

EFFECTIVE DOMESTIC TOURISM ADVERTISING LAYOUT: LITHUANIAN PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract

The issue of advertising is widely analysed in relevant literature; however, the emphasis is mainly on its commercial part. Advertising-related aspects in regard to domestic tourist behaviour still lack scholars' attention. Therefore, outdoor advertising and its possibilities of attracting domestic tourists are under-assessed. The purpose of the study is to determine the effective advertising layouts to be used in static outdoor domestic tourism advertisements. Accordingly, this study contributes to the literature by analysing the peculiarities of static outdoor advertising layouts and determining the most effective compositions of its creative elements. The most appealing advertising layouts are determined. Applying the principles of conjoint analysis, the main elements (i.e., attributes) of the advertising layout are established and composed into profiles, encompassing different element levels. The attributes used in the analysis are "headline position" (4 levels), "picture" (4 levels), "text" (3 levels) and "colour scheme" (4 levels). The results (based on profile rankings) allow determining relative attribute importance and attribute level performance. To verify the results, eye-tracking is performed. The study allows modelling recommended advertising layouts to be used in outdoor advertisements in domestic tourism.

Implications for Central European audience: Visual elements of tourism advertising are the most important for attracting consumer attention compared to textual ones. The visual elements should contain pictures of people or nature and should use a warm/mixed colour scheme. The headline should be placed in the upper position. The absence of text is the most attractive for consumers. For further research, the effect of different elements of advertising can be analysed, more levels of the same attributes might be included, and different compositions, colour mixing schemes and mediums might be chosen. Replication of the research in other countries or other types of tourism might broaden the researchers' understanding of the scope.

Keywords: advertising; advertising layout; conjoint analysis; domestic tourism; eye-tracking, outdoor advertising; tourism advertising

JEL Classification: L83, M37, Z33

Introduction

Tourism is a very important component of the contemporary economy of a destination, whether it is a region or a country (Arimavičiūtė, 2015). Every government or municipality is concerned about selecting and applying the most suitable and convincing measures for increasing tourist flows. Tourists dictate the trends for tourism supply, and other stakeholders (hoteliers, campsites, private accommodation and hospitality facilities) must conform to those trends (Dadić et al., 2022). Tourism-related literature mainly focuses on international tourism and its encouragement, and domestic tourism is still under-assessed (Athanasopoulos et al., 2014). Tourists are considered to be those who arrive and stay at a place overnight. According to the Lithuanian statistics department (Statistics Lithuania, 2022), the number of domestic tourists (in thousands) in 2021 was 786.2 (which is 12.01% more than in 2020, but still 7.61% and 4.23% fewer compared to 2018 and 2019 respectively). If considering the pre-pandemic period (more recent data are still not available), domestic tourists' expenditures were constantly growing: they spent 197.7 million euros in 2018 and 204.8 million euros in 2019 (which was respectively 5.11 and 5.1 times less than abroad). However, in comparison to outbound tourism, the number of domestic tourists in the pre-pandemic period was smaller by 11.08% in 2017; 2.75% in 2018; and 8.72% in 2019, indicating the failure of the marketing efforts by the local government, municipalities and businesses. During the years 2020 (pandemic period) and 2021 (post-pandemic period), the scales turned upside-down – more Lithuanians chose to travel inside instead of outside the country. The number of domestic tourists, compared to outbound in 2020 and 2021, was 63.26% and 59.08% more respectively). Considering the tourist's physical and financial capacity, the possibility of increasing the flow of domestic tourists might be envisioned.

Recently, scholars have broadened the traditional perception of creativity as only arts- and creation-related phenomenon and started emphasizing its importance in such areas as information technology, education and business (including management, marketing, public relations, etc.) (Sederevičiūtė-Pačiauskienė et al., 2018). In this regard, one of the most often used creative measures for promoting any product or activity is advertising. Advertising has been integrated into consumer everyday life: thousands of advertising messages are faced by people every day (Skorupa, 2014). The general goals of advertising – to inform, persuade and remind – can be set for any domestic tourism advertisement. Moreover, attracting consumers' attention and convincing them is a critical task performed by advertising practitioners (Shen et al., 2020). Despite the omnipresence of advertising, it is difficult to forecast which advertisements of a destination would be effective in terms of attracting tourists (Byun & Jang, 2015). What layout would be the most eye-catching? Many previous investigations have been done considering different elements of advertising, i.e., visual (Hilligoss & Howard, 2002; Modestavičiūtė, 2003) or verbal (Hewett, 2009; Kazlauskaitė & Liakaitė, 2009; Leech, 1966); however, there have been very few attempts to analyse the effectiveness of different combinations of these creative elements in advertising layouts. However, advertising layout shows a holistic picture and determines where the viewer will look first (Rayner et al., 2008) – it can be considered a determinant of advertising effectiveness. Accordingly, the authors aim to promote the scientific discussion regarding the issues of advertising effectiveness by analysing the problem of what advertising layout is the most effective in terms of attracting viewers' attention. Static outdoor advertising was chosen as the object for the research. Consumers face outdoor advertising outside their homes – on

the street, in public places and when travelling (Czajkowski et al., 2022). According to Pryshchenko (2021), it is suitable to shape mass consciousness, powerfully influence public opinion and represent past or present communicative and creative experiences; thus, it can serve as a perfect medium to advertise domestic tourism.

The aim of the research was to determine the effective advertising layouts to be used in static outdoor domestic tourism advertisements. The research results will enable state governments, local municipalities or businesses to create effective outdoor advertisements, thus attracting more domestic tourists to their destinations.

This study fills the gap in business, marketing and tourism-related literature in several forms. Firstly, the importance of creative attributes used in advertising layout are determined. Knowing the relative importance of every single attribute will help the advertising creators allocate their efforts in the process of advertising creation by paying more attention to the elaboration of the most important attributes. Secondly, the utilities of each attribute level are calculated; this step will help advertising creators make trade-offs among the different kinds of levels. Therefore, this will provide a possibility to compose the advertisements using the most highly ranked attribute levels. Thirdly, this study provides the results of an eye-tracking experiment demonstrating the patterns of consumer gaze movements and attention allocation (according to Skorupa (2014), drawing consumers' attention is the main purpose of advertising) in the circumstances of different advertising layouts.

1 Theoretical background and hypotheses

Chansuk et al. (2022) define domestic tourism as “one of the tourism types characterized as tourism infrastructure that involves citizens of a single nation travelling within their own country”. Interest in domestic tourism has risen as a reaction to the restrictions of the COVID-19 pandemic (Arbulú et al., 2021) since in 2021 and 2022, local mobility was less restricted than international, and it has been identified as a potential strategy to mitigate the negative impacts of reduced tourism demand (Allan et al., 2022). During the COVID-19 pandemic, the tourism industry was one of the hardest-hit economic sectors (Grančay, 2020). As international tourism nearly stopped entirely, the domestic tourism market was found to be a field for recovery of not only the tourism sector but the overall economy (Wu et al., 2022).

Volgger et al. (2021) emphasized that in the framework of domestic tourism, research into the effectiveness of marketing variables, i.e., advertising message contents or product variations, is limited, while destination advertisements are often employed by marketers to attract tourists (Byun & Jang, 2015). In order to maximize destination advertising effectiveness, Jiang et al. (2020) suggested increasing its precision. Despite a growing interest in social media, and social networks in particular, found in brand management and marketing communications literature (Klepek, 2020), from the consumers' perspective, outdoor advertising can serve as an information provider, allowing them to make better decisions (Czajkowski et al., 2022).

Tourism advertising-related research based on the effects caused can be divided into two categories: behavioural aspects and cognitive aspects (Weng et al., 2021). Byun and Jang (2015) emphasized that destination advertising used by destination managers is an important information source for travellers. Different metrics for the measurement of the effectiveness of advertising can be used at different stages of consumer decision-making (Huang & Liu,

2022). The AIDA model, encompassing attention, interest, desire and action, has been applied by researchers and in marketing practice (Hassan et al., 2015). Based on this model, attention represents consumers who are attracted by the tourism advertisements (Weng et al., 2021). Advertising acts in a highly cluttered environment (Becker & Gijzenberg, 2023), and its capacity to attract and sustain consumer attention is a measure of key importance to success (Shen et al., 2020). However, the elaboration of consumer attention-grabbing advertisements, which evoke thoughts and stimulate ongoing discussions, is challenging (Efrat et al., 2021).

Chamblée and Sandler (1992) argued that “layouts represent the culmination of all the components that make up print advertisements”. Efrat et al. (2021) suggested using attention-related diagnostic metrics to assess advertising effectiveness because the longer a period of attention towards an object, the stronger the memory it evokes. As one of such diagnostic metrics, visual saliency is named in the scientific literature. Visual saliency can be defined as the ability of an advertisement to be noticed and to attract attention because of the elements of the layout used in it, e.g., colour, shading and compositional design (Wilson & Casper, 2016). Based on the previous research (Pilelienė & Grigaliūnaitė, 2016a, 2016b), it can be stated that advertising layout serves as an important predictor of advertising effectiveness. Mainly, in a framework of advertising layout, academic research has investigated how cognitive processing varies across visual versus verbal material (Lewis et al., 2013), i.e., how pictures versus words affect advertising effectiveness through recall, recognition and preference. In this study, the ability of advertising layout to capture consumers' attention is regarded as a main measure indicating advertising effectiveness.

Semantically, the image depicted in an advertisement (i.e., poster) describes the concept visually by providing a creative idea and reproducing reality in a visual form of art; it provides information about material or imaginary objects and phenomena (Pryshchenko, 2021). Various pictures can cause consumer emotional arousal (Baumgartner et al., 2006); moreover, when used in advertising, pictures may serve as confirmatory evidence for consumer choice (Hughes et al., 2003). In the tourism context, research regarding the relationship between advertising images and emotions and the subsequent effects on consumer attitudes towards the destination is limited (Septianto et al., 2021). However, images of tourist destinations play a vital role in travel choice because of the presented information about a destination and the ability to stimulate travel memories and consumer experiences (Robinson, 2014; Vu et al., 2023). On the other hand, many advertisements still look similar to one another because of the typical pictures used as a stimulus (Byun & Jang, 2015). Contrarily, different images can evoke different emotional responses and behavioural reactions (Septianto et al., 2021). Considering the latter, we hypothesize:

H1: A picture has an influence on the visual attractiveness of a domestic tourism advertisement.

The main purpose of the headline is to attract the most consumer attention. The headline is considered the most visible and evident textual part of an advertisement (Blakeman, 2011). Byun and Jang (2015) argued that distinguishing what locations are advertised is often hard without seeing destination titles. Previous research (Pilelienė et al., 2015, 2021) indicated a decline in consumer attention to an advertisement in a pattern similar to the letter Z (if the consumer comes from a right-direction reading culture). The following hypothesis regarding the headline position is made:

H2: Headline position has an influence on the visual attractiveness of a domestic tourism advertisement.

Advertising text performs the special function of attracting consumers' attention and leading them to purchase in a very short time (Huang & Liu, 2022). Advertising text is a product-related story suggesting the customer benefits to be sought and leading to the purchase (Blakeman, 2011). Verbal language, compared to the visual elements, is perceived more slowly as it is more complicated (Pryshchenko, 2019). Figurative advertising language positively affects attitudes towards a product (Kronrod & Danziger, 2013). Therefore, if the advertising text is too short, it may fail to convince consumers, and the principal benefits will not be noticed. On the contrary, if the advertising text is too long, it might bore consumers. Considering text as an important element of an advertisement, we hypothesize:

H3: Advertising text has an influence on the visual attractiveness of a domestic tourism advertisement.

Colour is the first thing that a customer notices in advertisements; therefore, the proper choice of colour makes the message more informative and effective. The effect of colour on consumer behaviour has been clearly demonstrated in the related literature (Barnes, 2022). White et al. (2021) emphasized that the effect of colour is one of the most important marketing factors encouraging product choice-related decisions. Pryshchenko (2021) argued that the audience is influenced by the decorative expressiveness of the colour scheme (in line with other creative elements, e.g., graphics). Certain colours may cause specific emotional responses and consumer perceptions, and groups of colours can evoke various emotional reactions and differently affect product-related decisions (White et al., 2021). Scientific evidence shows that different colour schemes have different effects on consumers: warm colours (e.g., red and yellow) stimulate consumers' active reactions, cool colours (e.g., green and blue) are calming and perceived passively, and finally, achromatic colours (white and black) are neutral (Patil, 2012). Based on the latter insights, we hypothesize:

H4: Colour scheme has an influence on the visual attractiveness of a domestic tourism advertisement.

2 Research methodology

In order to reach the aim of the study, i.e., to determine the effective advertising layouts – the research was made in two stages: (i) a conjoint analysis and (ii) an eye-tracking experiment. First, static outdoor advertisements were decomposed into their attributes and the levels of each attribute were determined. The importance of each attribute and the utilities of attribute levels were determined by applying the conjoint analysis method. Relying on the analysis results, four types of advertising layouts were composed: the most advantageous, the least advantageous, and two average layouts (one slightly more advantageous than the average and one slightly less advantageous than the average). Later, the four advertising layouts were applied in the eye-tracking experiment.

2.1 Conjoint analysis

To determine the importance of the creative attributes of advertising layout, the full profile conjoint analysis method was used. Conjoint analysis is a quantitative method used for studying how people trade off the importance of multiple attributes of an object and how

people respond to different object scenarios composed of varying levels of several attributes (Hu et al., 2022). It is an attractive and reliable method used by researchers to analyse consumer preferences for certain combinations of product features (Veith & Lianu, 2013). Applying conjoint analysis, companies can use the information gained to make precise predictions of consumers' preferences and thereby develop new offerings (e.g., products, services, layouts, etc.) that lead to a substantial rise in market share (Kessels et al., 2010). In the present case, the conjoint analysis was performed to generate possible compositions of advertising layout. The creative attributes of the advertising layout and levels of each attribute were determined by holding two focus group discussions: one discussion was held with advertising creators and the other with prospective domestic tourists. The attributes and attribute levels determined were listed as follows:

- Picture. Considering the relation to an advertised object (domestic tourism), four main picture versions were identified as the attribute levels: “people”, “architecture”, “heritage” and “nature”.
- Headline position. Based on the analysed theoretical insights, four attribute levels were established for the headline position: “upper-left”, “upper-right”, “lower-left” and “lower-right”.
- Text. Three attribute levels were named for this element: “long”, “short” and “none”.
- Colour scheme. Four attribute levels were established to describe the colour scheme of the advertisement: “warm”, “cool”, “mixed”, “black-and-white”.

Based on the principles of conjoint analysis, all possible combinations of identified attribute levels can be generated into 192 advertising layout variants (4×4×3×4), as shown in Table 1.

Table 1 | Attributes and attribute levels used for conjoint analysis

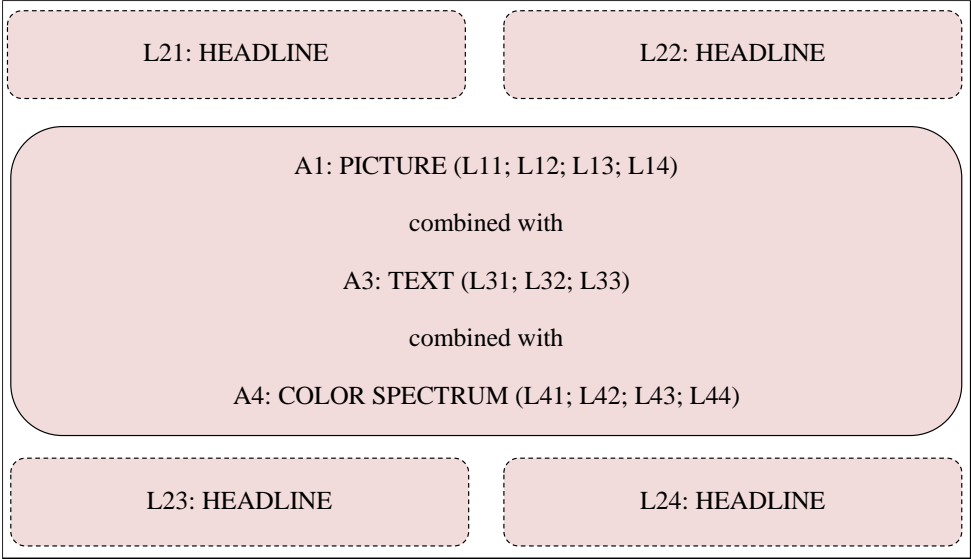
Attribute	Attribute levels	Number of levels
A1: Picture	L11: People	4
	L12: Architecture	
	L13: Heritage	
	L14: Nature	
A2: Position of headline	L21: Upper-left	4
	L22: Upper-right	
	L23: Lower-left	
	L24: Lower-right	
A3: Text	L31: Long	3
	L32: Short	
	L33: None	
A4: Colour scheme	L41: Warm	4
	L42: Cool	
	L43: Mixed	
	L44: Black-and-white	
Total: 4 attributes	192 combinations	15

Source: own elaboration

To simplify the ranking procedure for the participants, the “orthogonal design” function of IBM SPSS Statistics V.20 was used to reduce the number of profiles. Orthogonal design is a way to qualitatively analyse the correlations among the relevant variables at different levels by designing an orthogonal table and providing statistical analysis. It offers the ability to discover

the best combination of levels for different factors with a reasonably small number of experimental samples (Cai et al., 2022). The procedure resulted in a reduced number of domestic tourism advertising layouts: 16 possible versions of advertising layouts were generated. The generated layouts were depicted on concept cards. The system of advertisement layouts placed on concept cards is shown in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1 | Advertisement layout system



Source: own elaboration

The ranking of concept cards with different advertising layouts by respondents' priorities (from the most attractive to the least attractive) would help determine the relative importance of every single attribute and the utility of each level of the analysed creative attributes.

The research was done at Vytautas Magnus University (Kaunas, Lithuania). Respondents were citizens aged 25–45: 36 women and 19 men. The advertisement profiles (concept cards) were presented, and the ranking procedure was explained to each respondent individually. The aim of the research was not to create a representative sample (e.g., as in a polling exercise) but to grasp the people's general sentiment in a small timeframe (Papadima et al., 2020); a sample size larger than 30 participants is considered suitable for statistical analysis (Hu et al., 2022). According to Voges et al. (2022), the core of the conjoint analysis allows for the use of a smaller total number of respondents – around thirty to sixty.

2.2 Eye-tracking

Four different advertisements with four types of advertising layouts were composed based on the results of attribute level utility scores obtained through the conjoint analysis. Later, the advertisements were printed on separate papers based on the advertisement layout system (presented in Figure 1). The paper size used for all of the advertisements was A1 (594 x 841 mm). The printed advertisements were placed on a chosen wall on the street in the city centre of Kaunas (second most populous town in Lithuania). The order of the advertisements was

random. Participants were instructed to walk alongside the wall sightseeing; thus, they had the possibility to notice and see the advertisements.

Mobile video-based Tobii eye-tracking glasses, recording monocular gaze data from the right eye at a sampling rate of 30 Hz, 0.5° accuracy, 640x480 pixels resolution, max. recording angles: 56° horizontal and 40° vertical direction, were used for the experiment.

Bojko (2013) indicated that for eye-tracking experiment, when the same stimuli are shown to all the participants, the sufficient sample size is 20 participants; Pernice & Nielsen (2015) indicated that for reliable eye-tracking experiment, the sufficient sample size is around 30 participants. Thus, 30 participants (21 women and 9 men) took part in the experiment. The participants were Lithuanian citizens 25-45 years old. The necessary requirement for participation was being right-handed and having normal or normal-to-corrected vision. All the participants were asked to put on the glasses, and a standard nine-point calibration procedure was performed. Research participants were volunteers; no payment or reward was offered for taking part in the experiment. Detailed participation instructions were provided before the experiment and every participant signed a consent of participation.

To analyse the results of eye-tracking, Tobii Studio v.3.2.3 software was used. For the analysis, the measures of mean viewing time (s) and fixation count (number) regarding the specific advertisements and their attributes were calculated. The statistical analysis was performed using the IBM SPSS Statistics V.20 software package.

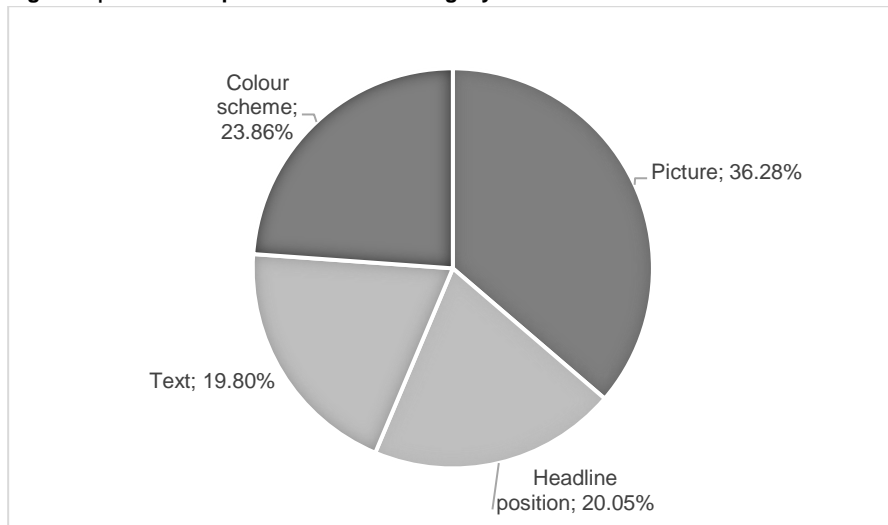
3 Research results

The conjoint analysis was carried out by applying the IBM SPSS Statistics V.20 for Windows software package. The relative importance of the advertising layout attributes and the scores of utility levels of each attribute were determined. All the attribute levels were statistically significant, indicating either a positive (the attribute level was preferred) or negative (the attribute level was evaded) impact on consumer choice (Zhang et al., 2021).

3.1 Attribute importance

The calculated relative importance of each analysed attribute of the advertising layout is shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2 | Relative importance of advertising layout attributes



Source: own elaboration

As depicted in Figure 2, the most important creative element of the advertisement was found to be the picture. This attribute determined 36.28% of consumer valuations; therefore, it can be stated that the choice of the correct picture is the most important in static advertising creation. The second important creative attribute of advertising layout was found to be the colour scheme of the advertisement. Almost 24% of the consumer priorities were based on this attribute. Both the most important creative attributes, picture and colour scheme, can be classified as visual elements of advertising layout.

Both attributes related to verbal elements, text and headline position, had a lower impact on consumer preference. The relative importance of both elements was close to 20%. Therefore, it can be argued that the latter attributes are important to consider in advertising creation; however, they deserve less attention than the visual ones, according to the results obtained through our conjoint analysis.

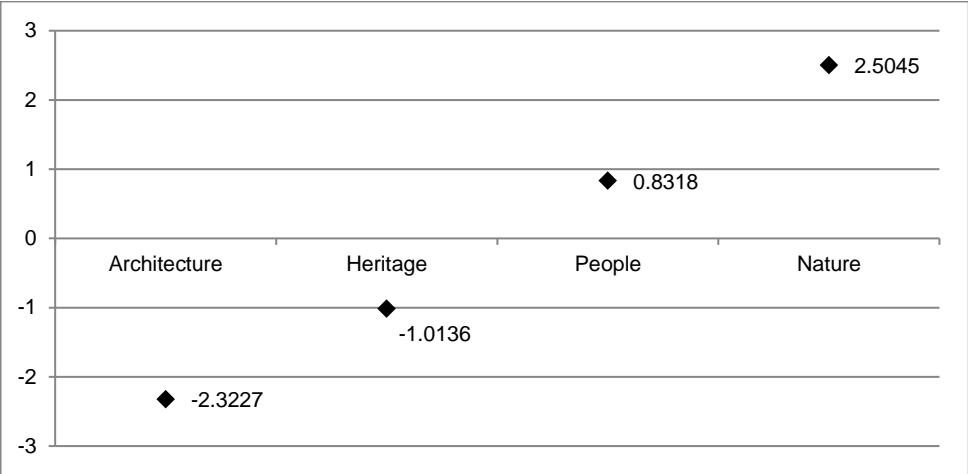
3.2 Attribute level utility scores

The relative importance of attributes indicates how much attention must be paid to a particular attribute by the creators of a product (in this case, advertising). However, every attribute can be decomposed into its utility levels, indicating the positive or negative effect of the level on consumers' valuations. Different combinations of the attribute utility levels can result in different product valuations. Moreover, using a level of one attribute with a high positive utility score can neutralize the use of a negatively evaluated level of another attribute. Therefore, knowing the utility scores of the attribute levels enables us to assess the utility of certain variations of product attributes. Part-worth utility (score values) represents the numerical scores that indicate how much each attribute level influences the customer's decision (Zhang et al., 2021).

As can be seen in Figure 3, the “picture” attribute was not only the most important creative attribute for customers making trade-offs between the different advertising layouts; the utility gap between the attribute levels was the highest and resulted in 4.8272 conditional utility points (2.5045 – (-2.3227)).

The research results indicate that the most expedient pictures to demonstrate for domestic tourists in the advertisement of a place are nature and people; on the other hand, heritage and architecture in the advertisements caused negative reactions (respectively: -1.0136 and -2.3227 conditional utility points).

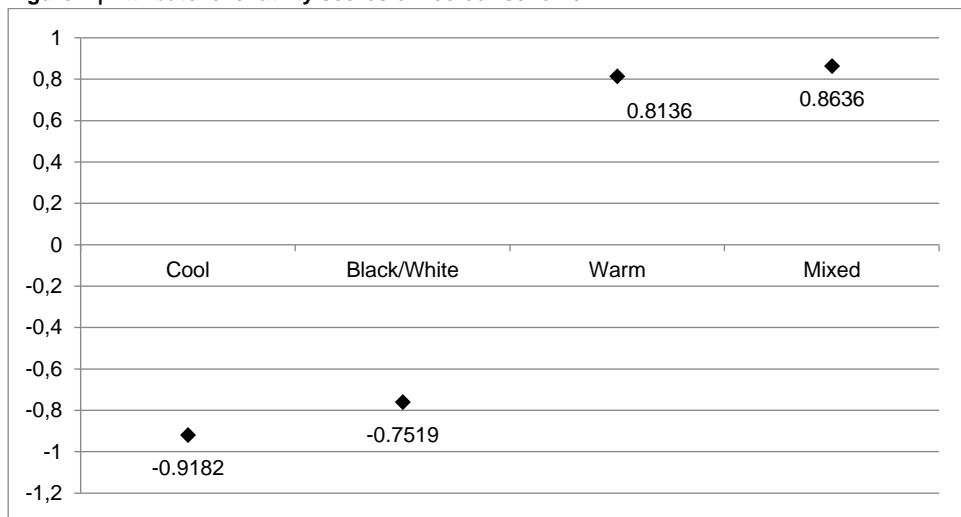
Figure 3 | Attribute level utility scores of “picture”



Source: own elaboration

The second largest utility gap (1.7818 conditional utility points) was found between the “colour scheme” attribute levels (see Figure 4). Therefore, it can be predicted that a combination of a heritage-representing picture (-1.0136 points) in a mixed colour scheme (0.8636 points) would result in a less negative combination than a heritage-representing picture in a cool (- 0.9182 points) or black-and-white (-0.7591 points) colour scheme.

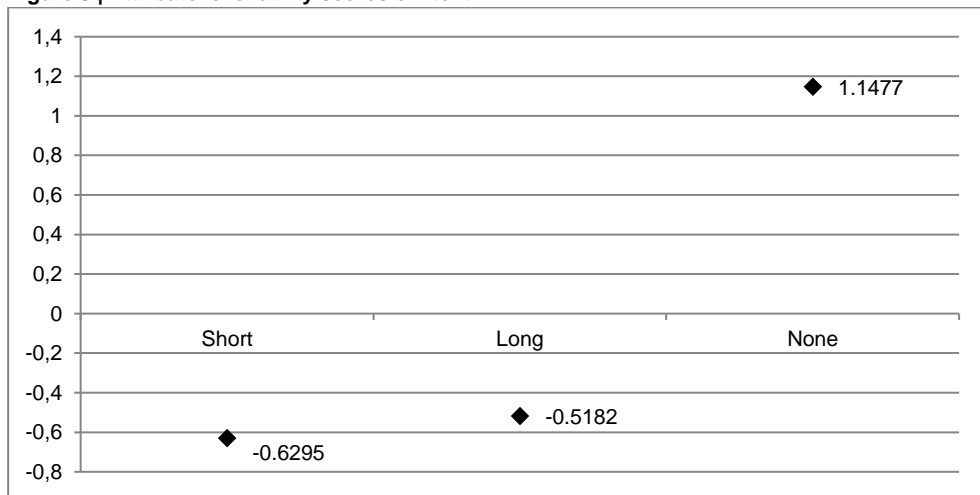
Figure 4 | Attribute level utility scores of “colour scheme”



Source: own elaboration

Considering the utility gaps between the levels of the textual elements of advertising, the more evident differences emerged in the “text” attribute – the utility gap between the most distant levels of the latter attribute emerged to be 1.7772 conditional utility points. Therefore, as the “text” attribute was found to be the least important element in advertising layout, proper attention must be paid to choosing its level. As can be observed in Figure 5, the most attractive and higher-ranked advertisements were those with no text (1.1477 conditional utility points). Moreover, short advertising text (-0.6295) was found to be even less attractive than long text (-0.5182). However, the utility difference between short and long advertising text was only 0.1113 conditional utility points.

Figure 5 | Attribute level utility scores of “text”



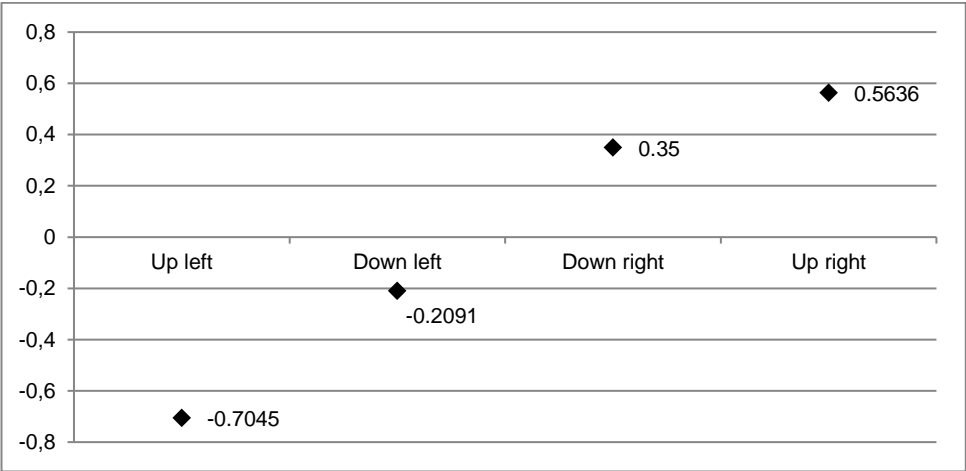
Source: own elaboration

Considering the combination of different attributes, it can be noticed that combinations of text (having negative utility) with a picture representing, e.g., people (0.8318 points) would result in a positive utility; i.e., 0.2023 conditional utility points in a version with a short advertising text and 0.3136 conditional utility points in a version with a long advertising text. Bearing in mind that in some cases, providing some amount of text in the advertisement is inevitable, based on the conjoint analysis results, its negative impact can be neutralized by using positively evaluated levels of other attributes. In this case, the negative effect of advertising text on consumer valuation can be neutralized by using warm or mixed colours in the picture. In this case, all the four possible attribute level combinations would result in a positive utility:

- short text combined with a warm-coloured picture: 0.1841 conditional utility points;
- short text combined with a mixed-coloured picture: 0.2341 conditional utility points;
- long text combined with a warm-coloured picture: 0.2954 conditional utility points;
- long text combined with a mixed-coloured picture: 0.3454 conditional utility points.

The lowest utility gap between attribute levels was obtained for the “headline position” attribute. As depicted in Figure 6, the difference between the two extremes resulted in 1.2681 conditional utility points.

Figure 6 | Attribute level utility scores of “headline position”



Source: own elaboration

The research results indicate that putting the headline on the left side of an advertisement makes it less attractive – the obtained utility of both left-related positions was negative. Moreover, the highest negative score was obtained by the upper left side (-0.7045 conditional utility points). If considering that all the research participants came from a right-direction reading culture, it can be assumed that they started watching advertisements based on the pattern of the letter Z, starting from the upper left corner. Therefore, the headline as a textual attribute having less importance than the visual one was seen first and regarded as a less attractive element in comparison to the visuals.

The negative utility of the upper-left headline position could be neutralized by combining it with:

- a picture representing people: 0.1273 conditional utility points;
- a picture with a warm colour scheme: 0.1091 conditional utility points;
- a picture with a mixed colour scheme: 0.1591 conditional utility points.

The negative utility of the lower-left headline position could be neutralized by combining it with:

- a picture representing people and with a short advertising text: (-0.0068) conditional utility points ($\rightarrow 0$);
- a picture representing people and with a long advertising text: 0.1045 conditional utility points;
- short text combined with a mixed-coloured picture: 0.025 conditional utility points;
- long text combined with a warm-coloured picture: 0.0863 conditional utility points;
- long text combined with a mixed-coloured picture: 0.1363 conditional utility points.

Considering the small but positive utility of the right-side positioned headlines, they could be used to neutralize the negative utilities of the other attribute levels. For example, the lower-right headline position in combination with a warm or mixed colour scheme could neutralize the negative utility of a heritage-presenting picture, resulting in 0.1500 or 0.2000 conditional utility points, respectively. Moreover, the combination of the upper-right headline position with the absence of text in an advertisement with a warm or mixed colour scheme could even neutralize the negative utility of architecture-representing pictures, resulting in 0.2022 or 0.2522 conditional utility points.

Many other positive combinations of attribute utility levels might be elaborated to neutralize negative utilities and enhance the positive ones. However, according to the research results, some general layout models can be elaborated. Based on the obtained utility scores, four types of advertising layouts, listed below, were composed for further research.

The most advantageous advertisement (highest attribute level utility scores):

- picture: nature,
- headline: upper-right.
- no text,
- mixed colours.

A more advantageous advertisement (second highest attribute level utility scores):

- picture: people,
- headline: lower-right,
- long text,

- warm colours.

A less advantageous advertisement (second lowest attribute level utility scores):

- picture: heritage,
- headline: lower-left,
- long text,
- colour scheme: black-and-white.

The least advantageous advertisement (lowest attribute level utility scores):

- picture: architecture,
- headline: upper-left,
- short text,
- cool colours.

The latter four advertising layouts were further used to provide an eye-tracking experiment.

3.3 Visual attention

The numbers of respondents who looked at the specific advertisements or their specific elements are presented in Table 2. As can be seen, the most, the least and the more advantageous advertisements were noticed by all of the participants.

Table 2 | Numbers of respondents who watched specific advertisements or their elements, N=30

Advertisement/element	Number of respondents who noticed
Most advantageous ad	30
Picture: nature	30
Headline: upper-right	11
Least advantageous ad	30
Picture: architecture	30
Headline: upper-left	17
Short text	13
More advantageous ad	30
Picture: people	30
Headline: lower-right	7
Long text	26
Less advantageous ad	26
Picture: heritage	26

Headline: lower-left	10
Long text	26

Source: own elaboration

Moreover, pictures of nature, architecture and people were noticed by all the participants as well. Nevertheless, the less advantageous advertisement and all the remaining creative elements of the advertisements were not noticed by all the respondents, implying that either they were too small, not attention-grabbing, not interesting or the placement of those elements was wrong.

The mean viewing times (s) of selected advertisements and fixation counts for them and their corresponding attributes are presented in Table 3. As can be seen, the fixation count corresponds to the mean viewing time.

Table 3 | Selected advertisements' mean viewing time (s), N = 30 (including zeros)

Advertisement/element	Mean viewing time (s)	SE	% of ad viewing time	Fixation count
Most advantageous ad	4.34	1.00	-	130.63
Picture: nature	1.84	0.25	42	56.10
Headline: upper-right	1.02	0.39	24	31.03
Least advantageous ad	6.49	1.16	-	195.43
Picture: architecture	3.87	0.64	59	116.70
Headline: upper-left	0.27	0.05	4	8.23
Short text	1.02	0.35	16	30.73
More advantageous ad	12.10	1.89	-	363.60
Picture: people	7.29	1.02	60	219.60
Headline: lower-right	0.06	0.03	0.4	1.67
Long text	2.28	0.74	19	68.57
Less advantageous ad	10.73	1.97	-	322.63
Picture: heritage	6.85	1.24	64	205.80
Headline: lower-left	0.04	0.02	0.3	1.13
Long text	3.16	0.55	29	95.33

Note: SE – standard error; ad – advertisement

Source: own elaboration

The longest viewing time was for the advertisement that was more advantageous; the second longest viewing time was for the advertisement that was less advantageous. The interesting point in these data is that the viewing time for the most advantageous advertisement was the shortest, while for the least advantageous advertisement it was the second shortest.

Nevertheless, the analysis of the viewing times for the specific attributes of the advertisements revealed that from all the elements, the picture attracts the most visual attention, thus substantiating the results obtained through the conjoint analysis and revealing that the picture is the most important attribute of the tourism advertisement. Moreover, the latter results revealed that the upper headline position attracted more visual attention than the lower one. Finally, non-surprisingly, longer text attracted more visual attention than shorter text, because of the reading time. When comparing differences in viewing times for the analysed advertisements, the results of the Friedman test revealed that there are statistically significant differences regarding viewing times for those advertisements (Table 4).

Table 4 | Friedman test

Ranks	
Advertisements	Mean rank
Most advantageous ad	1.50
Least advantageous ad	2.17
More advantageous ad	3.27
Less advantageous ad	3.07
Test statistics	
N	30
Chi-square	36.851
Df	3
p-value	0.000

Note: N – number of participants; ad – advertisement; Df – degree of freedom

Source: own elaboration

The Wilcoxon signed ranks test (Table 5) revealed no significant difference between viewing times for the less advantageous and the more advantageous advertisement.

Table 5 | Wilcoxon signed ranks test

Advertisements	Z	p-value
Least advantageous ad – most advantageous ad	-2.404	0.016*
More advantageous ad – most advantageous ad	-4.665	0.000*
Less advantageous ad – most advantageous ad	-4.583	0.000*
More advantageous ad – least advantageous ad	-3.862	0.000*
Less advantageous ad – least advantageous ad	-3.656	0.000*
Less advantageous ad – more advantageous ad	-1.081	0.280

Note: *p < 0.05; ad – advertisement

Source: own elaboration

Contrarily, there was a statistically significant difference in viewing times for the least advantageous and the most advantageous advertisement; the least advantageous advertisement attracted more visual attention than the most advantageous one did.

Moreover, the more advantageous and the less advantageous advertisement attracted statistically significantly more visual attention than the most advantageous one did; the more advantageous and the less advantageous advertisement attracted statistically significantly more visual attention than the least advantageous one did.

After analysing the research results, it can be declared that according to the analysed attributes, average advantageous advertising layouts attracted the most visual attention. Nevertheless, the analysis of the research results revealed that visual elements of tourism advertising layout are the most important in attracting consumer attention. When considering textual elements, it is important that the headline be placed in the upper position in order to attract consumer attention and the right position to make an advertisement more attractive.

Based on the research results, the hypothesis test results are shown below in Table 6.

Table 6 | Hypothesis test results

Hypothesis	Result
H1: A picture has an influence on the visual attractiveness of a domestic tourism advertisement	Supported
H2: Headline position has an influence on the visual attractiveness of a domestic tourism advertisement	Supported
H3: Advertising text has an influence on the visual attractiveness of a domestic tourism advertisement	Supported
H4: Colour scheme has an influence on the visual attractiveness of a domestic tourism advertisement	Supported

Source: own elaboration

As can be seen, all the hypotheses are accepted; thus, the variations of the four analysed elements are very important for the effectiveness of the advertisement.

4 Discussion

During the last thirty years, the number of days spent by tourists on holidays has decreased; moreover, tourists wish to experience something new and authentic (Dadić et al., 2022). Novelty and authenticity can be reflected in tourism advertisements. The study was designed to assess the effect of domestic tourism advertising layout on consumer visual attention. Attention was considered a significant measure of advertising effectiveness positively related to other behavioural outcomes sought by advertising (e.g., purchase intentions) (Efrat et al., 2021). Moreover, advertisements that cannot attract attention are deemed to be a waste of resources (Shen et al., 2020). Advertising may be regarded as a product of a culture with successfully implemented creative ideas. Based on the research results, it is now possible to state that, indeed, advertising layout has an effect on consumer visual attention to domestic tourism advertisements (Pryshchenko, 2021).

Before the research, we raised the question what tourism advertising layout would be the most eye-catching. This study contributed to enhancing the understanding of domestic tourism static outdoor advertising layout that can be the most eye-catching and effective. The results of this investigation showed that, first of all, visual elements of tourism advertising were the most important for attracting consumer attention compared to textual ones. The latter result substantiates the opinion of Pryshchenko (2019) that visual elements are perceived faster, more easily and more precisely compared to verbal ones. Also, the research results substantiate the evidence that the principal function of visual elements is to attract consumer attention (Cutler et al., 1992; Kim & Jang, 2019; Pieters & Wedel, 2004). Moreover, an interaction may occur between the stimulus (i.e., advertising), the emotion experienced and the level of perceived certainty (Septianto et al., 2021).

Consequently, it can be stated that when promoting tourism through advertising, those advertisements should be dominated by visual elements in order to attract consumer attention. The research results substantiated the insight provided by Perry & Wisnom (2002) that consumer reaction to colours is fast, and colour mixing is used in advertising to attract consumer attention. Moreover, carefully used colours enable differentiating products from competing ones and influence consumer attitudes towards brands (White et al., 2021). Barnes (2022) argues that the principal elements of the tourism experience are physical and social. Thus, the visual elements should contain pictures of people (social element) or nature (physical element) and should use a warm/mixed colour scheme for the best results when reaching for advertising effectiveness. However, the effects of a particular visual advertising element may be different depending on an individual's response to visual (vs. verbal) elements and/or the consumer's ability to generate vivid mental images (Patrick & Hagtvedt, 2011).

The obtained results indicate that if a headline is used in advertising, it should be placed in the upper positions of the advertisement in order to capture consumer attention. Otherwise, there exists a high possibility for the headline to remain overlooked by consumers. Finally, long text in tourism advertising is preferred to short text. The present study found the absence of text to be most attractive for participants. The study by Kim and Jang (2019) revealed that for those having less familiarity with an object, text-dominant advertisements accompanied by a detailed description were more persuasive.

Conclusion

The present study should be particularly valuable to state governments, local municipalities or businesses to create effective static outdoor advertisements, thus attracting more domestic tourists to their destinations. Moreover, the findings of the study can serve as a contribution to the current literature: firstly, the effectiveness of different combinations of visual and textual elements or advertising layouts regarding tourism advertising was analysed; and secondly, an objective eye-tracking research methodology was applied to analyse different tourism advertising layout elements and their impact on consumer visual attention.

The research was done in a framework of static outdoor advertising. After analysing the results obtained during the study, several conclusions can be made. Visual elements of tourism advertisements play a more significant role in attracting consumer visual attention compared to textual ones. However, even if advertising text is the least important factor for consumers while ranking advertisement attractiveness, it can reduce the valuation of an advertisement. Based on the results of the conjoint analysis, it can be concluded that advertising creators should avoid using text in tourism advertising. Moreover, in cases when using advertising text is inevitable, long texts are more effective than short ones in terms of visual attention-grabbing.

Advertising images are the most powerful attention grabbers; however, if aiming to evoke positive consumer evaluation, it is suggested to use images of nature or people. Images depicting architecture and heritage are also effective in terms of attracting consumer visual attention; however, such kinds of visuals might affect consumer valuation of an advertisement negatively.

The colour scheme was considered an important factor for consumers while ranking advertisements based on their attractiveness. The research results imply that mixed or warm colours used in outdoor advertising for domestic tourism are more effective. Finally, if considering a headline for an advertisement, to catch the most visual attention, it is suggested to use the upper-right position.

For further research, it can be suggested to analyse the effect of different creative elements of advertising. Also, more levels of the same creative attributes might be included, e.g., headline and text typeface, different colour tones, shades and saturation, also different types of compositions and colour mixing schemes. Moreover, other advertising media might be chosen.

Further limitations of the study can be envisioned in the sample size (Zhou et al., 2022). The research was limited to the Lithuanian perspective; therefore, its replication in other countries would benefit by providing different insights into consumer perception and the elements of visual attraction. Furthermore, the results obtained by Jiang et al. (2020) indicated that the congruency between advertising messages and characteristics of tourist segments is a critical determinant of the effectiveness of tourism advertisements. In this regard, the research can be replicated in the frameworks of different tourist segments. Moreover, the shift of emphasis from domestic to outbound or other types of tourism might broaden the researchers' understanding of the scope.

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