INNOVATIVE VISUAL COMMUNICATION SOLUTIONS FOR URBAN ENVIRONMENTS: ENHANCING STREET-LEVEL COMMUNICATION, URBAN AESTHETICS, AND INFORMATION CLARITY

BY

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DECLARATION BY STUDENT – DISSERTATION

I hereby declare that this research is a result of my own original research and that, no part of it has been presented for another degree in this university or any other higher education institute. I further declare that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

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DECLARATION BY SUPERVISOR

This Project Work has been prepared and presented under my supervision according to the guidelines for supervision and formatting of Project Work laid down by the Institute of Journalism under the University of Media, Arts and Communication (UniMAC-IJ)

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Supervisor **Signature** **Date**

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to all children with special needs in Ghana.

It is my hope that through improved urban planning and innovative visual communication solutions, we can create environments that empower the marginalized to navigate their surroundings with ease, especially during times of emergencies. May this work contribute to building a more inclusive and accessible future for all.

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TABLE OF CONTENT

ABSTRACT

Effective visual communication is critical for navigating urban spaces, especially in areas characterized by spatial disorder, congestion, and the proliferation of informal commercial activities. This study investigates innovative visual communication solutions aimed at improving street-level communication for public and private commercial needs, enhancing urban aesthetics, and decluttering the visual field to increase the clarity and impact of information. The research is grounded in the context of Madina, a vibrant commercial hub in Ghana, where the absence of clear directional signage, poorly organized market spaces, and limited access to public information systems present significant challenges to both residents and visitors. A qualitative research approach was adopted, utilizing semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders, including commuters and vendors. Thematic analysis was employed to identify core issues and potential solutions related to urban navigation, access to essential services, and public information delivery. Key findings revealed that the lack of clear and visible signage hindered access to critical services such as hospitals, police stations, and fire stations, especially for first-time visitors. Additionally, informal market structures and congested pathways further complicated navigation, while the absence of centralized information hubs led to reliance on verbal directions, which were often inconsistent and unreliable. The study highlights the transformative potential of visual communication tools, with respondents advocating for bold, durable, and strategically placed signage at key locations such as transport hubs, markets, and public facilities. Participants also recommended organizing markets into product-based zones with clear signage and maps to simplify navigation and enhance the shopping experience. The role of technology was equally emphasized, with respondents suggesting the integration of physical signage with digital navigation tools like mobile apps and interactive maps. However, challenges related to digital literacy and the reliability of map data were noted, underscoring the need for hybrid solutions that combine physical and digital tools. To address these challenges, the study recommends five key actions. First, install durable, weather-resistant signage at strategic locations to improve street-level communication for both public and commercial use. Second, reorganize market spaces into product-based zones with clear markers to enhance spatial order and reduce congestion. Third, develop hybrid communication solutions that integrate digital tools with physical signage to support diverse user needs. Fourth, declutter the visual environment by removing redundant or obstructive elements, thereby improving the visibility and impact of essential information. Lastly, engage the community in participatory urban planning to ensure the sustainability of visual communication solutions and foster collective responsibility for maintaining public infrastructure.

Keywords: Urban aesthetics, Urban Navigation, Street-Level communication, Sustainable urban design, Directional signs, urban accessibility, Market space organization, Public information clarity, Visual obstruction, Sustainable urban design

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

VC – Visual Communication

UD – Urban Design

UP – Urban Planning

UE – Urban Environment

DS – Directional Signage

PIS – Public Information Systems

ET – Emergency Response Time

CUH – Centralized Urban Hub

NMT – Non-Motorized Transport

IP – Infrastructure Planning

UR – Urban Renewal

LS – Law Enforcement Strategies

IS – Informal Structures

SP – Spatial Planning

TP – Transport Planning

CI – Community Involvement

TNI – Technological Navigation Integration

PID – Participatory Inclusive Design

GPS - Global Positioning System

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of the topic, specifically finding innovative visual communication solutions for urban environments: enhancing street-level communication, urban aesthetics, and information clarity in Accra. The chapter delves into the study's background and formulates a problem statement to determine the research's necessity and relevance to both national development and academic pursuits. This chapter also explains the research objectives and questions, which will serve as a guide to the findings.

1.1 Background of the study

In contemporary urban environments, the role of street-level visual communication is increasingly critical, serving as a bridge between public information needs, commercial promotion, and urban aesthetics. The municipality of La-Nkwantanang Madina in Ghana offers a unique case study for exploring the transformative potential of innovative visual communication solutions. This urban municipality, which is over 80% developed, represents a vibrant intersection of traditional livelihoods and rapid urbanization, characterized by the proliferation of housing and commercial properties. The coexistence of traditional and modern developments presents both challenges and opportunities for creating functional and visually coherent urban spaces.

Madina is home to one of the largest markets in the region, making it a bustling hub for commerce and residential activities that cater to diverse socioeconomic groups. This dynamic urban environment necessitates effective visual communication systems that ease navigation, enhance urban aesthetics, and improve the clarity of public and commercial information. However,

challenges such as inadequate directional signage, cluttered visual fields, and poorly organized spatial arrangements impede accessibility and functionality. Addressing these issues through innovative and sustainable solutions is central to this research.

The rapid urbanization in La-Nkwantanang Madina has led to a proliferation of advertising signs and street-level communication mediums, often positioned without adequate consideration for their impact on urban aesthetics, navigation, or public safety. Poorly planned signage contributes to visual clutter, obstructs critical road and directional signs, and reduces the effectiveness of public information systems. For instance, billboards and advertising boards frequently encroach upon key urban spaces, creating confusion for pedestrians and drivers alike. This visual disorganization not only affects the efficiency of navigation but also undermines the visual appeal of the urban environment.

The impact of visual communication solutions extends beyond aesthetics. Studies suggest that poorly designed or misplaced signage can increase cognitive load for road users, contributing to higher reaction times and a greater likelihood of accidents. Cognitive Load Theory (Sweller, 1988) explains that excessive stimuli from an overload of visual information diminishes the brain's ability to process relevant tasks effectively. In high-traffic areas like Madina's market zones, this challenge is amplified as drivers and pedestrians are inundated with competing visual cues. Innovative visual communication solutions, therefore, must prioritize clarity, intuitive design, and strategic placement to reduce these risks while enhancing user experience.

Moreover, Madina's diverse user base, encompassing traditional communities, contemporary housing developments, and commercial enterprises, requires inclusive and context-sensitive communication strategies. This research emphasizes the integration of technological tools, such as

interactive digital displays, geospatial mapping, and augmented reality, to create adaptive systems tailored to the unique needs of Madina's urban landscape. For instance, incorporating smart directional signage and interactive wayfinding tools can transform the navigational experience for residents and visitors, improving accessibility and fostering a sense of community.

Sustainable urban design is another core focus of this study. Community-based approaches that involve local stakeholders in the design and implementation of visual communication systems are critical for ensuring long-term functionality and acceptance. By addressing challenges such as obstructive and outdated signage, this research seeks to propose innovative strategies for decluttering the visual field, enhancing information clarity, and elevating the overall aesthetic appeal of Madina.

Drawing on global studies, such as the correlation between billboard density and accident rates (Beijer et al., 2004), and the successes of stringent roadside advertising regulations in Europe (Smiley et al., 2004), this study aims to develop localized solutions that resonate with Madina's unique urban fabric. The overarching goal is to explore and implement visual communication strategies that not only meet public and private commercial needs but also create a visually harmonious and functionally efficient urban environment.

1.2 Problem Statement

Urban environments are important places for economic activity, cultural expression, and social interaction, yet they often face challenges related to navigation, accessibility, and visual appeal. In La-Nkwantanang Madina, located in the Greater Accra Region of Ghana, ineffective visual communication systems, such as inadequate directional signage, poorly organized markets, and congested transport hubs, significantly impede urban functionality. Stakeholders and residents

alike report challenges in locating shops, public amenities, and transport hubs due to obscured, outdated, or absent signage systems(Adjei et al., 2019). Furthermore, congestion exacerbates the problem, obstructing pathways and reducing the clarity of information, thus detracting from urban aesthetics and diminishing the overall user experience (Oteng-Ababio, 2020).

While digital navigation tools like Google Maps offer partial solutions, their adoption remains uneven due to digital illiteracy and structural limitations such as narrow roads and scattered amenities. These issues reveal the necessity for an integrated approach that combines innovative visual communication solutions with urban planning improvements. Aesthetic enhancements, market segmentation, and reliable physical signage are essential to ensure equitable access to public spaces and foster a cohesive urban identity (Mensah & Oppong, 2020)

Despite the recognition of these challenges, there remains a significant gap in the implementation of sustainable, community-driven visual communication strategies tailored to the unique socio-economic and infrastructural realities of Madina. Addressing these challenges through participatory urban planning and durable communication solutions could transform Madina into a more accessible, navigable, and visually appealing urban space.

Furthermore, this research will delve into various ways of making public spaces accessible and easily identified by commuters and the general public. Understanding the challenges the public including road users perceive in locating public spaces and public information, these provides valuable insights into the effectiveness of current educational and regulatory measures.

1.3 Research Aim

To explore and develop innovative visual communication solutions that eases navigation, improves urban aesthetics, and information clarity in urban environments, focusing on addressing

challenges such as inadequate directional signage, obstruction, and poor spatial organization of Madina, while integrating technological tools and community based approaches for sustainable urban accessibility and functionality.

1.4 Research Objectives

1. To suggest a better and innovative visual communication solutions for street level communication for public and private commercial needs.
2. To suggest better and innovative solutions for urban aesthetic and public information needs.
3. To declutter the visual field to enhance information clarity, visual impact of information.

1.5 Research Questions

1. What innovative visual communication solutions can be developed to improve street-level communication for public and private commercial needs?
2. How can better and more innovative solutions be designed to meet urban aesthetic and public information needs?
3. What strategies can be employed to declutter the visual field and enhance the clarity and visual impact of information in urban spaces?

1.6 Significance of the Study

Firstly, the findings of this research will contribute to the understanding of the challenges commuters go through in locating public spaces like hospitals, fire stations, lorry stations, business ,public offices) in La-Nkwantanang Madina and accessing public information.

Also, the findings will inform policy-makers and other stakeholders in the planning of urban cities the appropriate technologies to use in providing innovative visual communication solutions for urban environments while enhancing street-level communication, urban aesthetics, and information clarity.

Furthermore, the study's findings can inform policy-making and urban planning initiatives aimed at optimizing directional signage systems for easy navigation and beautifying the urban cities.

1.7 Organization of the study

Essentially the study will be organized into five chapters. Chapter one provides an overview of the background, problem statement, research objectives, and research questions; the study's significance; and its scope and organization. Chapter two delves into the applicable theories, examining them from both a positive inquiry and analysis perspective, and provides insights into some related empirical works. Chapter three covers the research design, study population, sampling techniques, data collection methods, and data analysis methods. Chapter four will present the results and discuss the study's findings with relevant theories. Finally, Chapter 5 will draw conclusions and make recommendations.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter on Literature Review and Theoretical Framework explores innovative visual communication solutions in shaping urban environments, with a particular focus on enhancing street-level communication, urban aesthetics, and information clarity. Using La-Nkwantanang Madina as a case study, the chapter delves into the evolution of visual communication mediums, tracing their progression from traditional static billboards to dynamic digital displays and interactive technologies. By exploring both historical and contemporary developments, the chapter highlights how these advancements transform the urban landscape and influence public interaction.

The discussion is grounded in two key theoretical perspectives: Technological Determinism and Diffusion of Innovations Theory. These frameworks provide critical insights into how emerging communication technologies not only redefine societal behaviors and cultural norms but also enhance the functionality and appeal of public spaces. Through this lens, the chapter establishes a nuanced understanding of how innovative visual communication strategies can contribute to more cohesive, aesthetically pleasing, and functionally effective urban environments, particularly within the context of La-Nkwantanang Madina's unique socio-cultural dynamics.

2.1 Empirical Review

In the rapidly evolving landscape of urban communication, street-level visual communication technologies play a crucial role in disseminating information to the public. These technologies, which encompass digital billboards, electronic signage, and interactive displays, have undergone significant advancements in recent years. This empirical review explores potential changes and trends in street-level visual communication technologies, drawing on recent studies and technological developments.

Historically, street-level visual communication relied heavily on static billboards and posters. However, with the advent of digital technologies, there has been a shift towards more dynamic and interactive forms of communication. A study conducted in New York City by Smith (2020) employed a historical analysis approach to trace this evolution. The general objective was to understand the shift from static to dynamic communication methods, concluding that digital billboards and LED displays have become commonplace, offering high visibility and real-time content updates.

Digital signage has revolutionized street-level visual communication by providing more engaging and flexible ways to reach the public. Brown and Green (2021) conducted their study in Los Angeles, using observational and survey methods to assess the effectiveness of digital signs compared to traditional static signs. The study aimed to determine how digital signage impacts public attention, finding that digital signs are significantly more effective at capturing attention due to motion graphics, bright colors, and real-time updates.

Interactive displays represent the next frontier in street-level visual communication. Johnson et al. (2022) performed a mixed-methods study in Tokyo, incorporating both user interviews and interaction logs to measure engagement levels with interactive displays. The general objective was

to evaluate the impact of interactivity on user engagement and information retention, concluding that interactive displays significantly enhance both.

The integration of street-level visual communication with mobile technologies is another emerging trend. Garcia (2023) conducted a case study in Barcelona, employing qualitative interviews and technology usage analytics. The objective was to explore how technologies like QR codes, NFC tags, and Bluetooth beacons connect physical displays with mobile devices. The study concluded that such integration enhances the effectiveness of street-level visual communication by providing additional information and interactive experiences.

As cities strive to become more sustainable, the energy efficiency of street-level visual communication technologies has become a critical concern. Williams and Thompson (2021) conducted their research in Berlin, using a combination of energy consumption measurements and lifecycle analysis. The objective was to assess the sustainability of new LED and solar-powered displays. The study found that these technologies not only consume less power but also have longer lifespans, reducing environmental impact and maintenance costs.

The concept of smart cities has brought about a significant transformation in street-level visual communication. Miller (2022) conducted a longitudinal study in Singapore, using IoT data analytics and urban planning surveys. The objective was to examine how integrating IoT technologies with digital signage can enhance real-time data delivery and targeted messaging. The study concluded that IoT integration allows for adaptive content that responds to real-time conditions, such as pedestrian presence.

Augmented Reality (AR) is poised to further revolutionize street-level visual communication. Harris et al. (2023) conducted an experimental study in London, using AR applications in public spaces and measuring user engagement through eye-tracking and interaction metrics. The

objective was to assess the impact of AR on user engagement and information delivery. The study concluded that AR significantly increases engagement and provides valuable contextual information.

Despite the promising advancements, there are challenges associated with deploying advanced street-level visual communication technologies. Jones and Lee (2021) conducted a survey-based study in Chicago to identify these challenges. The general objective was to highlight the barriers to the widespread adoption of new technologies. The study concluded that high initial costs, technological obsolescence, and privacy concerns are major obstacles.

The deployment of street-level visual communication technologies is subject to various regulatory and policy frameworks. Clark (2022) conducted a policy analysis study in Sydney, examining municipal regulations and their impact on digital signage deployment. The objective was to understand how regulatory frameworks can balance benefits and potential issues like visual clutter and light pollution. The study concluded that effective regulation is crucial for responsible use and positive urban contributions.

Several cities around the world have successfully implemented advanced street-level visual communication technologies. Kim (2022) conducted comparative case studies in Tokyo's Shibuya Crossing and New York's Times Square. The objective was to identify best practices and potential pitfalls in digital signage implementation. The study concluded that strategic placement and content management are key to success.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is increasingly used to manage and optimize content displayed on digital signage. Liu and Wang (2023) conducted an AI-focused study in Seoul, using machine learning algorithms to analyze content engagement data. The objective was to determine how AI can enhance content relevance and engagement. The study concluded that AI algorithms

significantly improve the effectiveness of street-level visual communication through dynamic content management.

Public perception and acceptance are crucial for the success of new street-level visual communication technologies. Smith et al. (2021) conducted a public opinion survey in San Francisco to gauge public attitudes toward digital signage. The objective was to understand the factors influencing acceptance and concerns. The study concluded that while there is enthusiasm for digital and interactive displays, privacy and intrusiveness are significant concerns that need to be addressed.

Several trends are likely to shape the future of street-level visual communication. Martinez (2023) conducted a forward-looking study in Amsterdam, using trend analysis and expert interviews. The objective was to identify and predict future developments, such as holographic displays and personalized content through AI. The study concluded that these emerging technologies will continue to push the boundaries of urban communication.

The market for street-level visual communication technologies is experiencing robust growth. Adams and Brown (2022) conducted an economic impact study in Los Angeles, using market analysis and financial modeling. The objective was to evaluate the economic benefits of investing in digital signage. The study concluded that investments in these technologies can yield significant returns, especially in urban areas with high foot traffic.

Beyond advertising, street-level visual communication technologies have important educational and informational applications. Green (2021) conducted a mixed-methods study in Paris, using both observational techniques and user feedback surveys to explore these applications. The objective was to identify how digital and interactive displays can be used for public education and

information. The study concluded that these technologies are effective for providing real-time information and enhancing public awareness.

Ensuring that street-level visual communication technologies are accessible to all individuals, including those with disabilities, is critical. Nguyen et al. (2023) conducted an accessibility study in Toronto, using usability testing with diverse user groups. The objective was to assess the inclusivity of current digital signage technologies. The study concluded that incorporating features like voice-activated controls and high-contrast displays can significantly improve accessibility.

Research into the psychological and behavioral impacts of street-level visual communication is an emerging field. Robinson and Hall (2022) conducted a psychological impact study in Melbourne, using behavioral observation and psychological surveys. The objective was to understand how the design and content of digital signage influence pedestrian behavior and mood. The study concluded that well-designed signage can positively affect pedestrian behavior and mood.

Ongoing research and development are driving continuous innovation in street-level visual communication technologies. Tanaka (2022) conducted a technology development study in Tokyo, focusing on the latest innovations in display technology. The objective was to explore advancements such as flexible and transparent displays and improvements in display resolution and brightness. The study concluded that these innovations expand the possibilities for more dynamic and engaging urban communication.

2.2 Review of Related Issues and Concepts

2.2.1 Digital Displays in Street-level visual communication

Digital displays have become a cornerstone of street-level visual communication, revolutionizing how information are presented in urban environments. These technologies offer dynamic content capabilities, real-time updates, and interactive features, making them highly effective for engaging

audiences. As urban spaces evolve, so do the technologies that facilitate street-level visual communication.

The technology behind digital displays has seen significant advancements, particularly in terms of resolution, brightness, and durability. High-resolution LED and OLED screens provide sharp, vibrant images that capture the attention of passersby. According to Smith and Jones (2021), the development of micro-LED technology promises even higher resolutions and energy efficiency, potentially transforming the quality and impact of digital displays. These advancements allow for more detailed and engaging content, enhancing the overall effectiveness of street-level visual communication.

As environmental sustainability becomes increasingly important, the energy consumption of digital displays is a critical consideration. Modern displays are being designed with energy efficiency in mind, utilizing technologies such as low-energy LEDs and solar power. GreenTech (2023) notes that integrating renewable energy sources can significantly reduce the carbon footprint of these installations. Future developments are likely to focus on enhancing the energy efficiency of digital displays further, making them more sustainable options for urban communication.

Interactivity is a major trend in digital displays, with technologies such as touchscreens, motion sensors, and augmented reality (AR) creating more engaging user experiences. Interactive digital displays allow users to engage directly with content, whether for information retrieval, entertainment, or advertising purposes. Johnson and Lee (2020) highlight that interactive kiosks and screens are becoming more common in urban areas, offering services that range from wayfinding to interactive advertisements. This trend is expected to continue, with future displays incorporating even more sophisticated interactive features.

The integration of digital displays with smart city infrastructure is another significant development. Smart cities utilize Internet of Things (IoT) technologies to connect various urban systems, improving efficiency and quality of life. Smart digital displays can provide real-time information, such as directions, traffic updates or emergency alerts, and can be updated remotely based on real-time data. Miller and Davis (2022) suggest that this integration will enhance the relevance and utility of street-level visual communication, making it an integral part of urban movement and management systems.

With the increasing sophistication of digital displays and their integration with data analytics, concerns about data privacy and security are becoming more pronounced. Digital displays that collect user data for personalized content and targeted advertising must adhere to stringent data protection regulations. Anderson (2021) emphasizes that ensuring data privacy and security is essential to maintaining public trust and compliance with laws such as GDPR and CCPA. Future developments in digital display technology will need to prioritize robust data protection measures to address these concerns

2.2.2 AR in Street-level visual communication

Augmented Reality (AR) is rapidly transforming the landscape of street-level visual communication. AR overlays digital information onto the physical world, creating an interactive and immersive experience for users. This technology is being increasingly utilized in urban environments to enhance advertising, wayfinding, and public engagement. According to Brown et al. (2022), AR's ability to blend the digital and physical realms offers unique opportunities for dynamic and personalized content delivery in public spaces.

AR significantly enhances user engagement by providing interactive and visually appealing content. Traditional static billboards and signs are being replaced or supplemented with AR

experiences that users can access through their smartphones or AR glasses. For example, a static poster can come to life with animations and interactive elements when viewed through an AR app. This interactivity not only captures attention but also encourages user participation, making the advertising experience more memorable (Smith & Jones, 2021).

The advertising industry is one of the primary beneficiaries of AR technology. AR allows advertisers to create immersive campaigns that can attract and retain consumer attention more effectively than traditional methods. According to Patel (2023), AR advertisements can provide a more engaging and personalized experience, leading to higher engagement rates and better conversion metrics. For instance, a pedestrian might scan an AR-enabled poster to see a product demonstration or to access exclusive promotional content.

Beyond advertising, AR is revolutionizing urban navigation and wayfinding. AR can provide real-time information and directions overlaid on the user's view of the city, enhancing the ease and efficiency of navigating urban spaces. Research by Miller and Davis (2022) shows that AR wayfinding solutions can significantly improve the user experience, particularly for tourists and new residents. These applications can highlight points of interest, provide historical context, and offer interactive guides, making urban exploration more intuitive and enjoyable.

Despite its potential, AR in street-level visual communication faces several challenges. One major concern is the digital divide; not all users have access to the latest AR-enabled devices, which can limit the reach of AR campaigns. Additionally, there are privacy concerns related to the collection and use of data to personalize AR experiences. Anderson (2021) emphasizes the need for robust data protection measures to ensure user privacy and build public trust in AR applications. Regulatory frameworks will need to evolve to address these issues effectively.

The future of AR in street-level visual communication looks promising, with continuous advancements in AR technology and increasing adoption rates. Future developments might include more seamless integration with smart city infrastructure and the use of advanced AI to enhance AR content personalization and interactivity. Williams (2024) predicts that AR will become a standard feature in urban environments, providing residents and visitors with a rich and engaging layer of digital information that enhances their interaction with the cityscape

2.2.3 Interactive Media in Street-level visual communication

Interactive media technologies are significantly transforming street-level visual communication by increasing user engagement and interaction. Touchscreens, motion sensors, and voice-activated systems allow pedestrians to interact directly with advertisements and information displays. According to Johnson and Lee (2020), these interactive elements create a more engaging user experience, encouraging active participation rather than passive observation. This shift towards interactive media makes advertisements and public information more memorable and effective, thereby increasing their impact.

One of the key benefits of interactive media in street-level visual communication is the ability to collect valuable user data. When users engage with interactive displays, their interactions can be tracked and analyzed to understand behavior patterns and preferences. This data allows for highly personalized content delivery, enhancing the relevance and effectiveness of the communication. Patel (2023) notes that personalized advertising, driven by data analytics, significantly boosts engagement and conversion rates, making it a powerful tool for marketers.

Interactive media also enables real-time updates and dynamic content, which are crucial for maintaining the relevance of street-level visual communication. Digital displays integrated with interactive features can be updated instantly to reflect current events, weather conditions, or time-

specific promotions. Smith and Jones (2021) highlight that this capability ensures that the content remains timely and contextually appropriate, enhancing its utility and appeal to the public.

Despite the benefits, the adoption of interactive media in street-level visual communication raises significant concerns regarding data privacy and security. The collection and use of personal data for targeted advertising and personalized content necessitate robust data protection measures to prevent misuse and ensure user trust. Anderson (2021) emphasizes that adherence to data protection regulations, such as GDPR and CCPA, is critical to addressing these concerns and maintaining public confidence in interactive media technologies.

The integration of interactive media with smart city infrastructure presents a promising avenue for the future of street-level visual communication. Smart cities leverage IoT technologies to connect various urban systems, enhancing efficiency and providing comprehensive public services. Miller and Davis (2022) suggest that interactive media can serve as an interface for these smart systems, offering real-time information such as traffic updates, emergency alerts, and public service announcements, thereby increasing their value and functionality.

Looking ahead, advancements in AI and machine learning are expected to further enhance the capabilities of interactive media in street-level visual communication. Future innovations may include more sophisticated user interfaces, personalized content algorithms, and seamless integration with other digital services. However, as Taylor (2022) points out, these developments must be balanced with ethical considerations to prevent issues such as visual clutter, advertising overload, and the potential exploitation of user data. Ensuring ethical practices will be essential to the sustainable and responsible evolution of interactive media technologies.

2.2.4 Smart City Integration and Street-level visual communication

Smart city integration involves the use of advanced technologies to enhance the efficiency, sustainability, and livability of urban environments. This integration connects various urban systems, including transportation, energy, and communication networks, through the Internet of Things (IoT). As cities become smarter, street-level visual communication technologies are evolving to leverage these advancements, creating more dynamic and interactive public spaces. According to Miller and Davis (2022), the integration of visual communication technologies with smart city infrastructure can significantly improve the dissemination of information and public engagement.

One of the primary benefits of integrating street-level visual communication with smart city technologies is the ability to provide real-time information to the public. Smart billboards and digital displays can be linked to city data systems to show current traffic conditions, weather updates, and emergency alerts. This capability enhances the relevance and timeliness of the information presented, making it more useful for city dwellers. Research by Smith and Jones (2021) indicates that such real-time updates can improve urban mobility and safety by keeping residents informed about their surroundings.

Smart city technologies also enable more interactive forms of street-level visual communication. For example, digital kiosks equipped with touchscreens and motion sensors allow users to access information, navigate city services, and even provide feedback to municipal authorities. This interactivity fosters greater public engagement and participation in urban governance. Johnson and Lee (2020) suggest that interactive media in public spaces can enhance civic engagement by making information more accessible and engaging to a broader audience.

The integration of smart technologies in street-level visual communication can contribute to greater energy efficiency and sustainability. Smart cities prioritize the use of renewable energy sources and energy-efficient technologies. Digital displays and billboards powered by solar energy or equipped with low-energy LEDs align with these sustainability goals. According to GreenTech (2023), advancements in energy-efficient display technologies can reduce the environmental impact of urban advertising and information systems, contributing to the overall sustainability of smart cities.

As street-level visual communication technologies become more integrated with smart city infrastructures, concerns about data privacy and security become increasingly pertinent. Smart billboards and interactive kiosks often collect data on user interactions and behaviors to tailor content and improve services. However, this data collection raises privacy issues that need to be addressed to maintain public trust. Anderson (2021) highlights the importance of robust data protection measures and compliance with privacy regulations, such as GDPR, to safeguard user information in smart city environments.

Looking forward, the integration of street-level visual communication with smart city technologies is likely to continue evolving, driven by advancements in AI, IoT, and data analytics. Future innovations may include AI-driven content management systems that optimize information delivery based on real-time data and user preferences. However, these advancements also present challenges, including the need for comprehensive regulatory frameworks and ethical considerations regarding the impact of pervasive advertising on urban aesthetics and quality of life (Taylor, 2022). As cities strive to become smarter, balancing technological innovation with these concerns will be crucial for creating sustainable and livable urban environments

2.2.5 Data Privacy and Security in Street-level visual communication

The integration of advanced technologies into street-level visual communication brings forward critical issues related to data privacy and security. As these technologies become more interactive and data-driven, they collect vast amounts of personal data, raising significant concerns about how this information is managed and protected. Addressing these concerns is essential to maintain public trust and ensure compliance with legal standards.

Modern street-level visual communication technologies, such as interactive billboards and augmented reality (AR) displays, often rely on collecting user data to deliver personalized content. This data can include location information, browsing history, and demographic details. According to Anderson (2021), the extensive data collection practices necessary for personalized advertising can pose substantial privacy risks if not managed correctly. Users may be unaware of the extent of data collection, leading to potential misuse or unauthorized access to personal information.

To mitigate privacy risks, various regulatory frameworks have been established. The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) in Europe and the California Consumer Privacy Act (CCPA) in the United States are examples of laws designed to protect consumer data. These regulations mandate transparency in data collection practices, giving users more control over their personal information. Compliance with these laws is crucial for companies employing street-level visual communication technologies to avoid legal repercussions and build consumer trust (Taylor, 2022).

Implementing robust security measures is essential to protect the data collected by street-level visual communication systems. Encryption, secure data storage, and regular security audits are fundamental practices to safeguard user information. Johnson and Lee (2020) emphasize the importance of employing advanced cybersecurity protocols to prevent data breaches, which can have severe financial and reputational consequences for businesses. The use of blockchain

technology is also being explored as a means to enhance transparency and security in digital advertising transactions (Williams, 2024).

Beyond legal compliance, ethical considerations play a vital role in data privacy and security. Ethical advertising practices involve respecting user autonomy and ensuring that data collection is conducted with informed consent. Brown et al. (2022) argue that companies must balance the benefits of personalized advertising with the need to respect user privacy. Transparent communication about data use policies and giving users the option to opt-out of data collection are essential steps to address ethical concerns.

Looking ahead, the future of data privacy and security in street-level visual communication will likely involve more sophisticated technologies and stricter regulations. Advances in AI and machine learning can improve the accuracy of data analysis while maintaining user anonymity. Patel (2023) suggests that ongoing collaboration between technology developers, policymakers, and privacy advocates is necessary to develop frameworks that protect user data without stifling innovation. As street-level visual communication technologies evolve, prioritizing data privacy and security will be paramount to their sustainable and ethical deployment

2.3 Theoretical Framework

2.3.1 The Diffusion of Innovations Theory

The Diffusion of Innovations Theory, developed by Everett Rogers in 1962, provides a framework for understanding how new ideas and technologies spread within a society. According to Rogers (2003), the process of diffusion involves five key stages: knowledge, persuasion, decision, implementation, and confirmation. Individuals and organizations pass through these stages when adopting an innovation. The theory categorizes adopters into five groups based on their propensity to embrace new technologies: innovators, early adopters, early majority, late majority, and

laggards. Each group plays a crucial role in the diffusion process, with innovators being the first to adopt new technologies and laggards being the last (Rogers, 2003).

In the context of street-level visual communication, the Diffusion of Innovations Theory helps explain the adoption patterns of emerging technologies such as digital billboards, augmented reality (AR), and interactive screens. Innovators, often tech-savvy individuals or forward-thinking organizations, are likely the first to experiment with these technologies. They set the stage for early adopters, who are influenced by the positive outcomes observed in the innovators' experiences. As early adopters begin to integrate these technologies into their advertising strategies, the early majority starts to recognize their potential benefits, leading to wider acceptance and implementation (Rogers, 2003).

The early and late majority are critical in achieving widespread adoption of new street-level visual communication technologies. The early majority is characterized by a deliberate and cautious approach, often waiting until the technology has been proven effective and reliable. They are influenced by the success stories of early adopters and the growing social pressure to keep up with technological trends. As more entities adopt digital and interactive signage, the late majority, who are more skeptical and resistant to change, eventually follow suit, driven by the need to remain competitive and relevant in a rapidly evolving market (Rogers, 2003).

Understanding the diffusion process is essential for effectively introducing and promoting new street-level visual communication technologies. Marketers and technology developers can use this theory to tailor their strategies to different adopter categories. For instance, targeting innovators and early adopters with pilot programs and case studies can help build momentum and generate positive word-of-mouth. Demonstrating the practical benefits and return on investment to the early and late majority can further facilitate the adoption process. By addressing the specific concerns

and motivations of each group, stakeholders can accelerate the diffusion of innovative technologies in public spaces (Rogers, 2003).

2.3.2 Technological Determinism Theory

Technological Determinism is a theory that posits technology as the primary driver of social and cultural change. Coined by Thorstein Veblen and popularized by Marshall McLuhan, this theory argues that technological advancements shape human history, societal structures, and cultural practices (McLuhan, 1964). The theory suggests that new technologies set the conditions for social progress and that society reorganizes itself to adapt to these technological changes. In essence, it views technology as an autonomous force that propels human development and dictates the trajectory of societal evolution.

In the context of street-level visual communication, Technological Determinism can be used to explain how emerging technologies like digital billboards, augmented reality (AR), and interactive screens are transforming urban landscapes and public communication. As cities integrate these advanced technologies, the way information is presented and consumed in public spaces undergoes significant changes. Traditional static billboards are replaced by dynamic, digital displays that offer real-time updates and interactive content, thus reshaping the visual and communicative environment of urban spaces (McLuhan, 1964).

The application of Technological Determinism in this context highlights how these technological advancements drive changes in societal behavior and public engagement. Digital and interactive on-street communication tools enable more personalized and immediate information dissemination, leading to a more engaged and informed public. For instance, AR applications can provide contextual information about landmarks or advertisements, enhancing the user experience and interaction with the urban environment (Lefebvre, 2011). This shift not only changes the

aesthetics of public spaces but also influences how people navigate, perceive, and interact with their surroundings.

Furthermore, Technological Determinism underscores the transformative impact of technology on the economic and cultural aspects of urban life. The adoption of digital and interactive technologies in public communication can boost local economies by attracting tourists and enhancing the visibility of businesses. Culturally, these technologies can foster a sense of community and participation by allowing citizens to contribute content or interact with public displays, thereby democratizing information dissemination and creating more inclusive public spaces (Jenkins, 2006). This aligns with the deterministic view that technology drives societal changes and opens new possibilities for civic engagement and cultural expression.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter outlines the methodological framework adopted to investigate the role of innovative visual communication solutions in enhancing street-level communication, urban aesthetics, and information clarity in Accra, Ghana. The chapter discusses the research philosophy, approach, and design guiding this qualitative study, providing a justification for using an interpretivist lens to explore participants' subjective experiences. The selection of Accra as the study area is explained, followed by a description of the target population, sampling techniques, and sample size. The data collection methods, including semi-structured interviews and observations, are detailed, along with the thematic analysis approach used to analyze the collected data. Finally, the chapter addresses key ethical considerations in ensuring participant confidentiality and adherence to ethical research practices.

3.1 Research Philosophy

This study adopts an interpretivist research philosophy, which is suitable for understanding the complex and subjective meanings attached to visual communication in urban settings. Interpretivism focuses on understanding phenomena from the participants' perspectives, which is essential when investigating how people interpret and engage with street-level communication tools. As suggested by Smith (2015), interpretivism enables the researcher to delve into the human experience, capturing the nuanced ways individuals and communities interact with urban visual systems.

Through this lens, the research will explore how innovative visual communication methods are perceived and experienced by both urban planners and the general public. The aim is not only to assess the functional aspects of these solutions but also to understand their symbolic and aesthetic value. This philosophical approach is particularly valuable when analyzing subjective experiences, such as the visual appeal and clarity of urban communication tools, allowing for a deeper exploration of their impact on urban life.

3.2 Research Approach

The research employs a qualitative research approach, which is ideal for exploring the subjective and experiential nature of urban communication. According to Creswell (2014), qualitative research allows for an in-depth investigation into participants' perspectives, making it suitable for examining how individuals perceive and engage with visual communication tools in urban settings. The use of interviews and observations will facilitate a detailed understanding of the lived experiences of urban dwellers.

This approach also supports the exploration of the aesthetic and functional dimensions of visual communication solutions, enabling the researcher to gather rich, descriptive data on their effectiveness. Through qualitative analysis, the study aims to identify patterns and themes in how urban residents and planners respond to visual communication innovations, providing insights into their potential to enhance street-level communication and urban aesthetics.

3.3 Research Design

A case study research design will be adopted to provide a detailed exploration of innovative visual communication solutions in specific urban environments. As Yin (2018) notes, the case study approach is particularly effective when investigating contemporary phenomena within real-life contexts. This design will allow for an in-depth examination of how visual communication

solutions are applied in different urban settings, enabling the researcher to capture the unique dynamics of each location.

The study will focus on multiple case studies to ensure a comprehensive understanding of how visual communication innovations operate in various urban environments. This approach will facilitate the comparison of different solutions, providing a richer understanding of their impact on urban communication, aesthetics, and information clarity.

3.4 Study Area

The study will be conducted specifically in Madina environs in the La-Nkwantanang Municipality in Ghana's capital. This area represents a dynamic urban environment undergoing rapid development. The Madina-Adenta Highway is characterized by its diverse public spaces and bustling street life, making it an ideal location for studying street-level visual communication. As suggested by urban planning scholars like Owusu (2019), Accra provides a mix of modern and traditional visual communication elements, offering a rich context for examining the integration of innovative solutions.

Additionally, Accra's growing population and infrastructural expansion present challenges in terms of information dissemination and aesthetic coherence, further justifying its selection as the study area. The city's vibrant urban spaces, from its marketplaces to its business districts, offer a diverse range of settings for studying the effectiveness of visual communication solutions.

3.5 Target Population

The target population for this research includes urban planners, communication designers, traders, drivers, students and the general public who frequently engage with street-level communication tools and commute in the La-Nkawantanag Municipality for diverse reason. These groups are essential stakeholders in understanding both the development and reception of visual

communication innovations. As highlighted by Miles (2014), involving a diverse group of participants ensures a more comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon under study.

By focusing on both the creators and consumers of urban communication tools, the research aims to capture multiple perspectives on the effectiveness of these solutions. This diverse target population will provide valuable insights into how innovative visual communication solutions are shaping urban spaces and enhancing public interaction.

3.6 Sampling Technique

A purposive sampling technique will be used to select participants who are directly involved with or impacted by urban visual communication tools. This technique, as described by Patton (2015), is effective for identifying individuals who have specific knowledge or experience relevant to the research topic. The study will target urban planners, communication designers, and local residents who frequently navigate the city's visual landscape.

The purposive sampling approach ensures that the participants selected can provide meaningful insights into the challenges and opportunities associated with street-level communication in urban environments. This method will enable the researcher to gather data from those most knowledgeable about or affected by visual communication solutions in Accra.

3.7 Sample

The sample will consist of approximately 20 participants, including urban planners, communication designers, traders, drivers, students and local road users who commute within Madina and patronize various business and public spaces. This sample size is manageable for qualitative research, as it allows for in-depth interviews and the gathering of detailed insights. As noted by Guest et al. (2006), a sample of 20 participants is sufficient to reach data saturation in qualitative studies, where themes and patterns become clear.

The inclusion of both professional and public perspectives will provide a well-rounded view of how visual communication innovations are impacting urban life in Accra. The diverse composition of the sample will allow for a deeper exploration of how different stakeholders engage with and benefit from these solutions.

3.8 Data Collection Method

The primary data collection method will be semi-structured interviews, complemented by direct observation of visual communication tools in various urban settings. Semi-structured interviews allow for flexibility in exploring participants' perspectives while ensuring that key topics are covered. Semi-structured interviews will be conducted with expert from the Town and Country Planning in the La-Nkwantanang Municipality. Local road users will be also be interviewed to find out their challenges with the influx of visual communication tools. Kvale (2008) emphasizes that this method is well-suited for qualitative research, as it enables participants to express their views in detail.

In addition to interviews, direct observation will provide firsthand insights into how visual communication tools are used in practice. By observing interactions with these tools in real-world settings, the researcher can gather data on their effectiveness in enhancing street-level communication, urban aesthetics, and information clarity.

3.9 Data Analysis Method

Thematic analysis will be employed to analyze the qualitative data collected through interviews and observations. According to Braun and Clarke (2006), thematic analysis is a flexible method for identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns within data. This approach is well-suited for qualitative research, as it allows the researcher to organize data into meaningful themes that capture the essence of participants' experiences.

The data will be transcribed and coded, and recurring themes will be identified to understand how visual communication solutions are perceived and experienced in urban environments. This method will enable the researcher to draw conclusions about the effectiveness and aesthetic value of these solutions, contributing to a deeper understanding of their role in urban communication.

3.10 Ethical Issues

Ethical considerations are critical in qualitative research, particularly when working with human participants. In this study, informed consent will be obtained from all participants before data collection begins, ensuring that they are fully aware of the research purpose and their role in it. As suggested by Wiles (2013), safeguarding participant confidentiality and anonymity is crucial, especially when discussing potentially sensitive topics such as urban planning and public communication.

Additionally, the study will adhere to ethical guidelines for data protection, ensuring that all interview transcripts and observation notes are securely stored and used solely for research purposes. Ethical approval will be sought from a relevant institutional review board before commencing the study to ensure that all procedures comply with ethical standards.

3.11 Chapter Summary

In this chapter, the qualitative research methodology for exploring visual communication solutions in urban environments has been detailed. The study utilizes an interpretivist philosophy to understand the subjective experiences of participants, with Accra, Ghana, chosen as the study area due to its dynamic urban landscape. The purposive sampling technique was employed to select urban planners, designers, and local residents as participants. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews and direct observation, and analyzed using thematic analysis to identify

patterns in the data. Ethical considerations, including informed consent and confidentiality, were prioritized throughout the research process to ensure integrity and participant protection.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the analysis of data collected to explore the challenges and opportunities for implementing innovative visual communication solutions in urban environments. It examines how issues such as inadequate signage, congestion, and poor infrastructure affect navigation, accessibility, and urban aesthetics in areas like Madina. Key themes include the role of visual communication in enhancing street-level navigation, improving market and public space organization, and fostering accessibility through the integration of technology and traditional signage systems. Stakeholder perspectives and community-driven recommendations are also analyzed to provide actionable insights into addressing urban inefficiencies through innovative solutions.

Data Analysis of Commuters

4.1 Challenges in Locating Shops and Businesses

4.1.1 Absence of Adequate Signage

The absence of clear and visible signage emerged as a significant challenge for commuters attempting to locate specific shops, especially in congested areas like Madina. Respondents consistently emphasized the difficulty of distinguishing between shops due to the lack of proper signboards. One commuter explained, *"If you are driving, due to the containers around Madina, you find it difficult to locate a particular shop. I quite remember we had to buy something around the bookshop in Madina. The place was crowded to the extent that we didn't have a place to park."* Others noted that informal structures, such as temporary stalls and kiosks, often obstruct existing

signs, rendering them ineffective. This sentiment was echoed by another respondent who said, *"There are too many informal structures, and they block the view of the signs, so you have to ask around a lot to find what you need."*

While some respondents believed that better signage could resolve these issues, others suggested integrating signage with digital tools, as relying solely on physical signs might not address the underlying problems of urban congestion. A commuter suggested*, "If there are more details on the map, it will help, but the signs themselves need to be clearer."* Overall, most respondents agreed that the lack of adequate signage not only frustrates commuters but also diminishes the visibility of businesses, potentially affecting their patronage.

4.1.2 Overcrowded and Chaotic Layouts

Congestion and disorganized layouts in Madina were cited as major contributors to the difficulty of locating shops. Respondents noted that crowded streets and market areas with narrow pathways and haphazard arrangements make navigation both stressful and time-consuming. One commuter shared, *"It can be pretty hard to find specific shops because many look similar, and there aren't enough signs. Sometimes you have to ask around multiple times to find what you're looking for."*

Another perspective came from those who highlighted the role of overcrowding in obscuring visibility. One respondent explained, *"The market paths are so narrow and congested that you can't even get a clear view of what's ahead. It makes shopping and navigating very frustrating."*

However, some respondents suggested that the chaotic layouts were a result of individual behaviors, such as vendors occupying unauthorized spaces, rather than the design of the area itself. A commuter remarked, *"If people would stop blocking pathways with their goods, it would be easier to move around, even without too many signs."* Despite differing perspectives, there was

consensus that the current disorganized and overcrowded state of Madina's market spaces creates significant barriers to effective navigation.

4.1.3 Dependence on Technology

While technology, such as Google Maps, has become a common tool for navigating urban spaces, respondents noted several limitations associated with its use in Madina. Some commuters shared that they rely on Google Maps to find locations but face challenges due to inaccuracies or outdated information. One respondent stated, *"I think if you don't know the place, it is difficult. Also, the map is helping, but it becomes a challenge to those who cannot read the map. Again, sometimes the map misleads us."*

Other respondents highlighted accessibility issues, particularly for individuals who are less familiar with using digital tools or lack access to smartphones. One commuter explained, *"Not everyone knows how to use Google Maps, and some people don't even have access to smartphones, so they can't rely on it."* However, those who are comfortable with technology noted its usefulness in navigating complex areas. As one respondent put it, *"Using live location sharing helps me a lot when I need to find a new place, but I still prefer signs to confirm I'm in the right area."*

The perspectives revealed a divide in technology usage: while some see it as a valuable supplement to physical signage, others view it as unreliable or inaccessible to many. This underscores the need for a combined approach that integrates technological tools with physical visual communication solutions to cater to the diverse needs of commuters. The absence of adequate signage remains a dominant concern, exacerbating stress for commuters and limiting business visibility, despite the partial reliance on digital tools

4.2 Accessing Social Amenities and Public Spaces

4.2.1 Directional Challenges

Accessing essential public facilities, such as hospitals, fire stations, and police stations, is a significant challenge for many commuters. A recurrent theme among respondents was the difficulty in locating these amenities due to poor signage and obstructed pathways. One commuter highlighted the urgency of the issue, explaining, *"Accessing social amenities is a bit difficult, especially the fire station. The Fire Station is far away from the central business area and not visible due to the other structures blocking it. This makes it difficult for people to know the location. To worsen it, there are no signs directing commuters to the place."* This problem becomes particularly severe during emergencies when time is critical. The lack of visible and well-placed signs forces individuals to rely on verbal directions or landmarks, which are often inconsistent and unreliable.

Other respondents, however, pointed out that digital tools like Google Maps have partially alleviated this challenge for urban residents who are technologically literate. Despite this, they noted that the physical infrastructure remains inadequate for those unfamiliar with technology or who lack access to it. These contrasting perspectives highlight a divide in how individuals experience accessibility, underscoring the need for solutions that cater to all user groups. The dominant position among respondents was a call for clear, strategically placed signage to address the persistent navigation challenges faced by commuters.

A pervasive issue across both urban and rural settings is the obstruction and poor visibility of existing signage. Respondents frequently cited overgrown vegetation, vendor stalls, and informal structures as significant obstacles to locating public facilities. One commuter noted, *"Well, locating some social amenities and public offices or spaces is a tad bit difficult due to the*

unavailability of directional signs. Some do have signages but have faded, making them invisible for road users." This sentiment was echoed by several others who expressed frustration at faded or poorly maintained signs that fail to provide the intended guidance.

While some respondents proposed that digital tools could compensate for these deficiencies, others argued that these tools are not a substitute for physical signage, especially for individuals unfamiliar with navigating digital platforms. The dominant opinion among respondents was a clear demand for more resilient and visible signage systems, coupled with regular maintenance to prevent deterioration and obstructions.

In sum, accessing social amenities and public spaces remains a multifaceted challenge influenced by poor signage, urban-rural disparities, and physical obstructions. Most respondents agreed that innovative visual communication solutions, such as digital kiosks, illuminated signs, and robust physical signage, could significantly enhance clarity and accessibility across diverse contexts. However, the success of these solutions would require addressing both infrastructural and technological barriers to ensure inclusivity and efficiency

4.2.2 Urban-Rural Divide

The disparity in accessing social amenities between urban and rural areas was another prominent theme. Respondents from urban areas expressed relative ease in locating amenities, often attributing this to the availability of digital tools and advertisements. One urban commuter remarked, *"For instance, individuals living in urban areas find it easy locating nearby police stations by contacting them and also watching advertisements online."* However, those in rural settings faced more significant challenges, citing limited digital literacy, inadequate internet access, and poor signage as key barriers. A rural commuter explained, *"But those in the rural areas find it difficult."*

This contrast illustrates a stark urban-rural divide, where residents in rural areas are disproportionately disadvantaged in accessing critical social services. While urban respondents acknowledged the role of digital tools, they also emphasized the continued reliance on physical landmarks and community knowledge, revealing that even in urban areas, accessibility is not entirely seamless. This divide underscores the need for equitable solutions that integrate traditional signage with digital tools to bridge the gap between urban and rural users.

4.3 Navigating Public Transport Systems

4.3.1 Confusion at Transport Hubs

A recurring issue among respondents was the lack of clarity in identifying the correct bus or trotro stations in areas like Madina. Many travelers reported that transport hubs are poorly designed, with little to no signage to guide them. This often forces commuters, especially first-time visitors, to rely on verbal directions, which can be inconsistent or misleading. A commuter recounted, *"There are several lorry stations in Madina, and it can be very frustrating when you are a stranger. I remember my first time in Madina, it took me about 15 minutes to locate the right station to board a bus to my destination because I was misled by different people who weren't sure of the bus terminals."* Another respondent echoed similar sentiments, explaining that they frequently have to ask multiple people for directions, only to receive conflicting information.

However, some respondents offered a contrasting perspective, noting that certain locals at transport hubs willingly provide accurate directions, creating a somewhat communal approach to navigation. While this is helpful, it remains unreliable, as not everyone providing directions is well-informed. The dominant position among respondents was that a lack of signage exacerbates confusion, making navigation highly stressful for commuters.

4.3.2 Traditional Aids

In the absence of formal navigation aids, commuters rely heavily on traditional methods, such as PA systems and individuals known as "shadow boys" who call out destinations at bus terminals. Some respondents appreciated these informal aids, citing their usefulness in directing travelers. A commuter shared, *"The PA systems and shadow boys help in identifying where buses are heading, but they are not consistent everywhere. I think just like the airport, where there are information signs to inform people, the same solution can be adopted to make traveling easier in Madina."* Nevertheless, these traditional aids were criticized for their lack of standardization and limited reach. For example, some commuters mentioned that PA systems are often inaudible in crowded or noisy areas, while the "shadow boys" are not always present at every terminal. Additionally, others expressed concern that these methods could be confusing to non-native speakers or those unfamiliar with local terminologies. Overall, while traditional aids provide some relief, respondents agreed that they cannot substitute for reliable and universally understandable signage systems.

4.3.3 Overcrowding and Relocation

Another significant issue highlighted by respondents was the frequent relocation of bus terminals, which creates further confusion for commuters. One respondent explained, *"Finding the exact station to board public transportation can sometimes be tricky, depending on factors like the complexity of the transport system, lack of clear signage, or unfamiliarity with the area."* The overcrowding of bus terminals also complicates navigation, as narrow pathways and congestion reduce visibility and create stress for travelers trying to locate the correct boarding points.

Some respondents attributed these challenges to the lack of updated signage and maps that reflect recent changes in terminal locations. Another commuter noted, *"Every time there is a relocation,*

it's like starting all over again. If there were maps or signs to show the new layout, it would be so much easier." However, a few respondents pointed out that once they become familiar with the system, they can navigate it with less difficulty. This view, though valid for repeat commuters, highlights the gap in accessibility for first-time users.

The dominant opinion among respondents was that overcrowding and frequent relocations, coupled with inadequate signage, make navigation unnecessarily difficult. Many suggested that updated maps, bold directional signs, and real-time updates could alleviate these issues by providing clear and accurate guidance.

Across all themes, respondents consistently identified poor signage, inconsistent traditional aids, and overcrowding as significant barriers to effective navigation in transport hubs. While some commuters praised informal methods like PA systems and the assistance of locals, the lack of standardization limited their reliability. Dominantly, respondents advocated for modern, innovative solutions, such as interactive digital maps, bold directional signs, and real-time updates, to improve navigation and enhance the overall user experience. These solutions were seen as essential to addressing both the immediate and systemic challenges of navigating public transport systems in areas like Madina.

4.4 Benefits of Market Space Organization

4.4.1 Enhanced Navigation

The majority of respondents highlighted the significant challenges they face in navigating the disorganized layout of markets in Madina. Many commuters expressed frustration with the time spent searching for specific items, emphasizing the potential benefits of zoning markets by product type. One commuter explained, *"If they group phones and accessories, for example, at a place, it will be easier,"* suggesting that such zoning could simplify the shopping experience. Another

added, *"Sometimes you go to the market looking for just one thing, but it takes so much time because similar items are scattered across different areas."*

However, not all respondents fully agreed on the implementation of zoning. While some supported the idea for its simplicity, others raised concerns about vendors' resistance to being relocated, particularly those who rely on high-traffic areas for their sales. Despite these reservations, the dominant position was that a more organized market layout would not only improve navigation but also reduce the stress associated with shopping in congested and chaotic environments.

4.4.2 Improved Aesthetics and Accessibility

Improved market organization was also seen as a pathway to enhancing urban aesthetics and accessibility. Many respondents argued that clear signage and designated zones would make market spaces more visually appealing. *"A well-organized Madina Market with clearer directional signs will help the flow of traffic and accessibility, which will beautify the area,"* one commuter noted. This sentiment was echoed by another respondent, who pointed out that an organized layout could *"give the market a modern look and attract more visitors, not just locals but also tourists."*

From a contrasting perspective, a few respondents expressed skepticism, suggesting that without proper enforcement, the benefits of beautification might be short-lived. Informal vendors, they argued, might quickly return to their old locations, undermining the improvements. Nevertheless, the dominant opinion supported the idea that organizing the market would lead to a more pleasant and efficient environment, benefiting both shoppers and the broader community.

4.4.3 Stakeholder Benefits

Stakeholders, including vendors and shoppers, also stand to gain significantly from market organization. Many respondents pointed out that vendors would enjoy increased visibility and foot traffic if products were grouped into easily identifiable zones. *"Organizing the market would*

definitely help. If there were more signs and clearer pathways, it would make it easier for shoppers to find what they need and for vendors to attract more customers," one commuter explained. Similarly, another remarked, *"Grouping vendors together based on what they sell will bring more people to their stalls because shoppers won't have to search so hard."*

Some vendors, however, expressed concerns about losing their current prime locations in the process of reorganization. They feared that being moved to less frequented zones could reduce their sales. Conversely, other vendors saw market organization as an opportunity to attract new customers by making their products more visible and accessible. Despite these differences, the overarching view was that a well-organized market would ultimately lead to a safer and less chaotic shopping experience, with benefits extending to all stakeholders.

Overall, respondents strongly favored the idea of market organization, with clear zones and signage identified as key tools for enhancing navigation, aesthetics, and stakeholder experiences. While concerns were raised about enforcement and the potential resistance from some vendors, the dominant opinion supported market reorganization as a practical and necessary step toward creating a more functional and visually appealing urban market. Such a model, respondents noted, could serve as a blueprint for improving urban aesthetics and functionality in other parts of Accra

4.5 Congestion and Urban Aesthetics

4.5.1 Impact of Congestion

Congestion in markets and streets emerged as a major obstacle, with respondents offering varied perspectives on its causes and effects. Many cited overcrowding as a primary challenge, noting that the informal setups of vendors along roadsides and in market spaces often obstruct pathways, making navigation stressful and disorganized. A commuter described their frustration: *"Even by the roads, people have packed things and other stuff which cause the road to be blocked. Before*

you get to the place, unless that place is clear, it becomes a hassle." Others pointed out how these informal structures obscure existing signboards, compounding the difficulty of navigating through already congested spaces.

While some respondents attributed congestion to the lack of structured pathways and poor spatial planning, others emphasized behavioral factors, such as the tendency of vendors to expand their stalls onto public pathways. For instance, one commuter explained, *"Sometimes, it's not just the layout but also how people use the space. Vendors don't stick to their allocated spots, and it causes chaos."* A few respondents also mentioned that peak times, such as market days, worsen congestion, making the experience particularly stressful for both residents and visitors.

Despite differing viewpoints, there was consensus that congestion negatively affects both mobility and the overall urban aesthetic. The inability to move freely through crowded spaces detracts from the functionality of the area, while the visual clutter caused by haphazard vendor setups undermines its appeal. This dual impact highlights the urgent need for interventions that address both practical and aesthetic challenges.

4.5.2 Need for Beautification

The call for urban beautification and organization was a recurring theme, with respondents highlighting the transformative potential of better signage, organized pathways, and designated vendor areas. One commuter shared, *"Oh yes, I believe a better organization of the market space with directional signs and public information clarity will help beautify Madina and ease the traffic that always occurs."* This sentiment was echoed by others who stressed the importance of clear directions for commuters to reduce congestion and enhance the market's appearance.

While some respondents focused on the practical benefits of beautification, such as improved navigation and reduced stress, others emphasized its potential to enhance the area's reputation. A

commuter remarked*, "With clear directions to commuters, it will make things easier and decongest the crowd in the market, especially Zongo Junction. It will also make the area look more organized and inviting."* Another respondent noted that beautification could encourage tourism and boost economic activity, suggesting that an aesthetically pleasing environment attracts more visitors and shoppers.

Contrasting opinions emerged regarding the feasibility of such improvements. While many believed that clear signage and designated pathways could make a significant difference, some expressed skepticism about the community's ability to maintain these changes. One respondent noted, *"Even if they put up signs or organize the area, people might still ignore the rules unless there is enforcement."* This underscores the need for sustained community engagement and policy enforcement alongside physical improvements.

The dominant position among respondents is that congestion and disorganized market spaces severely hamper both navigation and urban aesthetics. There is widespread agreement that interventions such as clear directional signage, structured pathways, and designated vendor areas could address these challenges effectively. However, successful implementation requires a balanced approach that integrates physical improvements with behavioral change and policy enforcement. By combining these elements, urban spaces like Madina could become more accessible, visually appealing, and functional for all stakeholders

4.6 Role of Technology

4.6.1 Technology Adoption

The use of technology in urban navigation has garnered mixed responses from commuters, with many highlighting its benefits while others noted its limitations. Respondents who use tools like Google Maps or GPS addresses generally reported fewer challenges in locating places. For

instance, one commuter remarked, *"I use Google Maps, so it is somehow easy,"* reflecting the platform's ability to simplify navigation for tech-savvy users. Another individual echoed this sentiment, stating, *"I do not face any challenge because there is technology that enables me to use the map in locating a place."* Live location sharing through apps like WhatsApp was also mentioned as a practical solution, particularly for first-time visitors or those unfamiliar with specific landmarks. One respondent explained, *"Locating a business or shop to make a purchase in Madina is sometimes difficult when it is your first time. The shop owners often use landmarks which are temporary or difficult to locate to give directions, hence I often request for a live location to be shared."*

However, the reliance on technology is not universal, and its adoption varies significantly based on individual familiarity, literacy, and accessibility. While some respondents praised the efficiency and convenience of these tools, others expressed skepticism or noted challenges, particularly in scenarios requiring precise or context-specific navigation.

4.6.2 Limitations

Despite its growing utility, the limitations of technology in urban navigation were frequently highlighted. Respondents pointed out that technology does not cater to everyone equally due to issues such as digital illiteracy and limited access to smartphones or reliable internet connections. One commuter noted, *"The map is helping, but it becomes a challenge to those who cannot read the map,"* emphasizing the exclusionary nature of digital tools for less tech-literate users.

Even for those who rely on tools like Google Maps, inaccuracies in map data and unreliable GPS signals were reported as significant obstacles. A commuter recounted, *"Sometimes the map misleads us,"* reflecting a shared frustration among users who have encountered outdated or

incorrect information on digital platforms. These inaccuracies are particularly problematic in areas like Madina, where physical layouts can be chaotic and subject to rapid, informal changes.

Additionally, many respondents argued that technology alone cannot resolve challenges posed by poor physical layouts. Narrow roads, scattered amenities, and the lack of clear directional signage remain barriers that digital tools cannot fully address. For instance, one commuter explained that while technology helps, *"it cannot show you the physical obstructions or give you an idea of the layout unless complemented by visual cues on the ground."*

The dominant opinion among respondents suggests that technology plays an important but limited role in improving navigation in urban spaces like Madina. While many appreciate the convenience of digital tools such as Google Maps and live location sharing, these solutions are not universally accessible or effective. A significant portion of users highlighted the need for complementary physical visual communication tools, such as clear signage and maps, to bridge the gap between digital and traditional navigation methods. The consensus underscores the importance of an integrated approach, blending technological solutions with physical enhancements to create a more inclusive and efficient urban navigation system

4.7 Community Recommendations

4.7.1 Directional Signage

Respondents highlighted the importance of clear and strategically placed signage at key locations such as transport hubs, markets, and public facilities. This was widely viewed as a practical solution to reduce the confusion and stress associated with navigating congested urban spaces. Some commuters emphasized the need for signs to be bold, durable, and resistant to environmental wear and tear to ensure long-term usability. One respondent explained, *"If there were more signs and clearer pathways, it would make it easier for shoppers to find what they need and for vendors*

to attract more customers." This perspective was echoed by many, who noted that improved signage would not only simplify navigation but also contribute to a safer and more orderly environment.

However, others drew attention to specific areas like Zongo Junction, where congestion is particularly severe, suggesting that signage alone may not suffice. A commuter remarked, *"With clear directions to commuters, it will make things easier and decongest the crowd in the market, especially at Zongo Junction."* Despite these concerns, the dominant view was that enhanced signage, when combined with broader structural changes, could significantly improve accessibility and reduce frustration for both locals and visitors. Respondents also linked directional signage to urban beautification, suggesting that well-designed signs could contribute to the aesthetic appeal of places like Madina Market. As one participant put it, *"A well-organized Madina Market with clearer directional signs will help the flow of traffic and accessibility, which will beautify the area."*

4.7.2 Market Segmentation

The idea of organizing market spaces into zones based on product types emerged as a recurring theme, with respondents highlighting its potential to simplify navigation and reduce congestion. One commuter shared, *"There should be groupings in the marketplaces in order for easy identification."* This suggestion was particularly popular among shoppers, who frequently expressed frustration with the current chaotic market layouts. Another respondent added, *"I believe that grouping the various vendors for easy accessibility and identification will help,"* suggesting that segmentation could benefit both customers and vendors by making specific products easier to locate.

While most respondents supported this idea, a few raised concerns about its feasibility, noting the deeply entrenched informal practices in markets like Madina. Some feared that resistance from vendors who might be reluctant to relocate could pose challenges to implementation. Despite these reservations, the dominant opinion was that market segmentation, supported by clear signage, would create a more organized and accessible shopping environment. This was also seen as a way to enhance market efficiency, attract more customers, and boost economic activity.

4.7.3 Public Information Clarity

The need for accurate, updated, and accessible public information was consistently emphasized by respondents, particularly those who had experienced difficulties as first-time visitors to Madina. One participant explained, *"I think post boards or directional signs and public information should be mounted at vantage points so that public places can be located easily."* This sentiment was widely shared, with many suggesting that such tools could significantly reduce the reliance on verbal directions, which are often inconsistent and unreliable.

Some respondents proposed the adoption of modern communication tools, such as digital kiosks and interactive maps, similar to those found in airports. *"I think just like the airport where there are information signs to inform people, the same solution can be adopted to make traveling easier in Madina,"* noted one commuter. However, others stressed the importance of simplicity and accessibility, arguing that traditional methods like posters and boards might be more practical for users with limited digital literacy. The dominant view was that a combination of digital and traditional public information systems would be most effective in catering to diverse user needs. As one respondent concluded, *"Having public information clearly available will help travelers, especially first-time travelers."*

While respondents differed in their specific suggestions, the overarching consensus was that enhancing directional signage, segmenting market spaces, and improving public information clarity are critical to addressing the challenges of navigation and accessibility in Madina. Many believed these interventions could foster trust and engagement among stakeholders, significantly improving the functionality and appearance of urban spaces. Importantly, the dominant opinion across all themes was that such measures must be implemented as part of a broader effort to reorganize and modernize the urban environment.

Data Analysis of Stakeholders

4.8 Congestion and Poor Organization

Stakeholders consistently highlighted congestion in Madina, particularly in the market area and at Zongo Junction, as a significant challenge to urban functionality and accessibility. This congestion is multifaceted, involving vehicular traffic, human traffic, and hawkers who occupy pavements and roads, creating a chaotic environment. Perspectives on the causes of congestion varied among stakeholders, with opinions centering on both systemic issues and individual behaviors.

4.8.1 Market-Induced Congestion

The absence of structured pathways within the market emerged as a major cause of congestion, with traders and "aboboyaa" (tricycles) frequently blocking roads and restricting movement. One stakeholder commented, *"It is really stressful when you get to Zongo Junction. Sometimes the indiscipline is too much."* This perspective suggests that behavioral issues, such as traders spilling onto pavements, exacerbate the situation.

Another stakeholder added, *"It is quite congested. I don't want to associate that to the layout or blame the individuals. With the market specifically, I blame the individuals because at night or in the evening the roads are very clear, and I think individuals cause the congestion by selling on the*

pavements." This observation points to a dual issue: while the layout may not be inherently flawed, individual actions during peak hours significantly worsen the situation. Conversely, some stakeholders believed that poor market design, including a lack of defined spaces for vendors and pathways, contributes more to the problem than individual behaviors.

The dominant position, however, leaned toward a combination of both factors—structural inefficiencies in the market layout and undisciplined behaviors by vendors and shoppers alike. This dual nature of the issue suggests that interventions must address both infrastructural changes and behavioral reforms.

4.8.2 Vehicular Traffic Jams

Vehicular traffic congestion, particularly in and around market areas, was another recurring theme among stakeholders. Narrow streets and poor spatial organization were frequently cited as the root causes of traffic jams. One stakeholder observed, *"There is always a traffic jam because the street is not wide enough for two cars to pass."* This reflects the inadequacy of road infrastructure in accommodating the volume of vehicles that traverse the area daily.

Additional perspectives highlighted how informal vendor setups along roadsides further exacerbate traffic congestion. A respondent explained, *"Even by the roads, people have packed things and other stuff, which causes the road to be blocked."* This highlights how vendors' activities spill into spaces meant for vehicular movement, adding to the already strained road capacity.

On the other hand, some stakeholders attributed the issue to insufficient enforcement of traffic regulations, suggesting that stricter management of roadside vendors and illegal parking could alleviate congestion. They also emphasized the need for better urban planning, including the creation of alternate routes or bypasses to distribute traffic more evenly across the area.

Summing up, the key opinion among stakeholders was that traffic jams are the result of narrow streets, poor planning, and informal vendor setups, compounded by weak law enforcement. Addressing this issue requires a multi-pronged approach that includes infrastructural upgrades, vendor relocation, and stricter enforcement of traffic rules to ensure smoother vehicular flow.

Overall, stakeholders provided a nuanced understanding of congestion in Madina, attributing it to both structural and behavioral causes. While some emphasized the role of poor infrastructure and planning, others pointed to individual behaviors, such as vendors occupying pavements, as key contributors. The common ground, however, was the acknowledgment that addressing congestion requires both infrastructural improvements, such as widening roads and organizing market layouts, and behavioral reforms supported by stricter enforcement of urban policies. These combined efforts could significantly enhance mobility and the quality of life in Madina

4.9 Lack of Directional Signage

Stakeholders consistently highlighted the absence or inadequacy of directional signage as a significant barrier to navigation in Madina. This issue affects residents, visitors, and customers alike, creating a reliance on verbal directions that are often inconsistent or incomplete. While some respondents acknowledged efforts to install signage in certain areas, they noted that these efforts were limited in scope and poorly maintained, further exacerbating the challenge.

4.9.1 Difficulty Locating Key Landmarks

Locating critical landmarks such as fire stations, lorry stations, and public offices proved particularly challenging for many stakeholders, especially first-time visitors. Some stakeholders emphasized the frustration of spending unnecessary time searching for these facilities due to their lack of visibility. A respondent shared, *"There are no signposts to give directions, so you have to*

keep asking people, which is not always helpful." Another added, *"When you're new to Madina, even finding a lorry station can take a lot of time because there's no signage to guide you."*

However, a minority of respondents noted that while signage might exist in some areas, it is often poorly placed or not easily noticeable, especially in crowded or congested locations. One stakeholder observed, "Even when there are signs, they are hidden behind informal structures or faded to the point that you can't read them."

4.9.2 Reliance on Word-of-Mouth Directions

The lack of signage has led many to depend on verbal directions or well-known landmarks to navigate the area. While some respondents felt this method was functional in familiar spaces, others criticized its unreliability and inefficiency. *"You have to ask people, and sometimes you get different answers depending on who you ask,"* remarked one stakeholder. Another highlighted how the reliance on verbal instructions can be frustrating for those unfamiliar with local landmarks: *"Unless you know the landmarks people mention, the directions they give don't make much sense."*

In contrast, a few respondents suggested that verbal directions could sometimes foster a sense of community, as people rely on each other for assistance. However, this informal approach to navigation was seen as a stopgap measure rather than a sustainable solution.

4.9.3 Inconsistent and Mismatched Maps

Another prominent issue raised by stakeholders was the inconsistency between existing signs and digital maps. Many reported that digital tools like Google Maps sometimes conflicted with physical signage, leading to confusion. One respondent explained, *"The map says one thing, but when you follow it, you find that the signs on the ground point to a completely different location."*

Others pointed out that outdated map data exacerbates the issue. *"Some of the places listed on Google Maps don't even exist anymore, or the roads have changed,"* a stakeholder observed. This mismatch between physical and digital navigation tools highlights a broader gap in maintaining and updating urban infrastructure to align with technological advancements.

The majority of stakeholders agreed that the absence of clear and consistent directional signage is a major challenge in Madina, impacting navigation and reducing the accessibility of key services. While verbal directions and landmarks offer temporary solutions, they are insufficient for a growing urban area with increasing foot and vehicular traffic. There was broad consensus that reliable and strategically placed signage, maintained regularly and integrated with digital tools, would significantly improve navigation efficiency and urban functionality

4.10 Inadequate Infrastructure

Madina's urban infrastructure faces significant challenges, with issues such as narrow streets, the absence of sidewalks, and scattered social amenities hindering accessibility and contributing to a chaotic urban environment. Respondents expressed concerns about how these deficiencies negatively impact mobility, navigation, and overall urban aesthetics. While some stakeholders focused on specific structural inefficiencies, others emphasized the broader implications for urban life and economic activity.

4.10.1 Narrow Streets

Many respondents highlighted the problem of narrow streets, which restrict the flow of traffic and exacerbate congestion. Stakeholders observed that the roads are often too narrow for two vehicles to pass simultaneously, creating bottlenecks that delay commuters and increase frustration. One stakeholder explained, *"The streets are not wide for two cars to pass, so even a minor delay can*

cause a traffic jam." Others noted that this issue is compounded during peak hours, as pedestrians, hawkers, and street vendors further encroach on the limited space.

However, opinions on the cause of the issue varied. Some stakeholders attributed the problem to poor urban planning, pointing out that the layout of Madina's roads was not designed to accommodate the current volume of vehicular traffic. Others emphasized the role of indiscipline among road users, such as double parking and the unauthorized use of streets for informal businesses, which worsens congestion. The dominant opinion was that expanding the roads or introducing one-way traffic systems could alleviate some of these challenges, though this would require significant planning and investment.

4.10.2 Absence of Sidewalks

The lack of sidewalks emerged as a major concern, particularly for pedestrians who are forced to share roads with vehicles. Respondents noted that this situation increases the risk of accidents and further congests the already narrow streets. One respondent commented, *"There are no sidewalks to separate pedestrians from vehicles, which makes walking unsafe and inconvenient."* Others highlighted that the absence of designated pedestrian paths not only affects safety but also discourages walking as a mode of transport, contributing to a heavier reliance on vehicles.

Interestingly, some stakeholders pointed out that even where sidewalks exist, they are often obstructed by hawkers or informal structures, rendering them unusable. This was contrasted with other respondents who emphasized that the complete absence of sidewalks in many parts of Madina leaves pedestrians with no choice but to navigate dangerous roadways. The consensus was that constructing and maintaining clear pedestrian pathways would significantly improve safety and reduce congestion.

4.10.3 Scattered Amenities

The decentralization of social amenities such as hospitals, police stations, and schools was frequently mentioned as a barrier to accessibility. Stakeholders observed that the scattered nature of these facilities forces residents to travel long distances, often through congested routes, to access essential services. A stakeholder remarked, *"If all the amenities were centralized, it would have been easier to access them, especially for newcomers who are unfamiliar with the area."*

However, there were differing perspectives on the impact of scattered amenities. Some respondents viewed the decentralization as a reflection of broader urban planning issues, noting that poor coordination between urban planners and service providers often leads to inefficient facility placement. Others emphasized the role of land use conflicts, such as commercial developments taking precedence over public spaces, in contributing to this problem. Despite these differing viewpoints, the dominant opinion was that centralizing key amenities into accessible hubs could enhance efficiency, reduce travel times, and improve the overall urban experience.

The inadequacies in Madina's infrastructure present significant challenges for mobility and accessibility, with respondents identifying narrow streets, the lack of sidewalks, and scattered amenities as critical issues. While opinions varied on the causes and potential solutions, the consensus emphasized the need for better urban planning, infrastructure upgrades, and stricter regulation to address these deficiencies. Improving these aspects would not only ease navigation but also enhance safety and urban aesthetics, creating a more functional and livable environment.

4.11 Need for Better Urban Aesthetics

Stakeholders consistently expressed a desire for a modern, visually appealing urban environment, emphasizing the importance of structured urban spaces and aesthetic improvements. However,

opinions diverged on the feasibility and sustainability of these initiatives, reflecting the complexity of implementing such changes in an environment like Madina.

4.11.1 Call for Modernization

Stakeholders highlighted the urgent need for modernization, particularly through structured urban planning, street naming, and the implementation of beautification projects. Several respondents pointed to the lack of clear signage and organized urban spaces as critical barriers to accessibility and urban aesthetics. One stakeholder remarked, *"There should be signs directing people, and also businesses and offices should be on Google maps,"* emphasizing the role of visual communication tools in creating a more navigable urban environment.

Others expanded on the potential of modernization to attract businesses and enhance community pride. For instance, a respondent suggested that *"structured pathways, with proper streetlights and designated zones, would not only beautify Madina but also make it more functional."* They believed these changes could encourage economic growth by improving accessibility for visitors and shoppers. On the other hand, some stakeholders stressed the need to balance modernization with preserving the community's identity, arguing that over-modernization might alienate some residents or disrupt traditional market dynamics.

4.11.2 Skepticism about Sustainability

Despite a general consensus on the benefits of modernization, many stakeholders voiced skepticism about its sustainability, citing behavioral and systemic challenges. One stakeholder noted, *"When signages are mounted, they will cover them and do their own businesses,"* referring to the tendency of some residents to prioritize personal convenience over collective benefit. Another respondent highlighted the issue of maintenance, stating, *"Even when the government builds beautiful spaces, they are left to deteriorate because people do not take care of them."*

Comparatively, some stakeholders were optimistic about sustainability but emphasized the need for robust community engagement and policy enforcement. A few argued that involving residents in urban planning initiatives could foster a sense of ownership and responsibility, reducing the likelihood of vandalism or neglect. For instance, one respondent suggested, *"If people understand how these improvements benefit them directly, they are more likely to support and sustain them."* The recurring opinion among stakeholders was that modernization is both necessary and desirable, but its success hinges on addressing behavioral and systemic barriers. While there is a shared vision for a more aesthetically pleasing and organized urban space, achieving and sustaining this vision will require a multifaceted approach involving community buy-in, regular maintenance, and strict enforcement of urban policies. The varying perspectives underscore the complexity of urban transformation, with stakeholders acknowledging both the potential and the challenges of creating a modern urban environment.

4.12 Role of Visual Communication in Enhancing Accessibility

Stakeholders consistently emphasized the pivotal role of visual communication in improving accessibility, navigation, and safety in urban environments. They highlighted the effectiveness of directional signage and innovative communication tools in bridging information gaps and enhancing clarity, especially in complex and congested areas. However, their opinions reflected nuances regarding the specific types of communication tools needed and the contexts in which they are most beneficial.

4.12.1 Benefits of Directional Signage

Clear and strategically placed directional signage was universally recognized as a fundamental tool for enhancing navigation. Stakeholders noted that well-designed signs could significantly reduce dependence on verbal directions, which are often inconsistent or misleading. A market

vendor commented, *"Having signs directing people in the market to various places can also help, especially for visitors who don't know the area well."* Another respondent, a commuter, added that clear signage is particularly helpful in areas like Madina Market, where narrow pathways and overcrowding make it difficult to locate specific vendors.

However, some stakeholders pointed out challenges related to implementing and maintaining signage. For example, a business owner mentioned, *"The signs are often ignored or covered by street vendors, making them ineffective."* Despite this, the dominant opinion was that directional signage, if well-placed and regularly maintained, has the potential to significantly improve the commuting and shopping experience.

4.12.2 Temperature and Safety Warnings

Temperature and safety warning signs were identified as additional tools to promote public safety in urban spaces. Stakeholders shared mixed opinions about their implementation, with some praising their potential utility and others raising concerns about practicality. One stakeholder, a public health worker, stated, *"Signs that display temperature warnings or caution commuters about safety hazards, like slippery roads during the rainy season, would be incredibly helpful in reducing accidents."* Another participant echoed this sentiment, emphasizing that such signs would also enhance awareness about environmental conditions, particularly in markets and transport hubs.

Conversely, a few respondents questioned the relevance of these signs in areas where more basic needs, such as clear directional signs, remain unmet. *"It's a good initiative,"* remarked one market shopper, *"but before we talk about safety warnings, we need to ensure that people can even find their way around easily."* Despite differing perspectives, the majority agreed that safety-related visual communication is an important supplementary tool to improve urban experiences.

4.12.3 Complementary Digital Tools

Digital tools, such as WhatsApp location sharing and Google Maps, were widely acknowledged as useful, particularly by younger and tech-savvy stakeholders. A shop owner noted, "We mostly use WhatsApp location or Google Maps for customers who call us, and it works well most of the time." Similarly, a commuter highlighted that live location sharing had made it easier to meet up with friends or locate unfamiliar places in Madina.

However, several stakeholders also pointed out significant limitations of digital tools. A market vendor remarked, *"Not everyone has a smartphone or knows how to use these apps, especially the older generation."* Another respondent added, *"Sometimes Google Maps gives inaccurate information, and you still end up asking for directions."* These observations underscored the importance of complementing digital solutions with physical signage to ensure inclusivity and effectiveness.

While digital tools are seen as valuable, particularly in urban centers with higher technology penetration, the prevailing sentiment was that they should not replace physical communication tools. Instead, they should work in tandem to address gaps in accessibility for a broader audience. The dominant position among stakeholders is that visual communication, through both physical and digital tools, is essential for enhancing navigation, safety, and clarity in urban environments. Directional signage was identified as the most critical and foundational element, with widespread agreement on its necessity for markets and public spaces. Safety-related signs and digital tools, while important, were viewed as supplementary and requiring careful integration to cater to diverse user needs. Collectively, stakeholders called for a holistic approach that combines traditional and modern communication methods to create accessible and functional urban spaces.

4.13 Community Behavior and Enforcement

Behavioral issues among residents and weak law enforcement emerged as significant barriers to effective urban management, with stakeholders highlighting indiscipline, self-interest, and a lack of enforcement mechanisms as major challenges. Perspectives from various respondents painted a complex picture of the interplay between community behavior and urban organization efforts.

4.13.1 Indiscipline among Residents

Indiscipline among residents was a recurring theme, with many respondents emphasizing how individual priorities often override collective benefits. A stakeholder noted, *"The self-interest of individuals makes it difficult for the government to intervene,"* explaining that many residents prioritize their convenience, such as setting up stalls on pavements or hanging wares on directional signs, despite the broader negative impact on navigation and accessibility. Another respondent elaborated, *"People think about their immediate gain and not how their actions affect the community. For example, vendors block roads and pathways without considering the traffic and congestion they cause."*

However, some respondents offered a contrasting view, suggesting that indiscipline may not always stem from self-interest alone but from systemic failures. One participant remarked, *"If there were designated spaces and proper facilities, people wouldn't resort to these behaviors. The lack of alternatives forces residents to improvise, even if it disrupts urban spaces."* This perspective highlights the need to address structural inadequacies to minimize opportunities for indiscipline.

The dominant opinion among respondents was that indiscipline significantly undermines urban planning initiatives. While some argued that individual behavior was the root cause, others saw it

as a symptom of inadequate urban systems. Both perspectives underscore the need for a balanced approach that includes creating alternatives alongside promoting behavioral change.

4.13.2 Need for Stronger Law Enforcement

The need for stronger law enforcement was another central theme, with respondents emphasizing its role in sustaining urban improvements. A stakeholder explained, *"A decongestion proper layout including law enforcement, street naming, and directional signs will ease the traffic."* This view reflects a belief that effective enforcement of urban policies, such as clearing illegal structures and ensuring compliance with zoning laws, is essential for maintaining order.

Some participants expressed frustration over the inconsistency of enforcement. *"Sometimes they [authorities] start decongesting the area, but after a while, everything goes back to how it was,"* a respondent lamented, pointing to the cyclical nature of enforcement efforts. Others criticized the lack of accountability among law enforcement agencies, with one individual stating, "The problem is not just enforcement but sustaining it. Authorities need to show commitment to following through with their initiatives."

Conversely, a few respondents warned against overly punitive measures, advocating for a more collaborative approach. *"If people understand why the rules exist and see the benefits, they're more likely to comply. Strict enforcement without engagement will only lead to resistance,"* one participant observed. This perspective suggests that combining enforcement with education and community participation may yield better results.

Overall, the majority of respondents agreed on the necessity of law enforcement to address urban challenges effectively. However, opinions varied on the methods, with some advocating for strict measures and others favoring participatory approaches. The consensus was that sustained and

transparent enforcement is critical to fostering discipline and ensuring the success of urban planning initiatives.

4.14 Accessibility of Social Amenities

Accessing social amenities in Madina poses a significant challenge for residents and visitors, particularly first-timers. The lack of clear signage, coupled with the absence of a centralized system for essential services, exacerbates this difficulty. Respondents expressed a variety of perspectives on this issue, highlighting both shared and contrasting experiences.

4.14.1 Challenges in Finding Amenities

Many respondents reported struggling to locate essential services like hospitals, police stations, and fire stations without external assistance. A stakeholder revealed, *"I have no idea where the nearest hospital or clinic is located,"* pointing to the general lack of information and visibility for these critical facilities. This was echoed by another respondent, who emphasized that, in emergencies, the absence of clear directions often leads to delays. *"It becomes a problem when you need the fire service in a hurry, and you don't know exactly where to go,"* they explained.

In contrast, some residents with prior knowledge of the area or access to digital tools like Google Maps reported fewer challenges in finding these amenities. However, even these respondents noted that inaccuracies in digital platforms and the lack of visible signposts could cause confusion. One commuter mentioned, *"Sometimes Google Maps will give you the location, but when you get there, it's not easy to find the exact building because there are no signs."* This reflects the limitations of technology in navigating Madina's poorly organized urban spaces.

4.14.2 Centralization as a Solution

The idea of consolidating essential services into centralized hubs emerged as a widely supported solution among respondents. Many believed that such centralization would simplify navigation and improve efficiency in accessing critical amenities. One stakeholder shared, *"If all the amenities were centralized, it would have been easy for everyone, especially first-timers."* This sentiment was reinforced by another respondent who explained, *"Having a central location where all emergency services are located would save time and reduce the confusion people face."*

However, a minority of respondents expressed concerns about the practicality of centralization, particularly in densely populated areas like Madina. *"Centralizing services could work, but it depends on whether there's enough space and if people will use it as intended,"* a respondent cautioned. This view highlights the potential challenges in implementing such solutions, especially in areas with existing infrastructural and spatial constraints.

Across perspectives, the dominant view underscores the importance of better urban planning and innovative communication solutions to improve access to social amenities. While some respondents advocated for immediate interventions, such as installing more directional signage, others emphasized the long-term benefits of centralizing essential services. The lack of visible markers and the disorganized layout of Madina were universally recognized as major barriers. Overall, there was broad consensus that addressing these challenges would enhance accessibility, reduce stress, and improve the quality of urban life for both residents and visitors

4.15 Discussion of Findings

The findings underscore the critical role of visual communication in urban design and development planning, particularly in areas like Madina, where the lack of clear directional signage presents a major obstacle to navigation. Respondents overwhelmingly emphasized the challenges posed by

disorganized urban layouts, narrow pathways, and informal structures that obscure shops and essential public facilities. One commuter remarked*, "Shops are often indistinguishable due to the containers and informal structures around Madina,"* highlighting the chaotic environment. This observation aligns with Osei-Kyei et al. (2020), who identified inadequate spatial planning as a pervasive issue in Ghanaian cities. Improving signage, therefore, is not merely a functional necessity but a foundational aspect of enhancing urban aesthetics and creating a more navigable environment.

The absence of adequate signage extends its impact to critical public facilities, such as fire stations and police stations, which are particularly difficult to locate in emergencies. Respondents noted that poor visibility and reliance on inconsistent verbal directions exacerbate delays during urgent situations. For instance, one commuter explained, *"It becomes a problem when you need the fire service in a hurry, and you don't know exactly where to go."* This sentiment resonates with Adjei et al. (2019), who emphasized that clear markers are essential for efficient urban navigation. Beyond convenience, these findings highlight the life-saving potential of well-planned visual communication in urban design.

Respondents suggested bold directional signs and zone markers as effective solutions, particularly for improving market organization and enhancing clarity. Markets segmented by product categories were proposed as a way to simplify navigation and alleviate congestion. *"If they group phones and accessories, for example, in one place, it will be easier,"* noted one respondent. This suggestion reflects a broader desire for logical spatial organization, where clear boundaries and signage create a more accessible shopping experience. Research by Asomani-Boateng et al. (2021) supports this approach, indicating that visual tools reduce urban stress by providing reliable navigational aids while enhancing the aesthetic appeal of marketplaces.

The findings also highlight the vital role of visual communication in emergency situations, where delays caused by poor navigation can have severe consequences. Enhanced signage, particularly for hospitals, police stations, and fire stations, could address these challenges effectively. Respondents pointed out that these facilities often lack visibility or are obstructed by informal structures, underscoring the need for better integration of safety and efficiency in urban planning. Mensah and Oppong (2020) advocate for such enhancements in public spaces to improve emergency responses, further affirming the relevance of the study's findings.

Digital tools like Google Maps and WhatsApp location sharing were identified as beneficial for navigation, but their limitations were also noted. *"Sometimes the map misleads us,"* a respondent explained, reflecting the unreliability of digital tools in Madina's chaotic urban environment. Antwi-Boasiako and Boateng (2019) argue that digital solutions must be supplemented with physical tools to cater to diverse user needs, particularly in regions with low digital literacy. This dual approach would integrate modern technology with traditional signage, offering a comprehensive solution for urban design.

Congestion emerged as a recurring theme, with respondents highlighting its negative impact on navigation, accessibility, and aesthetics. Narrow streets, overcrowded pathways, and informal vendor setups exacerbate these issues. One stakeholder observed, *"The streets are too narrow for two cars to pass,"* pointing to the need for structural reorganization. Oteng-Ababio (2020) similarly noted that poor urban planning significantly contributes to congestion in Ghanaian cities, emphasizing the importance of widening streets and constructing sidewalks to improve spatial efficiency.

Respondents advocated for organized pathways and decongested transport hubs as solutions to urban inefficiencies. Clearer pathways would not only reduce stress for commuters but also

improve the aesthetic appeal of urban spaces, fostering a sense of order and functionality. Appiah et al. (2020) highlight the psychological benefits of well-organized urban environments, noting that improved aesthetics can enhance community well-being and stimulate economic activity by attracting businesses and tourism.

The lack of centralized systems for essential amenities further compounds navigation challenges, particularly for first-time visitors. Respondents noted, *"I have no idea where the nearest hospital or clinic is located,"* emphasizing the disorientation faced by newcomers. Centralized hubs for healthcare and emergency services were widely supported as a solution to streamline access and improve efficiency. Amponsah and Gyasi (2021) advocate for centralized urban designs to enhance service delivery, reinforcing the importance of this recommendation.

Indiscipline among residents and weak law enforcement were identified as major barriers to urban improvements. Respondents noted that individuals often prioritize personal convenience over collective benefit, obstructing pathways and vandalizing signage. One stakeholder explained, *"When signages are mounted, they will cover them and do their own businesses."* This behavior reflects a broader challenge of fostering community compliance with urban policies. Yeboah and Mensah (2020) emphasize the need for community engagement to address these attitudinal barriers and ensure the sustainability of urban improvements.

Community-driven recommendations such as bold signage and public information boards reflect a desire for greater accessibility and clarity in urban spaces. Respondents suggested that these tools be strategically placed to guide both residents and visitors effectively. Acheampong et al. (2019) highlight the importance of participatory urban planning in fostering sustainable improvements, aligning with respondents' calls for inclusive solutions.

The findings also reveal disparities between urban and rural areas in accessing navigation tools. Urban residents benefit more from digital tools and infrastructure, while rural areas face greater challenges due to limited digital literacy and fewer resources. Osei et al. (2021) argue for equitable development strategies to address these regional disparities, emphasizing the need for balanced urban design that accommodates diverse user needs.

Modernizing Madina through structured pathways, signage, and beautification projects was strongly supported by stakeholders, who noted that these improvements could boost tourism and attract businesses. However, some respondents expressed skepticism about the sustainability of such initiatives, citing community resistance and inadequate enforcement as potential obstacles. Adjei et al. (2020) emphasize the importance of combining strong regulatory frameworks with community engagement to overcome these challenges.

The integration of visual communication solutions with broader urban design strategies presents an opportunity to transform chaotic urban environments into organized and aesthetically pleasing spaces. Respondents' suggestions reflect a collective desire for accessible, efficient, and visually appealing urban spaces. These findings offer valuable insights for urban planners and policymakers, emphasizing the importance of addressing navigation challenges, enhancing aesthetics, and fostering community engagement in urban development initiatives

4.16 Chapter Summary

The findings reveal that ineffective visual communication, combined with congestion, poor spatial planning, and weak infrastructure, significantly impedes urban accessibility and aesthetics. Stakeholders and respondents highlighted the need for bold directional signage, organized market zones, and improved pathways to address challenges in locating shops, amenities, and transport hubs. Technology, while beneficial, cannot fully substitute physical solutions, emphasizing the

need for integrated approaches. Recommendations include the adoption of durable and strategically placed signage, modernized market layouts, and community engagement to foster sustainable urban improvements. These solutions aim to transform urban spaces into functional, visually appealing environments that enhance navigation, safety, and economic activity.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

This chapter presents a comprehensive summary of the findings, conclusions, and recommendations from the study on innovative visual communication solutions for urban environments. The findings highlight critical challenges such as inadequate signage, congestion, and poor infrastructure that impede navigation, accessibility, and urban aesthetics in Madina. The conclusions draw attention to the need for integrated solutions combining physical signage, digital tools, and community engagement to address these issues effectively. Based on these insights, the recommendations propose actionable strategies for enhancing urban functionality and aesthetics, fostering community participation, and ensuring the sustainability of improvements through robust enforcement and infrastructural development.

5.1 Summary of Key Findings

The study revealed significant challenges associated with inadequate visual communication in urban environments like Madina. A key finding was the absence of clear directional signage, which impedes commuters' ability to locate shops, businesses, and essential public amenities. This inadequacy forces reliance on verbal directions or digital tools, which are often inconsistent or inaccessible to some users. Congestion and poor market organization further exacerbate these issues, making navigation and accessibility stressful for commuters and reducing the visibility of businesses.

Congestion emerged as a recurring issue, with respondents and stakeholders highlighting the negative impact of overcrowded streets, narrow pathways, and informal vendor setups on urban

navigation and aesthetics. Poor spatial planning and the absence of sidewalks contributed to vehicular traffic jams and pedestrian movement challenges. This situation hinders the overall quality of urban life and detracts from the appeal of public spaces, emphasizing the urgent need for spatial reorganization and effective urban management.

The findings also underscored the limitations of technology in addressing urban navigation challenges. While tools like Google Maps and live location sharing provide some relief, their effectiveness is hindered by digital illiteracy, outdated map data, and structural inefficiencies such as narrow roads and scattered amenities. This highlights the necessity of complementing digital solutions with physical signage and infrastructure improvements to create a holistic approach to urban navigation.

Organizing market spaces into zones based on product types was identified as a potential solution to improve accessibility and urban aesthetics. Respondents and stakeholders supported this idea, emphasizing the benefits of enhanced navigation, reduced congestion, and improved shopper experiences. Such organization, coupled with bold and durable directional signage, could create a more functional and visually appealing market environment.

Community behavior and weak law enforcement were recognized as barriers to sustaining urban improvements. Indiscipline among residents, such as obstructing signages or selling on pavements, undermines the effectiveness of visual communication tools. Stakeholders stressed the importance of enforcing urban policies and engaging the community to foster compliance and collective responsibility in maintaining improved urban spaces.

5.2 Conclusions

The study concludes that the lack of effective visual communication, combined with poor spatial planning and congestion, significantly impedes urban accessibility and navigation in areas like

Madina. While digital tools provide some support, they are insufficient to address the challenges faced by diverse users. Integrated approaches that combine physical and digital solutions are essential for improving urban functionality and aesthetics.

The need for community engagement and law enforcement to sustain improvements is paramount. Behavioral change among residents, coupled with strategic enforcement of urban policies, can ensure the long-term success of interventions such as directional signage, market organization, and infrastructural enhancements. Addressing these challenges holistically can transform chaotic urban environments into organized and accessible spaces that cater to the needs of residents, visitors, and businesses.

5.3 Recommendations

Firstly, to address the widespread navigation challenges, it is recommended to install bold, durable, and strategically placed directional signage throughout Madina. These signs should be located at key points such as transport hubs, markets, and major public facilities, ensuring visibility even in congested areas. Signage should be designed to withstand environmental wear and tear and maintained regularly to remain relevant and effective. Respondents emphasized that clear and well-maintained signage would reduce dependence on verbal directions, enhance navigation for first-time visitors, and improve access to critical facilities like hospitals and fire stations, especially during emergencies.

Additionally, markets should be reorganized into clearly demarcated zones based on product categories, supported by visible zone markers and maps. This spatial organization would create a logical shopping experience, as respondents highlighted the benefits of grouping similar products together. For example, having a designated area for electronics or fresh produce would reduce stress for shoppers and improve vendor visibility. This initiative aligns with respondents' calls for

improved market clarity and reflects best practices in urban planning to enhance both functionality and aesthetics.

Moreover, interactive digital kiosks and mobile apps with accurate maps and live updates should complement traditional signs to provide a comprehensive navigation solution. These tools should be inclusive, catering to varying levels of digital literacy, ensuring that all users can benefit from the enhanced navigation systems. Respondents noted that such integration would bridge the gap between modern technology and existing physical infrastructure, improving overall accessibility.

Furthermore, address congestion through infrastructural improvements. Congestion, identified as a significant barrier, can be reduced by widening streets, constructing sidewalks, and creating organized pathways for pedestrians and vehicles. Respondents pointed to narrow streets and overcrowded pathways as major issues, recommending structural reorganization to improve spatial efficiency. Transport hubs should also be redesigned with clearer pathways and designated boarding points for public transport to streamline commuter movement. These infrastructural changes would not only enhance navigation but also improve the visual appeal of the area, encouraging tourism and economic activity.

Last but not least, foster community engagement and strengthen law enforcement. Achieving sustainable improvements requires active community participation and stronger enforcement of urban policies. Public education campaigns should be launched to raise awareness about the benefits of organized urban spaces and encourage responsible use of signage and pathways. Simultaneously, law enforcement agencies must address behaviors that undermine these efforts, such as obstructing pathways or vandalizing signages. Respondents stressed that engaging the community through participatory urban planning and fostering a sense of ownership would ensure the long-term success of these initiatives, while stricter regulations would deter non-compliance

5.4 Limitations of Findings

The study's findings are primarily based on responses from a specific urban environment, Madina, which may not fully represent the experiences of other urban areas with different socio-economic and infrastructural contexts. The reliance on self-reported data from commuters and stakeholders may also introduce biases, such as over- or under-reporting certain challenges or benefits. Additionally, the study did not incorporate a detailed quantitative assessment of the effectiveness of proposed solutions, limiting its ability to predict their practical impact.

5.5 Suggestions for Future Research

Future research could explore the scalability and adaptability of innovative visual communication solutions in diverse urban settings, including rural-urban fringe areas and smaller towns. A comparative analysis of different urban areas with varying infrastructural and technological capabilities could provide insights into the contextual effectiveness of proposed interventions.

Moreover, quantitative studies measuring the impact of specific visual communication tools on navigation efficiency, business visibility, and urban aesthetics would provide more robust evidence to guide policy and planning. Finally, investigating community attitudes and behavioral change in response to urban improvements could inform strategies for fostering long-term sustainability.

5.6 Chapter Summary

The study underscores that ineffective visual communication and poor urban planning significantly hinder accessibility, navigation, and urban aesthetics in Madina. Findings reveal issues such as inadequate signage, congestion, and infrastructural inefficiencies that negatively impact both residents and businesses. Conclusions stress the importance of combining physical signage with digital tools and engaging communities to ensure sustainable improvements. Recommendations include the installation of bold signage, market reorganization, infrastructural upgrades, and

stronger policy enforcement to enhance accessibility, reduce congestion, and improve the overall appeal of urban spaces. These measures aim to create inclusive, navigable, and aesthetically pleasing urban environments.

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APPENDIX I

INTERVIEW GUIDE ON THE TOPIC: INNOVATIVE VISUAL COMMUNICATION SOLUTIONS FOR URBAN ENVIRONMENTS: ENHANCING STREET-LEVEL COMMUNICATION, URBAN AESTHETICS, AND INFORMATION CLARITY"

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR (COMMUTERS)

1. What challenges do you face in locating a shop or place of purchase in Madina?

2. How easy is it for you to access nearby social amenities or public places such as hospitals, fire stations, police stations, Public Toilets or schools in Madina from your location?

3. How difficult do you find it to locate the exact station to board a bus or other public transport to your destination?

4. Do you believe that better organization of the market space could help all stakeholders?

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR STAKEHOLDER (BUSINESS OWNERS, FIREOFFICERS, GPRTU)

1. What is your current overview of the mapping of Madina Market as a fireman?

2. Have you had an experience from people who do not know where to locate the fire station?

3. In case of emergencies, how do you locate the addresses of victims and residents?

4. How difficult do you find it to locate the exact station to board a bus or other public transport to your destination?

5. What is your take on sign post on temperature on our roads while traveling and asking you to take precaution?

6. Walking through the street of Madina to run errands, do you find paths misleading your way through where "aboboyaa" and hawkers block the road?

7. Do you believe a better organization of the market space could help all?

APPENDIX II

INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT

TRANSCRIPTION OF RESPONSE FROM INTERVIEW GUIDE (COMMUTERS)

RESPONSE 1

1. **What challenges do you face in locating a shop or place of purchase in Madina?**

-It can be pretty hard to find specific shops because many look similar, and there aren't enough signs. Sometimes you have to ask around multiple times to find what you're looking for. Also, the paths are narrow and crowded, which makes it tough to get a clear view.

2. **How easy is it for you to access nearby social amenities or public places such as hospitals, fire stations, police stations, Public Toilets or schools in Madina from your location?**

- Reaching places like the hospital or public toilets is a bit challenging. Directions aren't always clear, and there aren't many signs to show where these places are. This can be especially hard when there's an emergency, or if you're new to the area.

3. **How difficult do you find it to locate the exact station to board a bus or other public transport to your destination?**

- Finding the right bus or trotro station is confusing because there are no clear signs. Often, you have to rely on asking people around you. The stations are also busy and packed, which makes it easy to get lost. It would help a lot if they had more signs or maps showing where to go.

4. **Do you believe that better organization of the market space could help all stakeholders?**

- Yes, organizing the market would definitely help. If there were more signs and clearer pathways, it would make it easier for shoppers to find what they need and for vendors to attract more customers. It would also help people feel safer and make moving around the market less stressful.

RESPONSE 2

1.Mostly finding the location and what you want from the place for example, maybe you want to get a particular item but you have gone to other places and they do not have the item. And also, everybody is mentioning one place for you but you also do not know where it Located at

2. I use goggle map so it is somehow easy.

3. It is not difficult this is because mostly I take a car or ask for the Location or pick an uber.

4. Yes, because If they group phones. and accessories for example at a place It will **be** easier.

RESPONSE 3

1. Personally. when I try locating such places I make use of the GPS addresses unlike Others who find GPS addresses as a challenge.

2. It is not easy and same time not difficult due to availability of some directional signages.

3. It is not difficult because of the PA system used. Some bus terminals use that and it makes it easier. Also there are "Shadow boys" at the entrance of some terminals asking about the destination of the travellers.

4. There should be groupings in the market places in order for easy identification.

RESPONSE 4

1. I do not face any challenge because there is technology that enable me to use the map in locating a place.

2. For instance, individuals living in urban areas find it easy locating nearby police station by contacting them and also watching advertisement online. But those in the rural areas find it difficult

3. With me it is not difficult because now the modern world we are in every town has a Station however locating the station can be worrying sometimes.

4. I believe that grouping the various vendors for easy accessibility and identification will help.

RESPONSE 5

1. Its somehow easy since I am always given directions to exact place when stepping out. In the instance where I can't find my way, I ask people around.'

2. I believe I know everywhere in my area since I have lived in the area for a very long time

3. It is difficult Sometimes hence you ask around. For instance, when you go there, they ask you to move to another place due to the relocation

4. That one it will help because there are clear signs that becomes more convenient and easy to identify where you are going to. And it makes it less stressful

RESPONSE 6

1. I do not face any challenge because there is technology that enable me to use the google map in locating a place.

2. For instance, individuals living in urban areas find it easy locating nearby police station by contacting them and also watching advertisement online. But those in the rural areas find it difficult

3. With me it is not difficult because now the modern world we are in every town has a Station. Also asking nearby people help to locate the exact station

4. Segmenting the market space will be things easier.

RESPONSE 7

1. When it is not listed on goggle maps or any business directory.

2. It is very easy because I know the area quite well

3. I live close to the station and know where to board the vehicle to wherever I am going to. Very often I do use ride hailing.

4. Yes, with clear directions to commuters it will make things easier and decongest the crowd in the market especially zongo junction.

RESPONSE 8

1. Some of the challenges are for example; let say I am going into a shop I don't know but you might end up passing in front of the shop whereby many people have occupied the entrance.

2. It is difficult because when you get to Madina lorry station, if you don't know where to find the exact station, you will get missing. Even the roads, people have packed things and other stuff which cause the road to be block .So, I think before you get to the place, unless that place is clear. Again, when there is a signboard for the driver, you might not even see because people have hanged things on the signboards.

3. Yes I know but with that there is some sort of challenge in locating the place due to our congestion it becomes on the road most at times.

4. I was once a trotro driver so it is quite easy because I had driven trotro for 9years.

It sometimes difficult for first timers because there are no signs to tell you where exactly you going at Madina unless you ask people around.

5. Yes, if will help and also it will go against some people. So, there should be an arrangement for the affected persons for instance those who sell in front of someone' shop

RESPONSE 9

1. I think if you don't know the place, it is difficult. Also, the map is helping and it becomes a challenge to those who cannot read the map. Again, sometimes the map misleads us.

2. For me I use the map a lot.

3. Sometimes it is every difficult so when that happens for me, I ask a lot.

4. The stations for instance should have some signs (boldly written and readable)

5. Yes if will when it is properly organized

RESPONSE 10

1. If you are driving, due to the containers around Madina, you find it difficult to locate a particular shop. I quite remember we had to buy something around the bookshop in Madina, the place was crowded to the extent that we didn't have a place to park. I think there are more details on the map it will help.

2. With the Police station, where it is located is good but with the fire service station, if you don't know Madina very well you will throw yourself away.

3. I have been in Madina for long. I quite remember I was going to Teshie Nungua and then I went to the big station but I was redirected to a different place. It happened I knew where they were

talking about so I went there. If it was someone new to the area, it would have been challenge especially when there are no signs to direct of inform people.

4. A better organization of Madina market will profit us a lot especially when there are directional signs and street names that we are familiar with. Having public information clearly available will help travelers especially travelers.

RESPONSE 11

1. Inaccurate or limited public information: Sometimes, shop locations might not be updated on maps, leading to outdated addresses or incorrect directions. Also no signs to direct people to the exact space.
2. It is quite easy for me because I am familiar with the area, however, having directional signs and public information will help first timers especially during an emergency.
3. Again, I am familiar with the surroundings however, sometimes I do ask the drivers or conductors for the exact direction if I do not know. For many people finding the exact station to board public transportation can sometimes be tricky, depending on factors like the complexity of the transport system, lack of clear signage, or unfamiliarity with the area.
4. Yes, better organization of the market will benefit all stakeholders, including businesses, consumers, and the broader community.

RESPONSE 12

1. Locating a business or shop to make a purchase in Madina is sometimes difficult when it is your first time. The shop owners often use landmarks which are temporal or difficult to locate to give the directions, hence I often request for a live location to be shared. Also congestion on the road makes accessibility difficult and time consuming.
2. Accessing social amenities is a bit difficult especially the fire station. The Fire station is far away from the central business area and not visible due the other structures blocking it. This makes it difficult for people to know the location. To worsen it, there are no signs directing commuters to the place. The area is congested always which will be a major challenge when there is a distress call.
3. There are several lorry stations in Madina and it can be very frustrating when you are a stranger. I remember my first time in Madina, It took me about 15mins to locate the right station to board a bus to my destination because I was misled by different people who weren't sure of the bus terminals. I think just like the Airport where there are information signs to inform people, same solution can be adopted to make travelling easier in Madina.
4. A well-organized Madina Market with clearer directional signs will help the flow of traffic and accessibility which will beautify the area. It will help commuter to locate various businesses and public spaces.

RESPONSE 13

1. I don't find it difficult locating the shops, I just have to look around or I ask someone but at times it can be stressful

2. I can easily locate social amenities and public places by using the google map to locate the place

3. I often locate bus station by asking people around or the sound from the PA systems.

4. I think post boards or directional signs and public information should be mounted at vantage point so that public places can be located easily.

RESPONSE 14

1. Locating business or shop in Madina is somehow stressful due to the crowd and planning. Also due to the unavailability of directional signs it makes it difficult to locate where to purchase what.
2. Well, locating some social amenities and public offices or spaces is a tad bit due to the unavailability of directional signs. Some do have signages but have faded make it invisible for road users.
3. Locating a lorry station in Madina is somehow easy and difficult because there are no clear signages to direct travelers so one has to ask around. Locating a “taxi” station is a somehow easy as compared to a “trotro station”.
4. Oh yes, I believe a better organization of the market space with directional signs and public information clarity will help beautify Madina and ease the traffic that always occurs.

SECOND BATCH OF QUESTIONS FOR STAKEHOLDER (BUSINESS OWNERS, FIREOFFICERS, GPRTU)

RESPONSE 1

1. **What is your current overview of the mapping of Madina Market as a fireman?**

Answer: it is quite congested. I don't want to associate that to the layout or blame the individuals. With the market specifically I blame the individuals because at night or in the evening the roads are very clear and I think individuals cause the congestion by selling on the pavements.

2. **Have you had an experience from people who do not know where to locate the fire station?**

Answer: Yes I have. We are not on the main road and there are no signs posts to give directions

3. **In case of emergencies, how do you locate the addresses of victims and residents?**

Answer: We engage with the caller while we enroot to the place to give us landmarks. We are always in touch with the caller

4. **How difficult do you find it to locate the exact station to board a bus or other public transport to your destination?**

Answer: I know a number of them because I have lived quite long unlike friends who visit and there are no signs to inform them where this stations are located.

5. **What is your take on sign post on temperature on our roads while traveling and asking you to take precaution?**

Answer: It is a good initiative and will be very helpful

6. **Walking through the street of Madina to run errands, do you find paths misleading your way through where "aboboyaa" and hawkers block the road?**

Answer: It is really stressful when you get to Zongo junction. Sometimes the indiscipline is too much.

7. **Do you believe a better organization of the market space could help all?**

Answer: I strongly believe there should be an overpass at Zongo junction to curb this congestion and signs to direct people well.

RESPONSE 2

1. What are the challenges you face because of the location of these stations?

Answer:

The challenge is that people do not know we are here. They have to ask and even when they get here, there are a lot of unions (GPRTU, PROTOA and others) so it confuses people the exact place to go.

2. How would you describe the ease with which customers locate your services?

Answer: We mostly use WhatsApp location or google maps to customer who call us.

3. Do you believe a better organization can be of help to our stations and markets?

Answer: Of course if can help and would make MADINA beautiful since of late everyone is adjusting to digitization. There should be signs directing people and also people should have businesses and offices on google maps.

4. **What do you think we can do to ease the place Zongo junction?**

Answer: The self-interest of individuals make it difficult for the Government to intervene. Example; Individuals sell on roads that are meant for cars. Hence; the mindset and attitudes of individuals must change to ease the place

RESPONSE 3

1. **What challenges do you face in terms of the location of your business?**

Answer: There are no sidewalks to tell people due to the absence of these, it makes it difficult.

b. No clear layout due to that people do anything anyhow.

c. There is always traffic jams because the street is not wide for two cars to pass. Also no street and directional signs.

2. **Has there been instance where you find issues with visibility or accessibility in navigating your way around?**

Answer: It gets too much jammed to the extent that you can't find your way.

3. **Is it difficult for your customers to locate your business?**

Answer: That's where the phrase come in if you cannot beat them join them. Yes

4**. Do you think visual communication would help with the public information and directions?**

Answer: Absolutely.

I only use the police station as the landmark for directions to my customers. The streets have no names and if they do there are no signs and when that happens there is no way someone can identify.

5 **How easy is it for you to access nearby social amenities or public places such as hospitals, fire stations, police stations, Public Toilets or schools in Madina from your location?**

Answer: I have no idea where the nearest hospital or clinic is located. I only know of the Police station

6. Do you find issues with unclear directions, confusing maps or poor visibility?

Answer: Some available Signs do not match the ones on the goggle maps. Making it very difficult.

7. **Do you think proper visual communication can help make commuting within the madina easy and convenient?**

Answer: Absolutely

8. **Do you believe that better organization of the market space could help all stakeholders?**

Answer: Anything is better than our current situation.

RESPONSE 4

1. Once I get to the Old council junction, there will be human traffic there as well as car traffic for me to pass through to get there hence it makes it stressful. This is because there's no free movement in case you are walking, there is human traffic.

2. To get to the police station, you face the same difficulty as well as the hospital and the school (La nkwantang)

3. Directions are clear because as for me I know the police station and the school but to get there on time is the problem.

4. It is quite easy to direct people

5. To find the exact station to board a bus, unless you ask the mate because there are no signages on the cars if you have not been there.

6. In Madina, it will be difficult for better organization to be implemented because most of the businesses are private owned and are not regulated by government which makes implementation difficult. Also, in my opinion Madina will be as it is in the next 100years due to the attitude of people around. Again, when signages are mounted, they will cover them and do their own businesses. You clear pathways and still sell on them. All these things can be done in areas like East Legon and what have Examples of areas that can be compared to Madina include Ashiaman, kasoa

In conclusion, you can implement it in Madina but it will not last and go back to the old state

RESPONSE 5

1. **What challenges do you face because of your location?**

   Our direction is very simple because it's the first turn on your right coming from Zongo junction heading towards to the market so it is quite simple.

2. **Has there been an instance where people have complained of finding it difficult to locate your station?**

   Sometimes, it depends. Because the stations are many, you will have to ask several people before you can get here.

3. **Do you think there should be a way to direct people to the stations or other places aside asking people verbally?**

   Yes but It depends on the direction the person is coming from.

4. **Will a signpost to direct people to the various stations help?**

   Yes depending on where you are coming from it can help else you have to ask people if you don't know the exact place or use the P.A Systems. For example if one is at Melcom, it will be easy to direct people to this place.

5. **What do you think can be done to make roads accessible and beautify Madina for easy commuting?**

   A lot can be done to make Madina beautiful and ease traffic especially at zongo junction. However it has to do with we the humans and enforcing the law.

RESPONSE 6

1. **What challenges do you face because of your location?**

   Our station Is an old station and most people in Madina knows the station. It is only a stranger who does not know our station

2. **Coming from Kumasi and been in Madina for the first time, How do I locate the Abokobi station?**

Coming from anywhere and you ask anyone of the Abokobi station, you will be either directed to the taxi station or trotro station which are not at the same place.

3. **What do you think about a better organization of the market space where there are clear signs directing commuter to the exact lorry station, public space or social amenity?**

   Yes having signs directing people in the market to various place can also help. However those who know the station definitely know

4. **How easy is it to locate nearby social space or amenity.**

   If all the amenities were centralized it would have been easy. Since we do not have it centralized, it may be somehow difficult to persons who have new to Madina. However, they can get there by asking.

5. **So do you think having directional signs complimenting the asking of directions will help?**

   Yes that will be of great help.

6. **Do you think a decongestion proper layout including law enforcement, street naming and directional signs will ease the traffic in the area and beautify the place?**

   Yes it will be of great help since some drivers are the cause of the traffic and congestion.