differently. This section of the research led to three main themes emerging from the data, namely colour use, stereotypes and controversial imagery and text.

## 5.6.1   Colour use: interpretation hidden in plain sight

"On the one hand the connection of meaning and colour seems obvious, natural nearly; on the other hand, it seems idiosyncratic, unpredictable, and anarchic" (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2002:343). When colour is discussed as a semiotic resource, it becomes multifunctional. According to Kress and Van Leeuwen, this is because of the contrasts in the meaning of colour. For example, in most parts of Europe, black is

worn as the colour of mourning, yet in northern Portugal and other parts of Europe brides wear black on their wedding day (ibid.).

In studies relating to how consumers perceive products, Proust and Di Folco(2014) found that colour has more than just aesthetic value. According to them, it can tell stories; influence the cognition and behaviour of the people that view them and are often perceived as the key factor in consumer perception of brands.

One focus group echoed the belief that colour symbolism could both add to and detract from the meaning of a billboard. "There can be no universals in how people habitually think and talk about colour, given that in many languages people do not talk about colour at all" (Wierzbicka, 2008:3). In this focus group discussion however, the use of colour seemed to influence respondents' interpretation of the message.



**Figure 5.1: No Pressure** (loveLife, 2003)

*Female participant 1 (Group B): And purple is a weird colour (laughter)*
*Facilitator: Why is purple a weird colour?*
*Female participant 1 (Group B): Because… Purple is, wait, let me put it [now] in our terms, its uhm…it's… we frustrated sexually.*

Here the association is sexual frustration, which together with the copy led to multiple interpretations by the group. This is because the copy (the text) and the colour of the billboard were interpreted separately and differently. When asked why purple means sexually frustrated, the same focus group participant responded:

*Female participant 1 (Group B):: Probably the teacher, [who] always used to talk about colours and how they are used to explain life. How we are like, yellow is jealousy and*

*although I love yellow and I'm not a jealous person. Black was always brought to us as death moods [representations], red was for hunger and love.*

*While purple was brought across as being a colour for frustration. He [the teacher] always used the examples of how clinics use the colour purple on their posters. How purple is dark and gloomy and he always thought that sexual frustration is one of the frustrations and because most of the kids use that expression.*

In the example above, the participant says that she was exposed to the colour purple on clinic posters and she had derived meaning from the colour due to its use on certain types of media. This statement is reminiscent of Eco's writing where he says that a sign only becomes fully meaningful when the greater context is placed (Eco, 1981). Furthermore, researchers have found that the impact of colour is attributed to the wide range of colour associations, in which colour is related to a representation of items or representations of as a symbol or a sign. For example, red is a symbol of "good luck" in China and red means "stop" as a traffic signal (LoBlue & Deloache, 2011).

According to LoBlue and Deloache (2011), researchers have long examined the developments of gender-stereotyped behaviour in children. These include predilection for pink and blue; they believe it occurs due to gender-stereotyped colour application in infancy being so prevalent that, "infants develop a preference for these familiar colours as they grow older" (LoBlue & Deloache, 2011:657).



**Figure 5.2: Too smart for just anybody** (loveLife, 2003)

The focus groups varied in their interpretation of this billboard in relation to colour usage. Either it had no effect on how it was interpreted, or it was the defining factor as to who the intended target audience was.

*Female participant 2 (Group B): It's not really eye catching.*
*Female participant 4 (Group B):Pink, my favourite colour.*
*Facilitator: Who do you think this billboard was made for?*
*Female participant 4 (Group B): Girls, cause I'm thinking about the pink.*
*Female participant 6 (Group B): Not necessarily, no…men also wear pink.*

Kress and Van Leeuwen (2002) argue that the meaning of colour depends on the association with that colour. They elaborate that colour can have an association with other colour connections or bearers. "Green, for instance, can be associated with the fields in which cows 'chew the cud' – or with the unhealthy pallor of a sick person, and doubtless with many other things as well" (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2002:354). Colour in these instances becomes a message in itself, lending itself to multiple interpretations, conveying emotion and even distracting from the intended message.

According to Lee et al. (2014), it is rare to view content in black-white (BW) format in the twenty-first century because all forms of mainstream media are in full colour. According to their research, there is no detectable difference in the emotional experience between exposure to BW and colour images, however in this example when the colours are combined, it added to the message interpretation (Lee. et al., 2014).
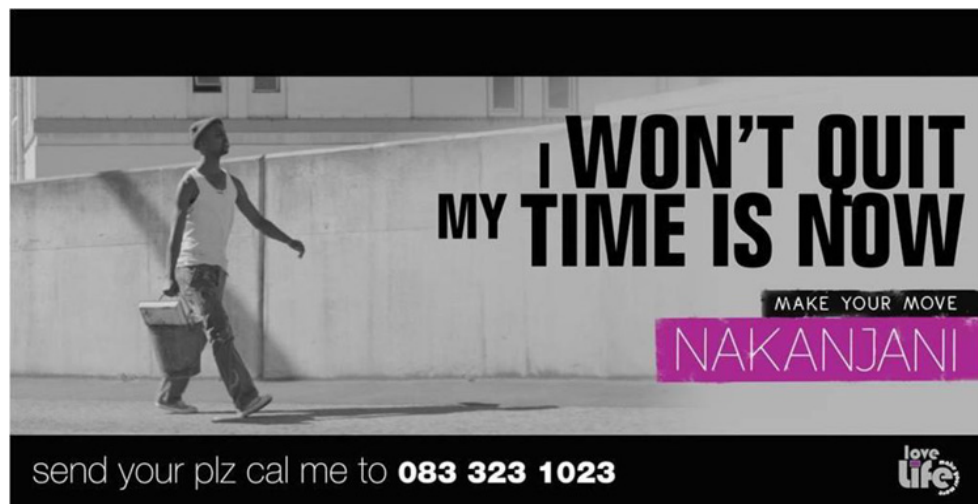


**Figure 5.3: I won't quit my time is now** (loveLife, 2012)

*Female participant 4 (Group B): Now look at that hey, this picture is in black and white, the words are black, maybe his walking towards colour.*
*Facilitator: Ok, but what does that mean, walking towards colour?*
*Female participant 6 (Group B): a brighter future.*

Many factors make it difficult for firms to identify brand image strategies to have global appeal or in the case of South Africa, national appeal. Such factors include

cultural and social economic differences. To add to this, the meaning of colour and preference change over time. Colour consultants predict trends and set short- and long-term colour forecasts, which marketing managers can use to adapt their different communications. However, these forecasts are influenced by social, political, economic, cultural, and technological societies (Proust & Di Folco, 2014).

### 5.6.2 Colour stereotypes

In a 2007 study called *Pretty in pink: the early development of gender-stereotyped colour preferences*, Vanessa LoBue and Judy Delouche concluded that "there is a divergence in the first few years of life with respect to girls' and boys' reaction to the colour pink" (LoBue & Delouche, 2011:663). Their research has vital significance for how gender-stereotyped preferences appear. The research concluded that adolescent girls do have a significant fondness for pink in relation to other colours, whereas boys displayed a strong avoidance to pink.

The research says that the preference is most apparent when girls and boys are two and a half years old and the theory is that this is the age when children begin to seek gender-related information. Due to exposure of the colour, girls relate to pink as part of what identifies "femininity" and begin to demonstrate gender-based colour preferences (LoBue & Delouche, 2011).

The study also mentions that children can be quite inflexible in their thinking about stereotypical gender practice, especially between the ages of three and four. However, when they reach ages five and six they become more flexible with these rules. This could explain why girls then begin choosing colours other than pink and boys start including pink into their colour choices (LoBue & Delouche, 2011).

In a 2014 study which assessed the assertion that colour is superior to black and white in an advertisement, revealed that although colour may have positive effects such as promoting attention, memory and general positive evaluations, it could also highlight secondary incidental aspects. These could distract consumers (viewers) from "attending to the more essential and primary features of the advisement" (Lee, et al., 2014).

### 5.6.3 Colour Stereotypes and assumptions: more than what meets the eye

"A stereotype can be defined as an often fake; the over-generalisation of characteristics of a group of people without regard to differences among members of the group" (Zhou & Chen, 1997:485).

The participants mentioned that in their opinion, the billboard advertisements made use of professional models and thus observing the models' expressions and body language could derive meaning. However, the key informant mentioned that in some instances, people working for loveLife were used in campaign photo shoots and not professional models because of budget constraints.

Advertising agencies have learnt that if one uses images to depict consumers, you have to draw from clear cultural categories. These categories have to be learnt, then used in a preconditioned specific way to depict "consumption practices to particular consumer groups" (Schroeder & Zwick, 2004:26). Still, the signifier gave rise to multiple signifieds – according to most of the groups, the billboards lacked context. This, coupled with the religious and cultural backgrounds of the participants, had an effect on the interpretation of the billboards. The dominant perceptions cut across several themes that follow.

The copy (text) caused a lot of confusion for many participants and the messages were deemed not clear. In this instance, the groups were convinced that the billboard messaging was about pressure, but they were unclear as to the meaning of the pressure.



**Figure 5.1: No Pressure** (loveLife, 2003)

*Male participant 3 (Group B): She looks like he's telling her something, he's telling her to do something that she don't [sic]  want to do.*
*Female participant 2(Group B): The expression. Ja [sic] also.*
*Male participant 3(Group B): Just look… she's sitting so (mimics the pose in the banner).*
*Female participant 2(Group B): But as a model, you supposed to like try use expressions.*
*Female participant 4(Group B): Not be pressurised by your boyfriend.*

*Female participant 1 (Group B): But you never know, maybe she could be pressuring him, you never know.*

*Male participant 3(Group B): No but the way her face look[s] see.*

*Female participant 2(Group B): But now why, why do you all think that's it's the man [applying the pressure] always, that's the thing that you must also [consider].*

*Female participant 1(Group B): That's like the whole confusion, who's pressuring who, the girl, or the boy; I think it's the boy, man.*

*Female participant 4(Group B): I also think it's the boy.*

*Female participant 2(Group B): Because she's so traumatised.*

*Male participant 3 (Group B):  But then why would there stand [sic ]"no pressure".*

*Female participant 7(Group B): Maybe she must get married.*

*Female participant 2 (Group B): He's sitting so easily relaxed and she's sitting so tensed up.*

*Male participant 3: You see advertising companies are supposed to hire models and whatever, to make sure that the expression is like [sic].*

This section of the data revealed that the group was exposed to gender stereotypes that were likely found in their own social groups. These stereotypes echoed the second of Leclerc-Madlala's ten cultural scripts: "Women are responsible for controlling and managing men's sexual behaviour". It was agreed by both women and men that it was largely the women's responsibility to control anything related to sexual behaviour, from using contraceptives to falling pregnant (Leclerc-Madlala, 2009:105-108).

This could explain why in the participant dialogue above the expectation of pressure moved from one gender to another and how even though it was female participants who questioned it, the expectation is that a woman controls male sexual behaviour.

*Female participant 4(Group B): They (loveLife) were saying that you should do it (have sex).*

*Female participant 2(Group B): I think it means don't let your friends pressurise you.*

*Female participant 1(Group B): If there's pressure, why would there stand [sic]"no pressure.*

*Male participant 3(Group B): Usually when someone saying no pressure it means that they putting more pressure on you like it's sarcastic.*

*Female participant 4(Group B): I think the words are saying no pressure, but like the people are actually doing it so…*

In this billboard, the participants had the opposite interpretation of the meaning the billboard intended to convey. In some instances the participants argued that the billboard was promoting rather than discouraging certain behaviours. This could

explain why in Diko's 2005 study, it was noted that participants responded better to the visual cues and for the most part did not understand the verbal ones.



**Figure 5.2: Too smart for just anybody** (loveLife, 2003)

The image of the girl on the billboard was identified as representing a girl, lady, or female, which enabled the participants to decode the message as indicative of the message being meant for young women:

*Female participant 1 (Group B): Oily skin, fake hair.*
*Female participant 2(Group B): A weird smile.*
*Female participant 2(Group B): But there's still a woman in the picture, they didn't put a man there, she's talking to a man.*
*Facilitator: Who do you think the billboard is aimed at?*
*Female participant 4(Group B): Young girls.*
*Female participant 1(Group B): Maybe like, she's young so every boy will look at her.*

The statement made above imply that there was an impression of disingenuous advertising regarding this billboard (fake hair, weird smile). This perception tindicates hat the females in the group did not resonate well with this image and felt that they did not identify with the girl in the image, possible because their descriptors were negative.

**Figure 5.4: His & Hers** (Robbins, 2001: 143)

*Facilitator: Who is the audience?*
*Female participant 3 (Group E):  Adults.*
*Facilitator: Adults? Why adults? Because with the other examples you said were young people but this one you say is adults*
*Male participant 1(Group E): Lovers.*
*Facilitator: Lovers? So, because adults are older…Lovers? Why this one for adults and the other one for your age? [sic]*
*Female participant 3 (Group E): Because those hearts are combined together, so it simply means that they are married.*

This particular dialogue again highlighted the aspect of cultural scripts, specifically those that "through the processes of enculturation, multiple and concurrent partnerships have become institutionalised and normative practices in Southern Africa" (Leclec-Madlala, 2009: 108). She posited that these shared ideas typify cultural beliefs like that of the traditional polygamous marriage based on the cattle exchange.

The Group E highlighted this. Further probing revealed that there was a definite disjuncture between how this particular group viewed sexual relationships and the rest of the groups. It is interesting to note that none of the groups actually mentioned used the words "*puzzle pieces"* or referenced it specifically.

*Male participant 2 (Group E): Because married means it's right.*
*Male participant 1 (Group E): You can't have everything that you want.*
*Male participant 2 (Group E): If you have a girlfriend at this age, it can confuse you and you can do everything that's not right.*
*Female participant 3 (Group E):  : And when you are married, you don't have to hide, now we're hiding our boyfriends.*
*Facilitator: Are you hiding?*

*Female participant 3 (Group E): We're hiding*

*Female participant 5 (Group E): Well, you know that your parents will get angry, we're not even talking about our boyfriends' in-front of our parents.*

*Female participant 3 (Group E): It's a no, no, situation.*

Campbell, et.al. (2006) find that one of the strategies that some church representatives use to try to regain lost moral authority, is to create the impression that people with HIV/Aids are "guilty" of immorality and sin and that their behaviour may even "lead to the end of the world". Since marriage is considered the appropriate domain for sexual activity in most religions, one could speculate that the rhetoric Campbell et.al.(2006) refer to is evidenced by the statement "Because married means it's right".

This group revealed that they were engaged in relationships, potentially sexual relationships, but were unable to talk to their parents or adults for fear of reprisal "we're hiding". Just being caught looking at a sexual awareness poster could lead to some form of reproach from an adult. Another focus group however had a completely different view of the exact same billboard, because they were allowed (by parents) to date and speak about it openly. One of the participants regarded the billboard as a warning, as she interpreted the billboard (Figure 5.4) in terms of having a boyfriend could be a distraction when studying.

*Female participant 1 (Group D): Maybe you [sic] the girl and he's your boyfriend, then he's always there to support you and encourage you to do the best and so and he will always stand by your side.*

*Female participant2 (Group D): I think it's a girl and boy also going out, having a relationship and they always do things together.*

Based on the feedback from these groups that are diverse because of their dating practices, age and race, the social and cultural context the person viewing the billboard 'inhabits' could influence the way they view relationships and therefore affects how an advertisement is interpreted. In fact, the Group E felt so strongly about hiding their relationships that they suggested it would be better if the posters were somehow encrypted. The encryption would allow them access to the information that they need but without their parents knowing.

**Figure 5.3: I won't quit my time in now** (loveLife, 2012)

This billboard opened up a discussion about the way that the participants communicate with each other and how they understand a certain kind of digital language referred to as "*Swag" notes.* They used this language when messaging each other on their cell phones.

*Male participant 3 (Group B): Nakajani.*

*Female participant 1 (Group B: It's almost like their slogan, tagline, whatever.*

*Female participant 4 (Group B: Now it looks like this (referring to the billboard as a whole) is almost like his swag notes.*

*Facilitator: What are swag notes?*

*Female participant 4 (Group B): It's a BBM thing (BlackBerry messager- phone language).*

*Female participant 1 (Group B): Like motivational stuff, like no pressure is almost like warning you, like telling you no pressure, almost like motivating you. Swag notes.*

*Male participant 3 (Group B: Yoh [sic], I have a lot of that on my phone.*

In another instance, the participants spoke about how they would not look at billboards like these in their neighbourhoods, due to the stigma attached to openly talking about sex. They said that Mxit (cell phone texting application feature) language would be a good communication tool because according to them, only they (the participants) would identify with and understand what was being said.

An advertising study conducted by Krishna and Ahluwalia (2008), revealed that an important advantage of using mixed language messages on an advertisement is being able to capitalise on the "favourable associations" of the languages without drawing attention to the language choice. This is ideal for instances where the category that the advertisement falls under is necessary in the global market (Krishna and Ahluwalia, 2008).

### 5.6.4 Insufficient information creates multiple interpretations

One group pointed out that the billboards needed more information for the message to be clearer. When focusing on the text of one of the billboards, it became apparent that the participants did not notice the logo until the facilitator mentioned it. This also highlighted that most of the participants had not realised that there was a helpline or *call to action*. A *call to action* is generally found on advertisements that require the target audience to "do something" related to the advertisement. In the case of the loveLife advertisements, it would mean that if you wanted to talk about anything related to the advertisement or your life "talk about it" you could call the helpline on the advertisement.



**Figure 5.5: love to be there (education)** (Robbins, 2007:155)

All the groups described this billboard as having a positive message and that the message was intended to encourage young people to stay in school and that education is the key to a successful future. The drawing on the left hand side did however cause some confusion.

> *Male participant 3 (Group B): It tells us that education is the key*
>
> *Female participant 4 (Group B): And also to graduate is everyone's dream*
>
> *Female participant 2 (Group B): Children must stay at school*
>
> *Female participant 4 (Group B): then they can have a better future*
>
> *Female participant 7 (Group B): I think this advertising wasn't very good because the picture, cause you like get dyslexic people who can't read and the picture supposed to tell you what it means but?*
>
> *Female participant 5 (Group B): It looks like it's a mathematical thing man*
>
> *Female participant 4 (Group B): Wait that looks, the drawing looks like a small child and on this side it's a big person, so probably what the small child would like to achieve one day*

*Female participant 1 (Group B): Or maybe it's even him wanting to go back to his old life, without complications*

*Female participant 4 (Group B): I think the stuff that, the pictures that we can understand is [are] realistic pictures (not drawn)*

This highlighted billboard construction, with emphasis placed on specific imagery. "The analogy between advertising and poetry is based on textual similarities: both are consciously created condensed written works" (Stern, 1988:3). Meaning that when using an image to communicate an idea in a design layout, there should be a strong link between that image and the copy used. In this way, both elements (and cues) reinforce the message.



**Figure 5.6: Everyone he's slept with is sleeping with you** (Robbins, 2003:151)

In this billboard, all the groups interpreted the copy in the same way. However, the focus of the groups seemed not to be on what was said but rather where the wording was placed on the billboard.

*Female participant 2 (Group B): That's why you must just have like a summary or something to explain to the people how it's supposed to work*

*Female participant 1 (Group B):: Not everybody like [sic] reading*

*Female participant 4 (Group B):: Pictures also tell you*

*Female participant 1 (Group B):: What if you going to go to the promenade (A shopping centre in Mitchells Plain) and that is like there on the on the wall or something*

*Female participant 1 (Group B): Are you now going to wait there for so long so that you can read the whole thing*

*Female participant 4 (Group B): So that's what people do, if there's pictures then people stand with the plastic bags behind them, and look at the pictures even if there's no words, so you might as well just stand there and read, instead of stand there and look at the picture [the] whole time*

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Designers or "creatives" (to borrow from advertising jargon) are taught to be aware of what commands visual/perceptual attention. "The 'rule' is that pictures, then headlines and next the bottom right hand of a page are attended to. So they design with this in mind-from top left to bottom right" (Maguire et al, 1999:299). One group pointed out that the billboards needed more information for the message to be clearer, especially in the cases of these billboards.

It is commonly acknowledged that advertising has the overall purpose to both inform and persuade. Therefore, advertising is not inherently about a particular social cause; it is essentially a communication tool used to sell services and products (Beltramini, 2006).

However, in loveLife's campaign the purpose is to effect behavioural change with the intention of saving lives. Echoed by the belief of economists that more information in advertising will aid market place efficiency, Beltramini (2006) argued that consumers could use advertising to add value and to make better, informed decisions. This highlights an issue that one of the creative directors interviewed, mentioned that in order to effect change, one has to go into the community and speak to people on their own level; to ensure the audience understands and that the community feels heard.

### 5.6.5 Gender stereotypes

Advertising that prescribes desired behaviour influences the relationship human beings have with their bodies, themselves, and their partners (Plakoyiannaki et al., 2009). Plakoyiannaki (2009) states the following as categories of female role stereotypes:

**Table 5.2: Categories of female role stereotypes (Plakoyiannaki et al, 2009:1417).**

| Category | Description |
|---|---|
| • *Women in traditional roles* | |
| *1.* Dependency | • Dependent on male's protection<br>• In need of reassurance<br>• Making unimportant decisions |
| *2.* Housewife | • Women's place is at home<br>• Primary role is to be a good wife<br>• Concerned with tasks of housekeeping |
| *Women in decorative roles* | |
| *3.* Women concerned with physical attractiveness | Women in pursuit of beauty and physical attractiveness (e.g. youthful). |
| *4.* Women as sex objects | Sex is related to product; Sex is unrelated to product. |
| *Women in non-traditional roles* | |
| *5.* Women in non-traditional activities | Engaged in activities outside home (e.g. extreme sports) or in masculine activities such as house construction |
| *6.* Career-orientated women | Professional occupations; Entertainer; Non-Professional; Blue collar |
| *7.* Voice of authority | The expert |
| *Women portrayed as equal to men* | |
| *8.* Neutral | Women shown as equal to men |

The *Too smart for just any body* billboard was perceived by the interviewed target audience sample, entirely from a stereotypical point of view, "women concerned with physical attractiveness" because of the stark design the main emphasis was placed on the image and the intended message fell away.

> *Female participant 1 (Group B): Oily skin, fake hair.*
>
> *Female participant 2(Group B): A weird smile.*
>
> *Female participant 2(Group B): But there's still a woman in the picture, they didn't put a man there, she's talking to a man.*
>
> *Facilitator: Who do you think the billboard is aimed at?*
>
> *Female participant 4(Group B): Young girls.*
>
> *Female participant 1(Group B): Maybe like, she's young so every boy will look at her.*

In this focus group discussion regarding this specific billboard, it was predominately females who had negative comments regarding the female on the billboard. This echoes the findings of Plakoyiannaki and colleagues in their 2008 study called *Women, Globalisation and Global management.* The study concluded that there was "tendency of female-audience web pages toward embracing decorative female images, particularly depictions of women in pursuit of physical attractiveness" (Plakoyiannaki, et al. 2008:109).

According to the same study, sexism prevails on these female-audience web pages, although on male oriented websites, "innovative stereotypes" exist where women are "represented in dependent (or non-traditional) roles; whereas in general-audience types, women are shown as housewives (or not equal to men). These findings will likely influence female stereotypes internationally" (Plakoyiannaki, et al. 2008:109). The loveLife campaign created these billboards by following the conventional rules, but did not consider the female gaze and in a campaign as important to health as loveLife, this is potentially devastating.

This became apparent in one of the focus groups when discussing the following two billboards:



**Figure 5.7: love to be there** (Robbins, 2007:154)



**Figure 5.5: love to be there** (Robbins, 2007:155)

The response to female billboard was as follows:

*Female participant 2 (Group B): You enjoy your job*

*Male participant 3 (Group B): Focus on your career*

*Female participant 1 (Group B) When you have a child*

Whereas the response to male one was:

*Female participant 2 (Group B): He wants to finish school*

*Male participant 3 (Group B) Ja [yes] he wants to finish, he wants to get his degree*

The woman in in the first example, is represented in a non-traditional role with the intention of showing that she achieved her childhood dreams. The response "when you have a child" suggests there was the impression for one of the participants that the imagined child of the woman in the picture created the drawing and therefore the participant interpreted the billboard as "live your dream as a mother". Whereas in the male version of the billboard, all the participants interpreted the message as being the male in the picture reaching the dream he had when he was a child.

In both instances the billboard was meant to inspire young men and women to achieve their dreams (possibly through education), however in the female case, one interpretation was that women can focus on their career even if they have children. Yet for males, the male image was not interpreted as drawn by his child and so the message was not you can focus on education even if you have a child.

### 5.6.6 Cultural stereotypes

According to Wang and Chaudhri (2009), media discourse, expresses the philosophies of the members in what is considered "social institutions or domains' otherwise known as mass media outlets, "while media content is regarded as reflective of society, a common belief is that the media conveys' the ideologies of the dominant elite of a social community. Such ideologies indicate socio-culturally shared group knowledge and refer to 'social cognitions shared by members of social groups, organisations or institutions" (Wang & Chaudhri, 2009:748).

Lippmann, who described them as "pictures in our heads" (Wang & Chaudhri, 2009: 748), first recognised the concept of a stereotype as an important concept in the social sciences in 1922. Wang and Chaudhri explain that stereotypes form as a result of an individuals' perception of the world around them, they are acquired through personal experience and are part of shared assumptions and beliefs that societies have about different people and groups (2009).

Inadequate funding could have been one of the reasons that stereotypical imagery was used in the loveLife billboard campaigns. According to the key informant, the budget did not allow for the use of professional models and therefore more cost effective methods were implemented, which could have resulted in a less effective communication style. Due to the sensitive nature of this advertising campaign using

generic images bought online could have impaired the designers ability to create the visual cues which were needed to illustrate specific messaging.

*"After the strategy and campaign meetings we would sit down and start looking for stock imagery (generic imagery bought online) combining it [the images] with different fonts using the chosen tag line for the ads. Sometimes, during this process we would come up with alternative tag lines that we would incorporate into mock-ups. loveLife would usually have three to four advertisements in a series and we would send them mock-ups of the series*

*Key informant: "When the campaign used photographic imagery, loveLife would choose people who worked or were involved with loveLife as the models, partly because it gave recognition to the people within the organisation and partly because it drastically reduced costs… When a campaign uses graphics instead of photographic images, the graphics need to be very much in line with current youth trends. Sometimes a design process which started out using real people ended up using pictorial graphics instead".*

Due to the abstract nature of the following billboard, the research indicated that each individual had his or her own idea of what was being communicated.



**Figure 5.4: His & Hers** (Robbins, 2001: 143)

Perception 1:

*Female participant 1 (Group D): Because those hearts are combined together, so it simply means that they are married.*

Perception 2:
*Female participant 1 (Group B): I think it's a boy and a girl, who's having a relationship, who's very safe who's having sex without condoms.*

*Facilitator: Ok, how do you get to that?*

*Female participant 1 (Group B): I just thought about the hearts.*

*Female participant 1 (Group B): It just came to my head.*

Although both interpretations were about relationships, in both cases due to the participant's cultural perceptions, the interpretation was different. According to Stroh et al. (2012) "stereotypes, processes of 'othering' and their function in the construction of group identities are a highly important topic, not only in the on-going boom of postcolonial studies, but also with regard to nationalism, transnationalism, ethnicity, migration, European integration, globalisation, English as a world language, and intercultural communication" (Stroh et al., 2012:279).

Stroh et. al. elaborates that in the discussion of stereotypes, a recurring feature is that on one hand it can impede dialogue, foster hate, misunderstandings, discrimination exclusion, and inequality. However, it is a personal cognitive natural need for streamlining and order (Stroh et.al, 2012: 279).

In advertising however, due to constraints such as budgetary constraints or company branding implications, one advert artwork is created for a national audience. In such instances, cultural allowances need to be considered by the designer.

*Interview participant 3: "The allowance would be in terms of language used, like you know I wouldn't come to Cape Town and then advertise a product or service using Joburg slang, I would try and do some research to what is popular to kids in Cape Town. Then if you were doing a national campaign, then you kind of like do a generic communication where it doesn't matter where you are in the country the youth or the potential buyer would understand it.*

*[…] You know like that McDonalds ad, the new one with the kids on the engine of the taxi and the seat and he's basically trying to save money so he can buy himself McDonalds, like if you've never gone through that experience of sitting on that part of the taxi you won't get the ad and that is kinda like aimed at specific people, you have to understand that that is not a generic ad compared to an Omo ad, where it talks about dirt. You know its like kids understand dirt, mothers and parents around the world understand dirt"*

Interview participant 3 said that in his opinion, using imagery and text that everyone understands is not culturally significant. To explain this he offered the following example:

*Interview participant 3: "The closest that I can remember to a generic advertisement campaign, was a campaign about ARV's, it was a simple advert the message, they took this lady that was like very ill, it was like very bad, like Aids affected her badly and then they kept a camera on top of her bed, they basically recorded her for 90 days.*

*But then it was in reverse, you see in 90 days you can actually see the difference, you can see the importance of having your medicine and you? That, everybody gets it and taking care of yourself in terms of like, you see that everybody gets it, take that organisation, if they have an advert in Cape Town or Joburg (Johannesburg) that type of message would maintain in Cape Town or Joburg.*

This would seem like the perfect solution, however according to the key informant, the brief dictated that because loveLife was a prevention organisation and its focus was to target the behaviour of the youth. The campaigns were meant to inspire behavioural change rather than dealing with the specifics of the disease.

### 5.6.7 Racial profiling

According to the key informant, there was a "race issue" involved with the creation of the billboard advertisements.

*Key informant: "There was the race issue where the campaign could not be directed at black youth alone but still had to have a demographic representation of people to some extent."*

The key informant was referring to the fact that when the first loveLife billboards' were created, South Africa's post-apartheid Aids policy making was characterised by conflict between government, civil society and the medical profession and at the time it was important that HIV/Aids not be seen as a "black" disease.

### 5.6.8 HIV/Aids stigma

In their 2011 study called *Stigma by association: The effects of caring for HIV/Aids patients in South Africa,* Haber et al, noted that the HIV workers who participated in the study experienced a general stigma towards people who had HIV/Aids (2011).

This stigma also emerged in more than one of the focus group sessions of this study. The participants were asked how they would approach the design of a mock campaign for HIV/Aids awareness; their reply was as follows:

*Male participant 6 (Group A): Something about, how… it happens how people look when HIV affects them*
*Female participant 2 (Group A): And like all the rashes and skin stuff that happens*
*Female participant 3 (Group A): Like a picture before and then after*

Doing as the participants suggest here would have implied that HIV/Aids is a death sentence, or that people living with HIV/Aids were sickly or looked ill. According to the key informant, this was exactly what loveLife tried to avoid, the intention of the campaigns was to show that you could live with the disease and prevent infection.

In the following examples, which were created by some of the participants of the focus groups, the nature of HIV as a disease is made clear by the use of medical imagery and avoiding infection using drastic measures.
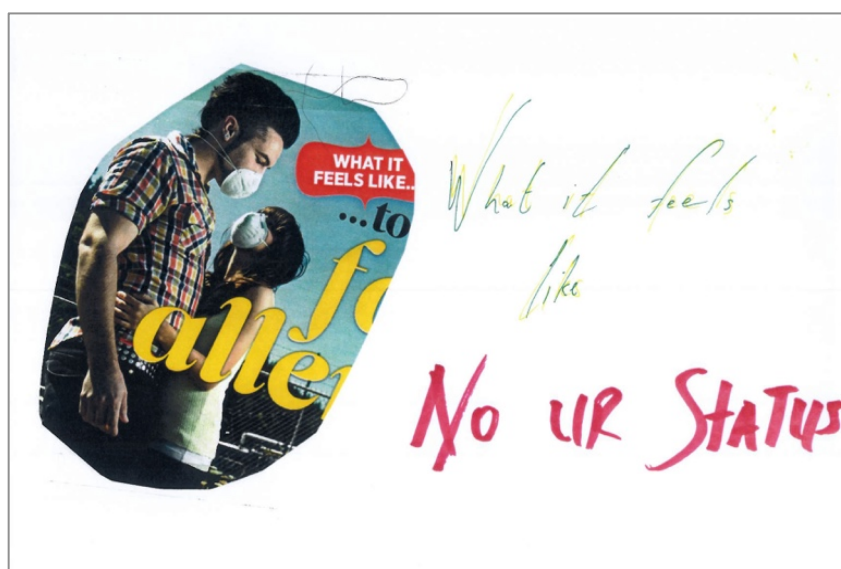


**Figure 5.13: No UR Status** (Focus group participant, 2014)

In this example, although the messaging is positive in that it tells the viewer to get tested for HIV (know your status), the mask alludes to the fear of "catching" the disease simply by being around someone who has HIV/Aids. The following image alludes to similar kind of messaging in the example below the imagery alludes to testing and again the fear of contracting the disease. This highlights the stigma associated with the disease, it alludes to the disease having to be controlled in a sterile environment and that you have to be extremely careful when coming into contact with someone who has the disease which contradicts the positive text (copy) alongside the image.

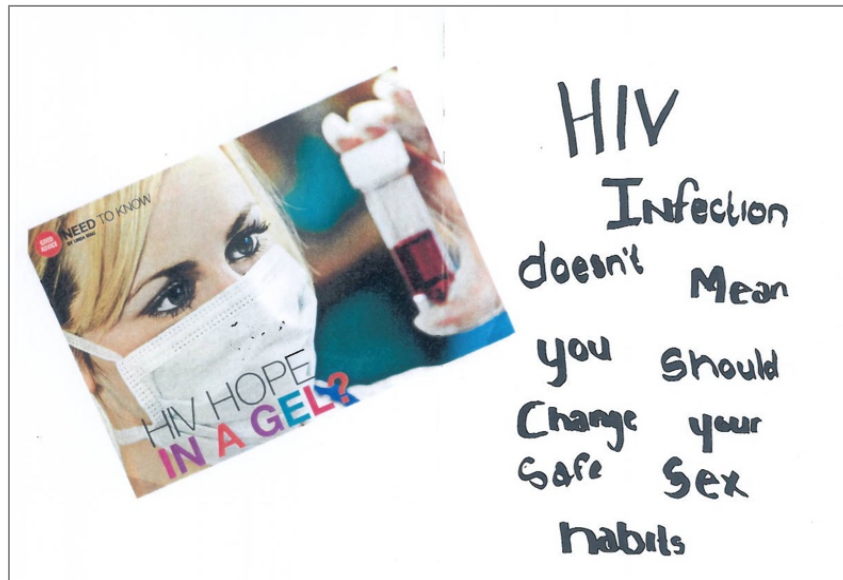**Figure 5.14: HIV infection** (Focus group participant, 2014)

The stigma related to HIV/Aids makes the task of advertising difficult and according to the Haber *et al* study, the stigma associated with the disease was so bad at one stage, that many of the HIV/Aids healthcare workers felt that they wanted to leave HIV/Aids work completely and some even said they would consider leaving South Africa to do similar work elsewhere. Interestingly, doctors and nurses perceived less HIV/Aids associated stigma directed toward them than other Aids worker groups (Haber et al, 2011).

The design brief required that the billboards portray concepts that encouraged people to enjoy their lives, strive for a good future, and make healthy choices. This was difficult to portray given the restraints stated below:

*Key informant: "There was the race issue; the campaign could not be directed at black youth alone. [It] still had to have a demographic representation of people to some extent. Also because loveLife was a prevention organisation and had its' focus as targeting the behaviour of the youth to avoid contracting HIV, the campaigns were aspirational rather than dealing with the specifics of the disease.*

*Research showed that the youth became disinterested when lectured about the use of condoms, so it was rare that condoms were depicted in loveLife media. Care had to be taken about how aspirations were phrased in billboards so that those who were already infected didn't feel left out.*

However, in later research, Van Zyl (2015) argues that culturally compatible references to condoms can still make them effective visual cues. In a research study conducted in Grabouw about the use of "condom stories as a method of addressing

reproductive issues" Van Zyl (2015), highlighted that in order to market condoms in a specific area the designer has to take on the role of a "cultural agent", who negotiates and mediates the cultural scripts that are represented in indigenous settings (Van Zyl, 2015).

> *Key informant: The campaigns were designed to make people think about their lives and question the messages in order to start a discourse because the more people talked the more information was relayed. Being seemingly obscure or cryptic was part of getting discussions going*".

This could explain the reason that the focus group findings revealed multiple interpretations of these billboards. According to Diko (2005), in some instances the billboards were completely misinterpreted. One could then presume that the intentional ambiguity used in the billboard design, which were intended to get "discussions going" is what could have attributed to the confusion.

In the loveLife billboard campaign, different factors played a role in selecting the visual cues, one of which included finding models for the campaigns. This proved to be problematic as the loveLife campaign billboards were highly visible and people were fearful of appearing in an advertisement and thereby being stigmatised for being associated with the campaign in such a visual way.

In 2013, Boyes and Cluver (2013) wrote a report on the relationship between HIV/Aids orphans and the stigma attached to their situation. The results showed that the "stigma experienced by HIV/Aids orphaned youth in maintained over long periods" (Boyes & Cluver, 2013:328). According to Kalichman et al. (2005), HIV/Aids stigma is a hurdle to the prevention and treatment of the disease. One could argue that the stigma attached to loveLife advertisement campaign had an effect on the production of the advertisements and possibly the interpretation thereof.

> *Key informant: "Often, a really strong concept had to be watered down because it inferred judgement or side-lined already marginalised groups"*

Another factor was that the billboard campaigns ran at the same time as the media frenzy about Aids denialism, which took place between 2000 and 2004 (Stephens, 2007). when President Thabo Mbeki was the president of South Africa At this time, the government had such a big impact on HIV/Aids policy that it affected the way that HIV/Aids related advertisements were portrayed.

## 5.7 The message

According to Martins-Haiku (2007) and Diko (2005), the participants, especially the urban participants who viewed the loveLife billboards, felt that loveLife assumed too much; that the message was not immediately obvious and that the youth would not necessarily come to the same conclusions (Martins-Haiku, 2007).

Diko (2005) argued, "Both rural and urban/semi-urban participants showed a limited understanding of the meanings of the billboards. The fact that participants could not successfully interpret the visual and verbal signs as intended, led them to make the connection between loveLife, either as a brand, or related to sex or related to love. The first thing that comes into their minds when they see loveLife is therefore sex or love. This recognition of the loveLife brand influenced the way they interpreted the messages" (Diko, 2005:75).

According to the key informant, this was initial message given to them in the brief for creating the billboard campaigns.

> Key informant: "*loveLife was a prevention organisation and had its' focus as targeting the behaviour of the youth to avoid contracting HIV the campaigns were aspirational rather than dealing with the specifics of the disease.*
>
> *Research showed that the youth became disinterested when lectured about the use of condoms so it was rare that condoms were depicted in loveLife media. Care had to be taken about how aspirations were phrased in billboards so that those who were already infected didn't feel left out. The campaigns were designed to make people think about their lives and question the messages in order to start a discourse because the more people talked the more information was relayed. Being seemingly obscure or cryptic was part of getting discussions going.*"

According to the key informant, the intention of the billboard campaigns was to promote discussions among the target audience and that is why the design was created in such an obscure or cryptic way. However, in some instances, the discussions led to a total lack of understanding or disinterest in the subject, or it led to behaviour that was the opposite of what was intended (Diko, 2005).

If the message was interpreted as intended, the problem could be that the message was flawed.

According to Davidson (2011), media campaigns are powerful when trying to communicate precise information to a desired market. Packaged appropriately, messages have the ability to efficiently reach the consumer and may evoke lifestyle change provided the viewer is able to understand how the information is imparted to him or her and it would improve his or her life. "In contrast, ineffective out-of-touch campaigns may confuse the consumer and impede intervention efforts" (Davidson, 2011:96).

Davidson (2011) argues that the main objectives of a HIV/Aids awareness advertising campaign should be as follows: (1) Participants appreciating a healthy lifestyle (2) Not acquiring and/or spreading the disease to loved ones or significant others; and (3) Averting the crippling effects of the stigma that is connected to the diagnosis (Davidson, 2011:96).

Davidson (2011) also points out that to avoid stigmatisation, one has to underline how the disease is not spread, as opposed to mainly highlighting the negatives. Creating a positive and open atmosphere, would allow open dialogue and create a comfortable setting for discussion. She posited that in order to shed light on whether there was information that the desired viewer may not have grasped, a "question-and-answer session could be conducted" (Davidson, 2011:97). One of the design professionals echoed this thinking:

Interview participant 3: "*To do national ads, you need to effect change. I've always said to a lot of organisations, you know like when somebody says, uhm we spent R30 000 making this ad and then we donated what we could have made.*

*It takes like seven million [rand] to make like a really good ad [vert]. . No, we took that seven million and we gave it to the organisation or charity. What people don't know is that what you spend like R60 000 to air that ad. If you want to make a difference, don't tell us, just do it.*

*That means like going into communities, cause [sic] I think like with HIV/Aids, whatever communication they do, for me I would say it's about removing stereotypes or kinda like superstitions more than, HIV is still around, be careful. But if you go into communities and have workshops, you actually show people that you can make a difference if you actually take care of yourself it actually does work.*

*… I want to say to my friend you know that there's as much as there's a broad market, but people still feel that I want to be that individual that you talk to, they don't want to feel like you taking to the mass audience, you're talking to the person sitting at*

*home and they must feel like that advert is speaking to me or is talking about me, they not talking about people who are infected or were infected by Aids it must be as simple as Wow that is me.*

*The ads needed to portray concept of encourage people enjoy their lives, strive for a good future and make healthy choices which in itself is difficult to portray.*

This concept also appeared in one of the focus group discussions:

*Female participant 2 (Group B): That's why you must just have like a summary or something to explain to the people how it's supposed to work*
*Female participant 1 (Group B):: Not everybody like [sic] reading*
*Female participant 4 (Group B):: Pictures also tell you*
*Female participant 1 (Group B):: What if you going to go to the promenade (A shopping centre in Mitchells Plain) and that is like there on the on the wall or something*
*Female participant 1 (Group B): Are you now going to wait there for so long so that you can read the whole thing*
*Female participant 4 (Group B): So that's what people do, if there's pictures then people stand with the plastic bags behind them, and look at the pictures even if there's no words, so you might as well just stand there and read, instead of stand there and look at the picture [the] whole time*

The need for clarification was very clear, the loveLife campaign billboards did create a discussion amongst the target audience as intended, however it failed to give adequate resources, which would allow viewers to access vital information despite having a contact number.

*Female participant 2 (Group B): Maybe if you are pressured into something like that, then you can phone and talk to them*
*Male participant 3 (Group B): Phone them?*
*Female participant 2 (Group B): Ja (yes), then maybe they can give you advice*
*Male participant 1(Group B) : Counsel you*
*Facilitator: Did you notice the number?*
*Male participant 3 (Group B): No, I can't see*
*Facilitator: Ok so that's a no*
*Female participant 4 (Group B): I thought it was null and void*

The fact that the contact number was missed could be attributed to three factors, (1) the advert on the billboard was so abstract that viewers were too distracted by

trying to creating meaning to notice it, (2) or its placement on billboard was not significant enough, or (3) it was not clear as to why there was a contact number.

## 5.8    Social responsibility

Social marketing utilises marketing views to influence the independent behaviour of the public to advance their own interests and the community they belong to. This is pertinent when the desired audience is not likely to behave in the required way without a payoff (tangible or intangible). It is paramount to social marketing that attitude modification beneficial to the community is the marketer's objective (Shanahan & Hopkins, 2007).

Their research shows that to promote social objectives such as safe driving, family planning, health awareness, and anti-smoking messages, social marketing is used. Social marketing has a reasonably lengthy past and although it is more difficult to "sell" benefits that the consumer may never see (i.e. not dying in a drunk driving accident), social marketing provides benefits to both individuals and society" (Shanahan & Hopkins, 2007:33-34).

Social marketing incorporates a transactional procedure, but in a social rather than economic frame of reference. Social exchange theory, argues that the non-profit itself becomes the focus of attention for collaborators who include the organisation, communities, regulatory agencies and media. Stakeholders perceive non-profits as abstract entities because of their intangibility in that they offer ideals and services rather than products (Shanahan & Hopkins, 2007).

### 5.8.1    Ethical visuals

The Social responsibility of a graphic designer would include ethical visuals. To understand this, Manning and Amare talk about philosopher C.S. Peirces' (1839-1914) variety of three-part typologies in their article, *Visual-rhetoric Ethics: Beyond accuracy and injury (*Manning & Amare, 2006*).* The first goal is to elaborate that font choices convey a precise visible perception (interpretation) and do so to correlate with the primary objective of eliciting emotion (Manning & Amare, 2006*.* They offered the following illustrations as an example:
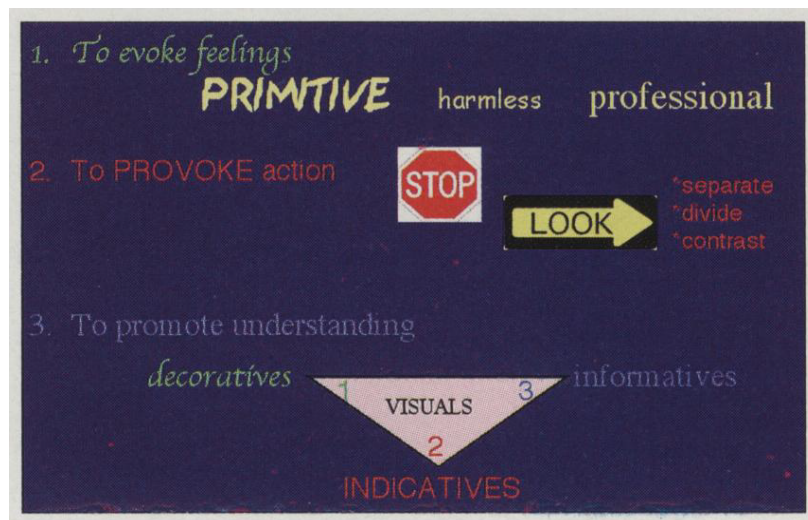
**Figure 5.15: Visual-rhetoric goals sorted into Peirce's three categories; distinctive colours and fonts used for decorative and indicative purposes.** (Manning & Amare, 2006:195).
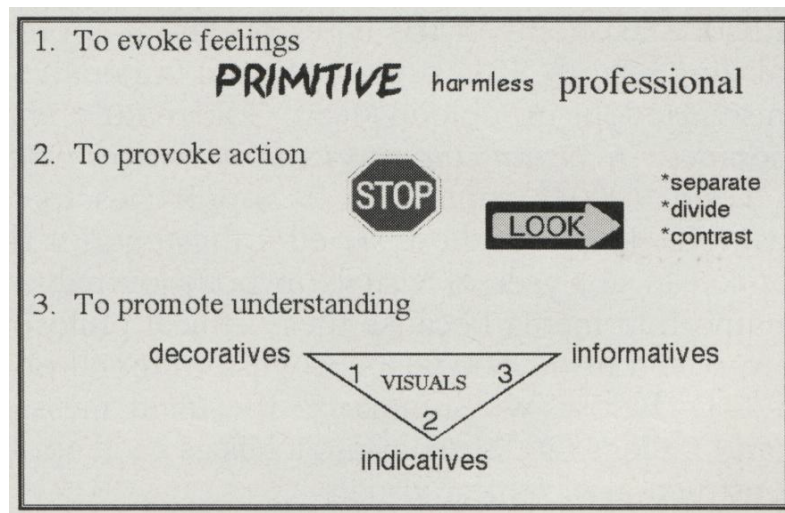


**Figure 5.16: Visual-rhetoric goals sorted into Peirce's three categories, colour and font contrasts restricted for the sake of informative purpose** (Manning & Amare, 2006:195).

The second objective, are visual strategies which provoke action, for example bulleted lists shift the viewer into the specific task of dividing, spreading and contradicting "otherwise undivided statement in the flow of information" *(*Manning & Amare, 2006:195*)*.

The third goal is to promote the understanding of the audience, by making conceptual relationships visible, known as 'informatives*'*. "Charts, graphs, diagrams, and tables have a concept-relational component, an informative component that can be distinguished from whatever decorative and indicative properties that they also have" *(*Manning & Amare, 2006:195*)*.

When decorative or indicative elements begin to interfere with the informative purpose and visual ethical concerns can arise. In the example provided the colour and font choices of Figure 5.16 could potentially distract from the factual information. However, an efficient review could dispose of the "colour and so doing most of the font contrasts" *(*Manning & Amare, 2006:195*)*. That, according to Manning and Amare (2006) is not just a question of effectiveness, but also one of ethics.

According to Manning and Amare (2006) "Decoratives communicate a feeling; indicatives communicate an action, but informative communicate statements or ideas that can be validated (judged true or false) by means of logical reasoning or experiment" *(*Manning & Amare, 2006:201*)*. We cannot control how we feel but we can choose whether we will, will not or can't perform a specific action or we cannot or will not.

Visuals are either ethically used as informative or they are not, to understand the difference between when it is or is not we must know the difference between Informative visuals and decorative/indicative visuals. Images have both decorative and informative properties figures 5.17 and 5.18 illustrate the difference.
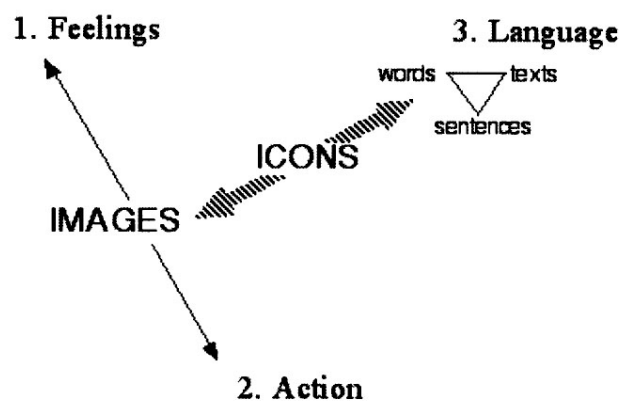


**Figure 5.17: The mediating functions of visuals; images and pointers mediate between perception and action; informative visuals mediate between perception/action and language. (Manning & Amare, 2006:201).**
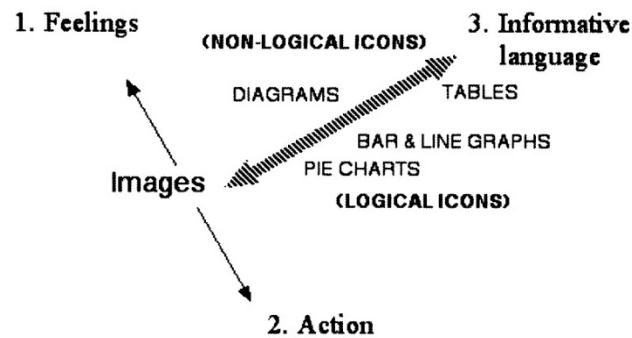
**Figure 5.18: The spectrum between images and language: Images are the least-language-like visuals, and tables are the most language-like.** (Manning and Amare, 2006:201).

These graphs illustrate that perceived images enable the mediation between feeling and action. For example the reaction to an image of a free-roaming spider could elicit feelings of fear, whereas informative visuals enable the mediation between perceived images and languages. This means that language must be understood in icon form. However, this could pose a problem when the viewer from different cultural backgrounds view and then interpret the icon in a different way.

Although there is very little research on visual ethics outside of accuracy and injury issues, Manning and Amare offer this summary (Lester, 2003 cited in Manning and Amare, 2006:196):

- **Categorical Imperative:** Visuals should be consistent, impartial, and morally just in portraying subjects accurately.
- **Utilitarian:** Visuals should be useful and good for the audience as a whole, not just for the benefit of one or two individuals.
- **Hedonism:** Visuals should be pleasing aesthetically
- **Golden Mean:** Visuals should not be biased toward one extreme (for example, favour one political party over another).
- **Golden Rule:** Visuals should not harm others because communicators care about audiences as much as they care about themselves.
- **Veil of Ignorance:** Because everyone is equal, visuals should not express (that is, be ignorant) prejudice or discrimination (ibid).

According to Manning and Amare (2006), it is rare for most professionals to conduct a thorough audience analysis when creating their presentation visuals to ensure that issues such as cultural and gender sensitivity are taken into account. Most professionals do not have enough information on audience demographics to construct non-harmful visuals. Despite overwhelming evidence of the importance of knowing

one's audience, most professionals do not make use of their audience as a resource to gauge the effect of the visual design (Manning & Amare, 2006).

### 5.8.2 Visual rhetoric

Visual rhetoric is a new area of study, it recognises that visuals may communicate more than aesthetics or emotions and includes the images' cultural context. "Visual rhetoric is commonly thought to differ from the study of graphic design in as much as informative (rhetorical) visuals often have their own systemic relationships and patterns of meaning that constitute a separate code or a separate language, in a manner of speaking, that is not inferior to, merely supplemental to, or dependent on textual in formation" (Manning & Amare, 2006:197).

This was clear especially in how the focus groups interpreted the advertisement in Figure 4 as described earlier in cultural stereotypes:

There are however, visual rhetoric aspects that begin to combine with "textual rhetoric layout issues, font choice issues, white-space issues, (that is, visual design/graphics issues, even though there are other aspects of visual rhetoric that pull away from textual issues)" (Manning & Amare, 2006:197). Manning and Amare argue that aesthetic–decorative issues have to be treated in the same way as indicative and informative visuals.

Visuals will need to be grouped and will be considered as part of a unified semiotic system, of which textual language forms part, of in order to build on a common set of assumptions, despite using distinctly different strategies and goals. In order to humanise technical illustrations, Manning and Amare (2006) argue that instead of simply juxtaposing words and images on an advertisement, one has to genuinely integrate the two.

### 5.9    Implications

According to the focus groups, the implications of the stereotypical imagery sometimes meant that more than one interpretation of the advertisement was possible. This elicited discussion as was loveLife's intention. However, what loveLife did not anticipate was that in some instances the interpretation so skewed as to imply a message that was in complete opposition to what they had intended to convey. The billboards also failed to communicate that if the target audience were confused or had questions they could call the designated telephone number for advice or information.

This could imply that the target audience found the billboards confusing overall or that not enough emphasis was placed on the visibility of the contact number.

Another implication of the campaign was the multiple interpretations of the colours used on the billboards. Whether it intentional or not the colour of the billboard played a big role in how the target audience interpreted the overall message. This could be what Manning and Amare (2006) implied in their study, when they asserted that when a decorative or indicative element interferes with the informative process the message could be misinterpreted.

## 5.10    Chapter summary

This chapter described the design process used by designers to create artwork or visual codes (or cues). The process starts with different types of research, the designer collates general marketing research, or in the case of bigger design agencies, marketing professionals collate the market research. However, with regard to the imagery and font used in the design, the designer is responsible, as their training allows them to develop a feeling for contemporary work.

Many factors affect this research process, the biggest factor being the advertising campaigns' budget, as this will ultimately affect the research budget. The research in this dissertation showed that the focus group participants interpreted specific meaning from the billboard campaign based on the belief that professional models were hired for the imagery in the campaign, and that these models were instructed to portray certain messaging. However, due to budgetary constraints, the designers made use of amateur models that were in fact loveLife staff. In cases where the budget did not allow for a photo shoot of this kind, generic stock imagery became the substitute.

One of the themes that arose was colour use, it emerged that colour plays a vital role in how the billboards were interpreted; sometimes the colour of the billboard created a separate meaning to what was intended. Colour use also highlighted gender issues, wherein specific colours like pink and purple created discussions about who the billboards were aimed at. The meaning of the colour related largely to what it was associated with and the association depended on what the participant was exposed to.

The second theme to arise was that of stereotypical interpretations of what was meant to be none stereo typical imagery. which also lead to multiple interpretations of what the advertisements were meant to portray. This could be directly compared to

the cultural scripts created by Leclec-Madlala (2009), because in most cases the stereotypical interpretation was based on one of her scripts. The stereotypes were also in most cases gender related by the participants' in the focus groups.

The third theme to arise was that multiple interpretations were the result of insufficient information in the advertisements. The text on the advertisements was short, intended according to the designers to capture the viewer's attention. However, according to the participants, there was not enough information to interpret definitively what was being said. The participants felt that it was not clear what the telephone number on the billboard was for.

The fourth theme was the stigma related to HIV/Aids; this theme played a huge role in how the advertisements were designed. The designers created advertising campaigns that showed the danger of unprotected sex while trying not to further stigmatise those living with the disease. This influenced the way the advertisements were designed and therefore how it was interpreted.

The initial brief from the client played a role in how the billboards were eventually interpretated, according to the key informant. The client did not agree with the professional design agencies and decided to opt with using a design campaign created by students who had no working experience. loveLife's research showed that the youth were disinterested when lectured about condom use and as a result, condoms were rarely depicted. The brief also stipulated that the campaign should not further stigmatise of those who already had HIV/Aids. The designers created the billboard in a seemingly obscure or cryptic way in order to meet the requirements of the brief that the campaign needed to promote discussion.

Design discourse maintains that the designer should have the last say on the visuals used in an advertising campaign. However, in the case of loveLife, the designers needed to reach a consensus with the loveLife CEO and other role players. This according to the key informant affected the billboards overall messaging. Both the focus groups and the designers displayed a feeling that the campaign could be improved and less ambiguous.

The research revealed that participant and designer alike revealed that they thought the information was important and offered possible solutions. The focus groups hinted at adding more information to the advertisements and one of the designers inferred

that it would be more cost effective to make use of programmes within the organisation instead of trying to create a national advertising campaign.

Creating ethical visuals means that in order to create a set of informative visuals that specific groups can understand, target audience research should be emphasised. This requires a different look at the types of research conducted to collect information about the target audience. By using participatory design principles which include the target audience in the process of creating the advertisements could potentially lesson the chance of misinterpretation.

# CHAPTER SIX
<span style="color:gray">CONCLUSION</span>

## 6.1    Overview

This study set out to explore the cause(s) of possible misinterpretation on advertisements on billboards. By using qualitative research methods and semiotic theory, this study addressed the research questions posed in Chapter 1. The case study was the loveLife billboards and because of this, questions related to semiotics were posed to focus groups in order acquire their interpretation of pre-sampled loveLife billboards. Interviews with design professionals and a key informant who actually worked on the campaign in question, followed with interview questions based on the focus group data.

The data collected provided information that related to how designers create advertisements (visual cues) and then how the target audience interprets them. The research highlighted that the target audiences' socio/demographic backgrounds need to be considered when designing an advertisement, as it affects how they relate to it and therefore how they interpret it. The research provided possible recommendations (*see 6.5*) for how to minimise the chance of misinterpretation in future public awareness campaigns.

## 6.2    Message

According to Eco (1972), semiotics teaches us that without context a sign has no definite meaning. Semiotics also elaborates that both the copy on the advertisement and the image play a role in how the image is interpreted. Stuart Hall (2007) elaborated on this with his "Journey of a message" by highlighting that one has to be aware that of what the "noise" or interference could be when creating an advertising campaign, in order to find solutions to lessen the chance of misinterpretation.

Semiotics demonstrates that cultural diversity plays a role in how a message is interpreted because the viewer interprets a message according to their social-cultural background.

## 6.3    Implications of visual cues

The focus groups discussions revealed that the advertising campaign generated multiple interpretations. However, according to one of the designers who worked on the loveLife campaign, the designs were intentionally vague to "in an attempt to get discussions going". Some studies (Diko, 2005; Delate, 2001) posited that because the

billboard designs were ambiguous; the messages were unclear and therefore misinterpreted.

This study however, revealed that the reason for the multiple interpretations was complex and that the designers of the loveLife campaigns encountered many limitations with regard to their design process. Previous studies (Delate, 2001; Diko, 2005) concluded the following.

1. The messaging had to be simpler.
2. The appropriately aligned message development centred to diversity.
3. To ensure the fitting context, adolescents should be included in creating the message.
4. Advertising campaigns should resonate with adolescents.
5. loveLifes' intention should be clear.
6. Be considerate of the target audiences' socio-cultural contexts (Delate, 2001; Diko, 2005).

This study concludes that many factors influenced the design of the campaign. Interruption of the first step in the design process occurred when loveLife rejected the design pitch of the professional design agencies (Robbins, 2000). According to Robbins (2000), the initial focus of the loveLife campaign was not HIV/Aids awareness, but rather loveLife as a brand that would deal with HIV/Aids issues. This could have led to some of the misinterpretation. Robbins (2000) elaborated that the professional design agencies wanted to make use of the well-known visual cue of the red ribbon, which has become synonymous with HIV/Aids, but loveLife wanted a fresh new approach.

The agencies recommended a simple clear message in the design, however loveLife opted to make use of the suggestions made by the students of the Vega school of design, and thereby overlooking years of experience for what they considered a better fit. According to Robbins (2000), loveLife felt that the agency approach did not match their research. In the design process, the designer is responsible for the design of the visual cues and this is done according to experience and expertise, however in this instance loveLife wanted to hold that responsibility. This could have had an impact on how the billboards were interpreted (Robbins, 2000).

## 6.4    Social responsibility

According to Armstrong, designers are becoming more aware of the cultural and political aspects of their engagement with society. Beyond this, with the advancement of technology, designers are able to foreground social issues by producing both form and content. "Designers are looking beyond successful business and aesthetic practices to the broader effects of the culture they help create" (Armstrong, 2012:13).

According to the research, the designers in the agency had a social responsibility to convince the loveLife team that the designers' approach was politically and culturally sound. In this case, loveLife failed to trust the instincts of the professionals. Though at a later stage professionals were used, they had to work on an existing idea. This could have attributed to ways the messages were constructed and therefore it could have affected the way in which it was interpreted. Simply put, by the time the professionals were asked to work on the campaign the flawed design approach had already been set in place.

Advertising campaigns of this nature should make use of ethical visuals that are intended for particular groups and in order for this to happen, adequate research techniques need to be incorporated into mainstream target market research as part of the design process to ensure that the final product fits the context it is produced for.

## 6.5    Recommendations

The following recommendations for future social awareness campaigns are based on the findings of this study. The first recommendation is that when a public awareness campaign needs to be created, clients and designers should work together when doing the research from the outset. Starting with the initial meeting between client and designer/design agency representative, this meeting is traditionally used as the starting point of the design process, the client is asked to fill in a briefing form or to discuss the design brief, which essentially lists the client requirements. This is the ideal opportunity for the design agency to be socially responsible by considering the brief and then recommending co-design and participatory design techniques to be included in the design process.

Secondly, when it comes to the visual cues used in the design campaign, clients should trust the chosen agency to make the best decisions in terms of what the design should look like. When the design agency, introduces the co-design and participatory design techniques, it could reassure clients that the decision that was made is sound and that it does in fact resonate with the target audience. Furthermore, budget discussions should take place in the initial briefing meeting, as this will inform the type of design choices that the designer will make regarding which media to use to best achieve the desired results.

The third recommendation is that when designing a public awareness campaign, factors such as gender, culture, age, language and stereotypes taken into consideration by both designer and client, as this will dictate the style and type of campaign that will be created. It is at this stage of the design process that designers'

practical working experience can greatly influence how a design is styled, in this study, the client disregarded the experienced designers' expertise and opted to make use of design students because their approach seemed fresh and new.

However, the research revealed that experienced designers' initial recommendations of simple clear messaging and imagery might have had a better chance of being interpreted as intended. According to Davidson (2011:97), a professor of Psychology at Yale University a socially responsible public awareness campaign message should be clear and follow the following objectives (Davidson, 2011:97):

- Participants enjoying better health
- Not acquiring and/or spreading the disease to loved ones or significant others, and
- Avoiding the debilitating effects of the stigma that is attached to this diagnosis

The last recommendation is that the messaging of a campaign should be focused and includes a *call to action* (a sentence that explains what the viewer's role or choices are regarding the advertisement, e.g. Call this number to contact us). One of the observations from the research was that the participants did not realise that there was a telephone number that they could call and if they did notice the number, they were unsure of its purpose.

The introduction of different methods of researching the target audience should be part of the design process. Current market research is not in-depth enough to have an impact on the actual design process of an advertising campaign. Participatory design and co-design principles could be used to include the target audience into the design process and in so doing create the lacking context that was highlighted in the existing billboard campaigns.

## 6.6    Limitations

This study relied heavily on access to certain people, such as designers and adolescents. This sometimes proved difficult because on certain instances resulted in time constraints during the interviews and discussions. The study was limited to the Western Cape province of South Africa only.

## 6.7    Conclusion

This study set out to investigate how visual cues on loveLife billboards were interpreted. The research revealed that graphic designers create visual cues, using the information given to them by the client in the brief and the research collated by either themselves or the marketing professionals in their company (Arnston, 2011).

This study began by looking at standard design practice and the design theories that designers make use of. This includes colour theory, which is how the choice of colour affects the *harmony* of an artwork, in other words how an image fits together. Colour symbolism addresses how cues are interpreted due to what colour they are. Many different design theories address layout elements such as perspective, line, composition etc. These theories are intended to enable the designer to communicate visually; however, these theories are varied and based on Western culture. The theories based on Western culture are universally applied without taking the culture of the target audience into consideration. Many designers are trained according to these theories.

There is not one specific design theory that all designers make use of, which means that the design could be influenced by the designers' cultural background and this could potentially be problematic because the designer does not necessarily share the same background as the intended audience. For example, if the designer comes from a culture where the colour white is traditionally the colour worn to mourn, the design choices he/she makes could be based on his/her own interpretation of colour symbolism. If the target audience does not share the same cultural background and if the advertising campaign is a public awareness campaign that is misinterpreted, the repercussions could be dire.

Controversial HIV/Aids political policies compounded the stigma related to the disease and this had repercussions for the design process as the social/cultural situation limited the designers' artistic licence during the loveLife billboard campaign. It was thus a good case study for how audiences may interpret a campaign in a way that was not intended by the designer. The questions posed to the focus groups, were designed using a semiotic approach put forth by Bergström (2008) could be used to highlight instances where design might be misinterpreted (noise).

Once the focus groups had given their interpretations of the billboards, the next part of the research process was to interview designers who create advertising campaigns. The interviewed designers hailed from design agencies in Cape Town as well as Johannesburg and included a creative director who worked on a few of the loveLife billboard campaigns. This combined with the pre-existing research revealed that the loveLife campaign opted to use graphic design students to design the initial concept and design strategy for the loveLife campaign, because loveLife felt that the agencies approach did not meet their requirements.

The interviews revealed that the designers agreed on a simple, clear approach to public awareness campaigns due to the sensitive subject matter. However, according to Robbins (2010), loveLife approached design agencies and were advised to use simple messaging with the red ribbon icon widely associated with HIV/Aids in South Africa. loveLife was not satisfied with this advice and opted to approach design students in the hope that the students would have a fresh exciting take on the campaign. The students pitched an advertising campaign idea that hoped to create interest by treating loveLife as a trendy brand and which purposely made use of abstract imagery and controversial text such as "skin on skin" and "everybody he has slept with is sleeping with you" (Robbins, 2010).

According to the case study, that was one of the reasons the billboards had multiple interpretations, because the messaging and imagery was not clear, many of the focus groups participants did not notice the call to action on the billboards, which was intended as a helpline for adolescents who had no one to talk to about the subjects on the billboards. It is for this reason and due to the sensitive nature of the awareness campaigns, it is imperative that Non-Governmental Organisation's (NGO's) and designers alike become socially responsible for the type of messaging they decide to use on advertising campaigns as the results are intended to promote life choices that could save lives.

Based on this, clients that make use of design agencies, should entrust the design agencies to be aware of current trends and to know the best way to include the trends into an advertisement that will resonate with the target audience due to the agency's years of experience and design knowledge. Co-design principles and participatory research methods such as including the target audience into the design process to ensure that the context is considered and that it resonates with the intended audience, which according to Eco will allow the advertisement to be interpreted as intended (Eco, 1981). This type of advertising campaign should be well researched, and the messaging should be packaged in a way that can effectively reach the target audience.

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# APPENDICES

## APPENDIX A: INFORMED CONSENT LETTER
(adapted from www.who.int)

Institution letterhead

Informed consent for _____

This informed consent form is for parents/guardians of adolescent girls and boys participating in the research entitled, "**Cultural orientation and the implications for the interpretation of Public awareness Billboards in Cape Town**"

Olivia deBarry: Principal investigator
Cape Peninsula University of Technology

**This Informed Consent Form has two parts:**
- **Information Sheet (to share information about the study with you)**
- **Certificate of Consent (for signatures if you agree that your child may participate)**

**You will be given a copy of the full informed Consent Form**

**Part 1: Information Sheet**

**Introduction**
I am Olivia deBarry, and I am a Masters student at Cape Peninsula University of Technology. I am doing research to access the implications for the interpretation of Public Awareness Billboards in Cape Town. In my research, I will talk to many teenagers, both girls and boys and ask them a number of questions.

Whenever researchers study children, we talk to the parents and ask them for their permission. After you have heard about the study and agree, then the nest thing I will do is ask your daughter/son for their agreement as well. Both of you have to agree independently before I can begin.

You do not have to decide today whether or not you agree to have you child participate in this research. Before you decide, you can talk to me to discuss any concerns.

There may be some words that you not understand. Please ask me to stop as we go through the information and I will take time to explain. If you have questions later, please feel free to ask me.

**Purpose**
To study how different public awareness billboards are interpreted by youth.
(To access the implications for interpretations of Public Awareness Billboards.)

**Type of Research Intervention**
A qualitative Focus Group

**Selection of Participants**
I want to talk to many teenagers about how they are interpreting Billboards advertising namely "LoveLife" and "Brothers for life" campaigns in Cape Town". I would like to ask your daughter/son to participate because she/he lives in Cape Town.

**Voluntary Participation**
You do not have to agree that your daughter/son talk to me. You can choose to say no.
I know that the decision can be difficult when it involves your children. And, it can be especially hard when the research includes sensitive topics like HIV/Aids and sexuality.

You can ask as many questions as you like and I will take the time to answer them. You don't have to decide today. You can think about it and tell me what you decide later.

**Protocol**
Your daughter/son will take part in a discussion with 6-8 other teenagers. I will guide the session, I will ask them to view a preselected sample of billboard advertisements, which have been advertised on Billboards in Cape Town and ask them what and how they interpret the billboards. The questions will include:
1. Do you know what this is?
2. Who do you think this advertisement is aimed at?
3. What is the purpose of the advertisement?
4. Can you relate (associate) to the message and or image in this advert?
5. What is the message they are trying to communicate in this advertisement?
6. If you had to create an advertisement of this nature, what would you depict on the advertisement?

The conversation will take place in (location) and no one else but the people who take part in the discussion and I will be present during this conversation. The entire discussion will be tape recorded, but no one else will be present unless your child asks for someone else to be there. The recorded information is confidential, and no one else will have access to the information documented during the session.

**Duration**
I am asking your child to participate in a focus group that will take about 1 hour of her/his time.

**Incentives**
Your daughter/son will not be provided with any payment to take part in the research

**Who to contact**
If you have any questions, you may contact the following:

Olivia deBarry
Contact details

## APPENDIX B: CERTIFICATE OF CONSENT
(adapted from www.who.int)

# Certificate of Consent

I have been asked to give consent for my daughter/son to participate in this research study, which will involve her/him participating in one Focus group. I understand that she/he will also be asked to give permission and that her/his wishes will be respected.

I am aware that there is no benefit to either my child or me personally and we will not be compensated. I have been provided with the name of a researcher who can be easily contacted using the number I was given for that person.

I have read the foregoing information, or it has been read to me. I have had the opportunity to ask questions about it and any questions that I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I consent to voluntarily for my child to participate in this study and understand that I have the right to withdraw her/him from the study at any time.

Print Name of Parent or Guardian     _____
Signature of Parent or Guardian     _____
Date     _____
                (day/month/year)

***If illiterate***

A Literate witness must sign (if possible, this person should be selected by the participant and should have no connection to the research person). Participants who are illiterate should include their thumbprint as well.
I have witnessed the accurate reading of the consent form to the potential participant, and the individual has had the opportunity to ask questions.
I confirm that the individual has given consent freely.
Print Name of witness     _____
Signature of witness     _____
Date     _____
             (day/month/year)

**AND** Thumb print of participant
I have witnessed the accurate reading of the consent form to the potential participant, and the individual has had the opportunity to ask questions.
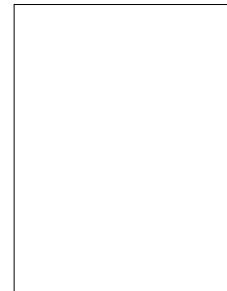I confirm that the individual has given consent freely.
Print Name of researcher     _____
Signature of researcher     _____
Date     _____
             (day/month/year)

A copy of this Informed Consent Form has been provided to the parent or guardian of the participant_____(initialled by researcher/assistant).

## APPENDIX C: CERTIFICATE OF CONSENT FOR INTERVIEWS

(adapted from http://emerald.tufts.edu/central/research/msword/Medford/ICF3.pdf)

Cape Peninsula
University of Technology

# CONSENT FORM

**CONSENT TYPE: ORAL CONSENT WITH SHORT FORM WRITTEN CONSENT**

**PARTICIPANTS: OVER 18**

**INVESTIGATOR:** Olivia deBarry

**BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE:** You are being asked to take part in a research project, which is being organized by Olivia deBarry. The purpose of this research project is to learn more about the interpretation of public awareness billboards. As a creative director, you are in a position to provide me with insight into the situation, and I would appreciate it if we could interview you.

**PROCEDURES:** The format of the interview will be an informal discussion. With your permission, I will audiotape the interview solely for the purposes of accurately transcribing the conversation.

**CONFIDENTIALITY AND RISK:** There is some risk involved if, for example, you divulge confidential information. Therefore, if you wish pseudonyms to be used to protect your privacy and confidentiality, I will be happy to do so. Alternately, if you wish to be quoted by name on anything in particular I am also happy to accommodate this request. Please know though that you do not have to answer any questions or discuss any topics that make you feel uncomfortable.

**WITHDRAWAL OF PARTICIPATION:** Should you decide at any time during the interview or discussion that you no longer wish to participate, you may withdraw your consent without prejudice.

**COSTS BENEFITS TO YOU:** There are no direct costs involved with participation. There are also nodirect benefits to you.

**REQUEST FOR MORE INFORMATION:** You may ask more questions about the study at any time. Please contact Olivia deBarry at o.debarry@gmail.com

**SIGNATURE:** I confirm that the purpose of the research, the study procedures, the possible risks and discomforts as well as benefits have been explained to the participant. All questions have been answered. The participant has agreed to participate in the study.

The participant agrees to be audio-taped             YES ❏       NO ❏        Initial
_____

The participant would like his/her name to be used    YES ❏       NO ❏        Initial
_____

**CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH STUDY**
**Short Form Written Consent (to be used with oral consent form)**

**Short-Form Written Consent**
I confirm that the researcher has explained the elements of informed consent to the participant.

The subject knows that their participation is voluntary, and that they do not need to answer all questions. The purpose of the research as well as the risks and benefits have been explained. The procedures as well as the time commitment have been outlined. The participant understands issues of confidentiality.

_____
Participant Name

_____
Participant Signature

**APPENDIX D: BILLBOARDS**



**Figure 5.1: No Pressure** (Robbins, 2007:152)



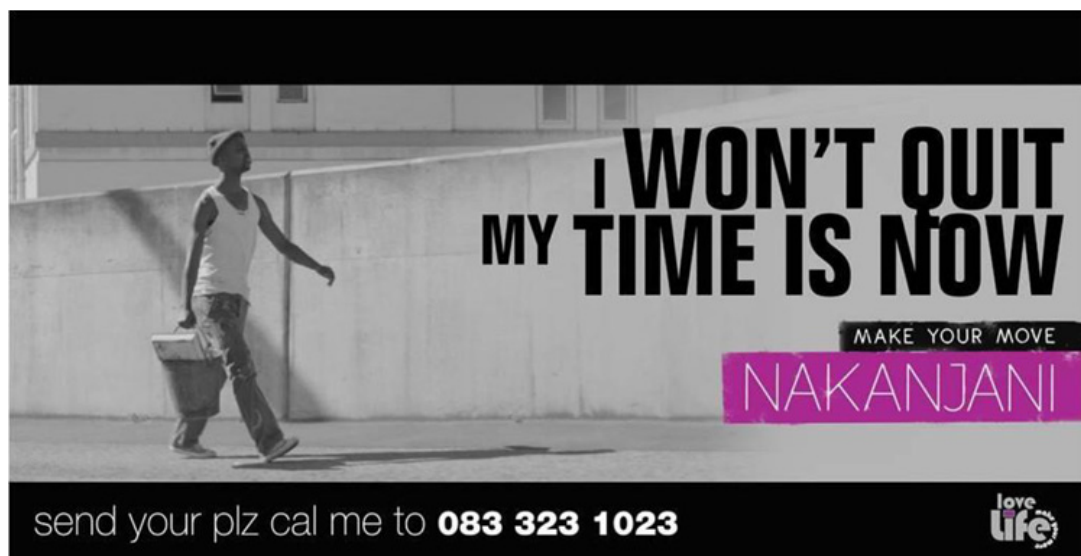**Figure 5.2: Too smart for just anybody** (loveLife, 2003)



**Figure 5.3: I won't quit my time is now** (loveLife, 2012)

**Figure 5.4: His & Hers** (Robbins, 2001: 143)



**Figure 5.5: Love to be there (education)** (Robbins, 2004:155)



**Figure 5.6: Everyone he's slept with is sleeping with you** (Robbins, 2003:151)

**Figure 5.7: love to be there** (Robbins, 2004:154)