AN ASSESSMENT OF THE VISUAL COMMUNICATIONS APPROACH OF THE PUBLICATION UNIT OF AHMADU BELLO UNIVERSITY, ZARIA-NIGERIA

BY

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FACULTY OF ENVIRONMENTAL DESIGN,
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DECLARATION

I declare that the work in this thesis entitled "An Assessment of the Visual Communications Approach of the Publication Unit of Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria-Nigeria" has been carried out by me in the department of Industrial Design, under the supervision of Professor D. J. M. Yakubu and Dr. S. U. Dakyes. The information retrieved from the review of literature has been duly acknowledged in the text and a list of references supplied in the bibliography. No part of this thesis was previously presented for another degree or diploma at this or any other institution.

Name of Student	Signature	Date

CERTIFICATION

This thesis titled "AN ASSESSMENT OF THE VISUAL COMMUNICATIONS APPROACH OF THE PUBLICATION UNIT OF AHMADU BELLO UNIVERSITY, ZARIA-NIGERIA" by Bonaventure Goji ZIRRA meets the regulations governing the award of the degree of Master of Arts in Industrial Design of Ahmadu Bello University, and is approved for its contribution to knowledge and literary presentation.

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DEDICATION

With a special feeling of gratitude, I dedicate this thesis to my loving parents, Clara Ladi and Michael William Zirrafumma whose earnest desire was to see us attain a sound level of education, but left this world fortunately too early: may their souls continue to rest eternally in the Lord who decides the direction of all things.

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ABBREVIATIONS

ABU: Ahmadu Bello University

AMA: American Marketing Association

ASCII: American Standard Code for information Exchange

CD: Compact Disc

DI: Direct imaging

DSS: Demonstration Secondary School (ABU, Zaria)

DVD: Digital Visual Disc

FCLP: Functional Context Learning Paradigm

GUI: Graphical User Interface

HTML: Hyper Text Mark-up Language

ICT: Information and Communication Technology

JAMB: Joint Admissions and Matriculations Board

JPEG: Joint Photo Export Group

MP3: Portable Media Player (3)

MP4: Portable Media Player (4)

PDF: Portable Document Format

PNG: Portable Network Group

URL: Uniform Resource Locator

USB: Universal Serial Bus

VC: Visual Communications

WWW: World Wide Web

OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF TERMS

Bit: The basic unit of information in computing and digital communications. A *bit* can have only one of two values, and may therefore be physically implemented with a two-state device. These values are most commonly represented as 0 and1.

Highlight: In art, photography, painting, drawing, and digital compositions, Highlight refers to any of the brightest parts of a subject, in contrast to shadow.

Marquee: A non-standard Hyper Text Markup Language element which causes text to scroll up, down, left or right automatically.

Midtone: Mid-tone in an artistic context refers to the values in between light and dark shades, used to render an object in a realistic manner.

Raster: A graphic image in form of a dot matrix data structure used in representing a generally rectangular grid of pixels, or points of colour, viewable via a monitor, paper, or other display medium. *Raster* images are stored in image files with varying formats.

Shot: (Past tense of Shoot), to snap a photograph.

Type: The component of used to reproduce the elements of a document (usually individual letters, alphabets or punctuation).

Value: The use of lightness and darkness in a piece of photographs or other *artworks*.

Vector: Geometrical primitives such as points, lines, curves and shapes or polygons all of which are based on mathematical expressions to represent images in computer graphics.

SYMBOLS

%: Percentage

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to assess the impact of visual communication designs published by the Public Affairs Unit of the Ahmadu Bello University Registry. The specific aim was to develop a prototype Visual Communications Resource that would serve as the ideal tool for advertising university undergraduate programmes, using perceptive principles of design that are capable of strongly impacting on prospective undergraduate students. In line with the principles of the Functional Context Learning Paradigm, an informed awareness led the study to the development of an undergraduate prospectus in print mode, based on the variables of typography, images and colours highlighted in the statement of the problem. The study explored a descriptive analysis to delineate the visual content which later guided the entire redesign procedure before administering them to respondents (prospective students) in clusters of Focus Groups. The results obtained from the analysis revealed that in spite of the limited media of advertising university courses, richly designed prospectuses seemed to be the preferred medium for educating and informing prospective students as well as their parents and guardians of the courses and extra-curricular options available. The conclusion of this study was that Visual Communications Materials that incorporate crisp digital images, simple array of texts and harmonious colours can have a great impact on the target audience it was being designed for: particularly, the prototype prospectus had a positive impact on prospective students that constituted the study population. The study finally recommended that the University Management in liaison with the Graphics section of the Department of Industrial design should endeavour to implement this concept for educating and informing prospective students in a more suitable, effective and sustainable manner.

CHAPTER ONE

1.0. Introduction

1.1. Background of the Study

The publication unit of Ahmadu Bello University (ABU) is a specialised unit in the Registry department charged with the strategic responsibility of circulating information within and outside the University, using various media such as telephone, fax, TV, posters, prospectuses, journals, bulletins, calendars and more recently, the World Wide Web (www).

The Public Affairs Directorate of Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria started in 1975, as a small unit under the Registry called Information Office with a few intermediate and junior staff, with the Deputy Registrar, as head. The basic functions of the unit then were mainly to publish and distribute information pamphlets for the University within the two campuses at Samaru and Kongo. The office saw major changes in its structure and functions between 1986 and 1989 when the office was changed to Information and Protocol Unit. The unit was upgraded to a full-fledged department in 2006 (www.abu.edu.ng/centreinstitute/). Five units were created out of the department to handle critical and key functions such as protocol, public relations, immigrations, ceremonies, information and publications. The Public Affairs Department was later transferred to the Registry.

After a study tour to some universities, the Head of Department recommended the return of the Department to the Vice Chancellor's office. The Vice Chancellor obliged to the recommendations and further upgraded the Public Affairs office to the level of a Directorate in 2013. To cope with the new status, the Public Affairs Directorate is currently making efforts to establish cadres and structures that would professionalize its services,

which includes: Press Relations, Community Relations, Designing, Implementing, Managing and Content Development of News Items and Social Media sites for University's Website.

In addition to the Internet, all the media sources listed above are still very effective in most developed Nations. In the case of ABU, the Internet has become the media that has represented a significant chunk of the total information circulated by the University despite the low patronage of Internet among Nigerians and Africans in general. Regional differences are quite significant as 86.9 percent and 70.4 percent of North Americans and Europeans respectively are on the Internet, compared to only 25.9 percent of Africans which have significantly grown from 9.6 percent in 2010 (International Telecommunication Union, 2014).

The most recent plan in the reorganisation transition of the Public Affairs Directorate is to overhaul the entire central operating unit of the Registry to enhance communications, good span of control, quick and quality decisions as well as quick implementation with good results and feedback. Quality assurance and ethical practices are the overall strategic goals and major concern in the reorganisation of the ABU registry as mandated at the 124th, 139th and 141st meetings of the Governing Council held in February 2007, April 2010 and November 2010 respectively (ABU Special Bulletin, 13th April 2011). The simplicity and functionality of the structure is expected to provide an instinctive inspiration from the Head of unit down to the other members of staff. The staff becomes reliable and trusted to exercise a good degree of initiative and relative autonomy to take proactive actions based on established order. The various units under the registry have been designed to handle specific areas of operations, responsibilities and scope.

Figure 1: The New Organogram of the Ahmadu Bello University Registry, Source: ABU Special Bulletin, (2011)

Figure 1 graphically delineates the organisational structure of the registry. Other field units are also designed to execute specific responsibilities as dictated by specific functionalities. Within the structure, however, managers are placed to strategically handle units and the effectiveness of the structure depends entirely on the ability of the managers to work as a team with efficient coordination.

This situation analysis calls for the need to further investigate the functional issues raised in this study background, with a view to proffer practical graphic solutions using the perceptive concepts and theories drawn from the review of literature.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

The ABU Special Bulletin, (2011) reported that the information and publication unit specifically does not have a well organised modern operating procedure that would enhance flow of communication, good span of information/communications control, and expected results with a significant feedback. Telephone, fax, TV, Video, posters, prospectuses, journals, bulletins, calendars, maps and the Internet are the various media prescribed by the publication unit for circulating information; unfortunately, most of these sources have not been effectively harnessed except for journals, special bulletins and the Internet.

Through a thrifty situation analysis, it was observed that the university maps and undergraduate prospectuses are the visual communication materials that are completely out of publication and production despite the continuous impact maps and prospectuses make globally. Prospectuses in particular were last published in 1984/1986. From 1986,

there have been noticeable and tremendous global developments in the area of design, printing, products and digital equipment which have transformed the layout of visual communication materials entirely. As such, prospectuses and all other visual communication materials ought to be regularly redesigned, reproduced and circulated to their consumers.

Apart from being obviously outdated, the existing edition of the undergraduate prospectus has some shortfalls, and does not seem to represent modern graphic and visual communications standards. When viewed at a glance, one perceives a lack of aesthetic appeal because of the poor design concepts of the document's layout. The design layout of the prospectus has four glaring features that summarise its flaws.

- The absence of colours;
- The low quality of images;
- The improper use of typographic elements; and
- Low paper and print quality

Based on this informed awareness within a functional context, the state of ABU prospectus raises the need to redesign a visual communications resource for advertising undergraduate programmes.

1.3. Aim and Objectives of the Study

The aim of the study is to assess the impact of visual communication design through exploring solutions with design tools, theories and perceptual principles; while the objectives are to:

(i) Assess the quality of the visual communication (VC) materials produced by the Publication unit;

(ii) Examine the impact of the materials on the target audience;

(iii) Develop a prototype print design template for an undergraduate prospectus for Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria.

1.4. Research Questions

From the problems and objectives of this study, the following research questions are raised:

(i) What is the quality of the existing ABU prospectus produced by the publication unit?

(ii) How have those materials impacted on the target audience and what results have they actually produced?

(iii) What principal elements and principles of design are essential in developing a prototype of ABU Undergraduate prospectus?

1.5. Significance of the Study

Redesigning layout concepts and prototype of an undergraduate prospectus for Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria will:

(i) Sensitise prospective students on academic and extra-curricular options available through the use of an effective prospectus dissemination,

(ii) Help the University to further advertise her key selling points by a way of redesign of its undergraduate prospectus with a view to reaching out to more prospective students.

1.6. Justification of the Study

Through an informed awareness, it was observed that a lot of prospective undergraduates find difficulties in accessing relevant information pertaining to university programmes due to insufficient information. Based on this informed awareness within a functional context, redesigning, developing and circulating visual communications materials that would function as the lead advertising tool for undergraduate programmes, will also project the culture, environment, social life, sports facilities and several activities that will sustainably inform and educate prospective students, parents and visitors about A.B.U.

1.7. Scope and Delimitation of the Study

Layout principles that enhance the appeal of visual communication materials come into play in a wide range of media such as print, broadcast, the Internet, outdoor advertising, and way findings, to mention a few. Each aspect of these visual communication designs is broad in its own sense. As such, the scope of this study is delimited to the print and publication design templates for an undergraduate prospectus for Ahmadu Bello University Zaria.

CHAPTER TWO

2.0. Literature Review

2.1. Introduction

The review of literature for this study discusses some fundamental concepts of visual communications, history, principles of layout designs and the aesthetic concepts of typography and photograph that are relevant for designing graphic layouts for print materials, brand management, relevance of computer technology in enhancing print and publication designs. This chapter concludes by discussing the approach to be explored in executing the design process.

2.1.1. Conceptual framework

The conceptual framework is the schematic diagram which shows the variables included in the study. According to Miles & Huberman (1994), a conceptual framework explains, either graphically or in narrative form, the main things to be studied – the key factors, constructs or variables – and the presumed relationships among them.

This study specifically explored the Functional Context Learning Paradigm (FCLP), an idea which mainly helped to identify a problem within a given environment and proffer practical solutions to the problems identified. Explored acquired technical graphic skill, backed by an informed awareness, the learning activities (creativity, execution resourcefulness that achieved compelling results) were geared towards practical outcomes that related to real functional contexts. Similarly, Sticht (1985) in Tibekilem (2011) observed that the functional context approach emphasises the significance of making solutions relevant to the experience of learners and their work setting. The finding of new information will be facilitated by making it possible for the designer to

relate it to knowledge already possessed and transform old knowledge into new knowledge. The developed visual communication design was done creatively using computer skills and transferred from the confines of the studio to the "real world" where it was enhanced. The FCLP served as a guide in articulating the design variables listed in the problem of statement, while the theory of visual communications also guided the use of elements and principles of design in the overall layout organisation.

2.1.2. Theoretical framework

The theoretical framework consists of theories, principles, generalizations and research findings which are closely related to the present study under investigation. The theories are fundamentally hinged on the Shanon model of communication as well as Lidwel's theory of the effectiveness of text and images in Visual Communications. Ryan and Conover (2004) observed that communications is as old as man, but the communications model has over the years remained fundamentally the same in terms of flow of idea from one source to another source, (from sender to receiver) and from receiver back to sender, holding that the two-way process of communication can only be efficient if it flows along five component parts (Sender, message, medium receiver and feedback) to ensure that the message was understood.

The various design theories in the literature reviewed below are the theoretical phenomena that have been consistently engaged as guiding principles in visual communications design. The topics below subsequently discuss on Visual Communications in Layout designs the detail.

2.2. Visual Communications in Layout Designs

Visual communication as the name suggests, is communication through visual aid and is described as the conveyance of ideas and information in forms that can be read or viewed. Visual communications largely rely on vision and are mostly expressed in two dimensional images such as: signs, typography, drawings, graphic design, pictures, graphs, charts, colour, illustrations and electronic resources (Sless, 1981, P.187). Similarly, Sale (2010) observed that visual communications is a common process whereby one system influences another system through the regulation of the transmitted signals, employing the physiology of sight perception, communication models, and visual communications theory. Visual communication also explores the idea that a pictorial message accompanying text has a greater power to inform, educate, or persuade an audience. Lidwell (2003) supports this assertion by maintaining that memory for pictures and words together is superior to memory for words alone or pictures alone.

Today, the use of presentation software has made visual aid development easier. As such, users anticipate more upgrades in software and digital devices, especially with the increasing number of Internet users. Figure 2 graphically presents internet usage worldwide with a significant progress compared to the preceding years. Internet users worldwide have doubled in the past five years and have already surpassed the 2 billion predicted mark for 2011, with the majority of the 226 million new users this year coming from developing countries (United Nations Telecommunications Agency, 2014).

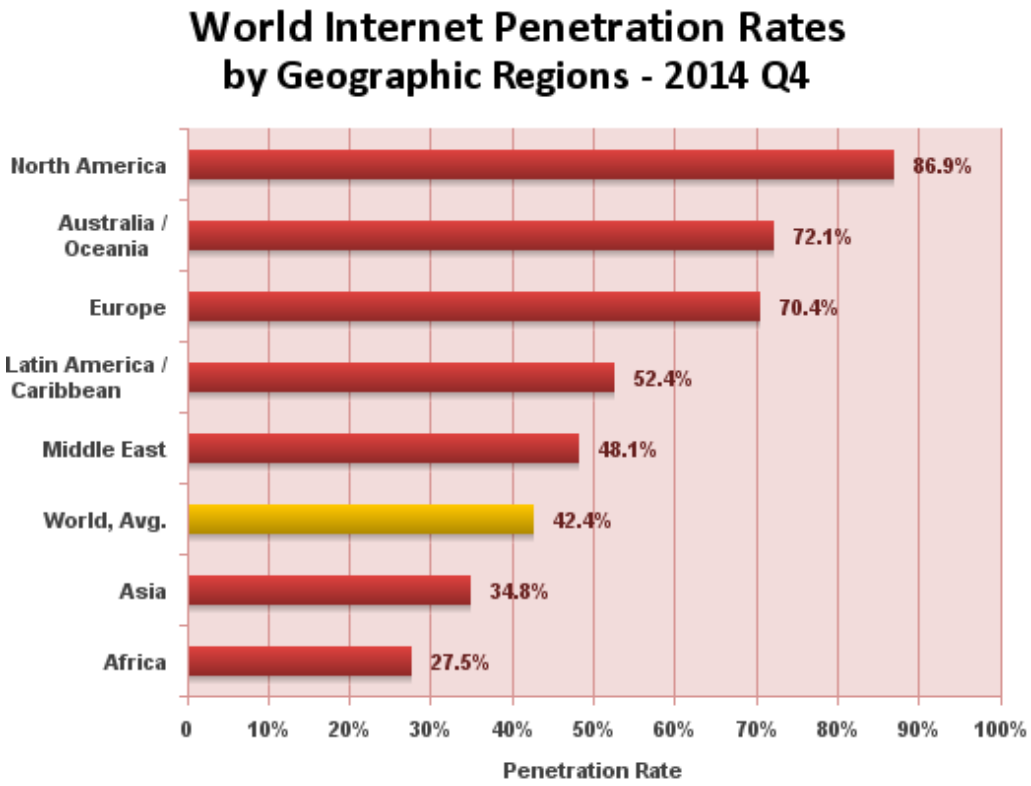


Figure 2: Bar Chart Showing the Level of Penetration of Internet
Source: Internet World Stats- www.internetworldststs.com.htm (2015)

Recent researches in the field of visual communications have focused on web design, graphical user interface (GUI) and graphically-oriented usability. Jamieson (2007) remarked that visual communication on the World Wide Web (www) is perhaps the most important form of communication that takes place while users are browsing the Internet and using online media. This is because the Internet is fast and can be accessed at anytime, anywhere worldwide, provided there is Internet access. However, this does not mean that it is stronger than print media. The print media has a slightly slower production procedure which results in higher-quality prints and more developed information. Publishers no longer have to choose between the two, as many newspapers and magazines can also be found on the Internet. Print media, particularly newspapers, tends to focus on a specific geographical area, while magazines, prospectuses calendars and journals can have a wider circulation that extends beyond regional and national

boundaries within days or weeks. This means that the circulation of print media is fairly limited. In contrast, online media (Internet) can be accessed worldwide over the Internet, giving them a larger available audience.

When using the web, one uses one's vision as the primary sense, and therefore the visual display of a website should be very appealing and also attract the users to appreciate and comprehend the message or the communication taking place.

The role of communications is crucial in attaining maximum organisational success. Sale (2010) observed that communications have always been one of the most important strategies for attaining organisational success, achieved by constantly improving on organisational communications to give an institution an edge in today's information and communication age. Furthermore, Payne (2001) adds that when you improve your communication, you will improve on your life personally and professionally. Communications therefore, cannot be taken for granted because by practicing responsible communications, an organisation or institution will meet their own needs while benefiting from others. Communication is also important to our society generally because it helps us develop a sense of community within our opinions and differences.

Through communications, we discover our similarities of interest and purpose and can reach a compromise or gain understanding on many issues about which we disagree. Ryan and Conover (2004) held that communication existed since the existence of mankind, evolving along the demands of our constant and ever changing century needs. However, the communications model has over the years remained fundamentally the same in terms of flow of idea from one source to another source- from sender to receiver, and from receiver

back to sender (feedback). Several pioneers in the communications field such as Thomas Bohn, Harold Lasswell, Paul Messaris, Claude Shanon, and Warren Weaver have come up with communication models. Claude Shanon's model (Figure 3) has however, been the most common of all.

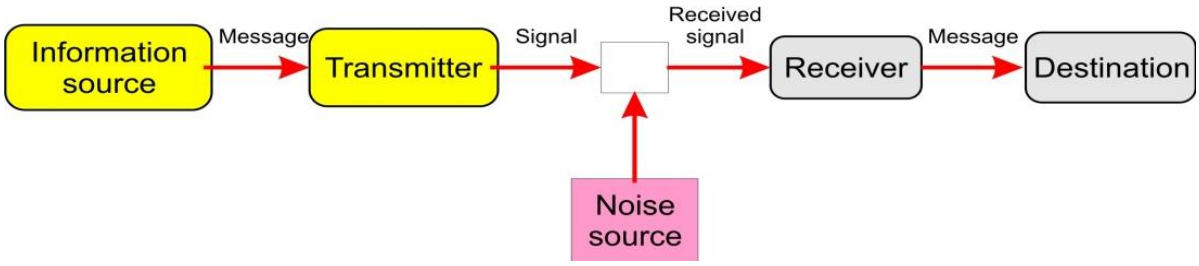


Figure 3: The Claude Shanon's Model of Communication.
Source: Redrawn from Ryan and Conover (2004) Graphic communications today.

Information dissemination approaches that implement a mechanical, one-way flow of written information have not proven to be effective in encouraging widespread adoption and implementation of new programmes, ideas, and strategies. Fuglesang (1973) also observed that communication can be most efficient only if it is a two-way process, although, Ryan and Conover (2004), held that the two-way process of communication can only be efficient if it flows along five component parts to ensure that the message was understood. The five components include:

- Sender;
- Message;
- Medium;
- Receiver and;
- feedback.

In the complete two-way process (Figure 4), if any one of the five components is omitted, the message may likely fail to be communicated. The model below illustrates the information flow through the five essential components.

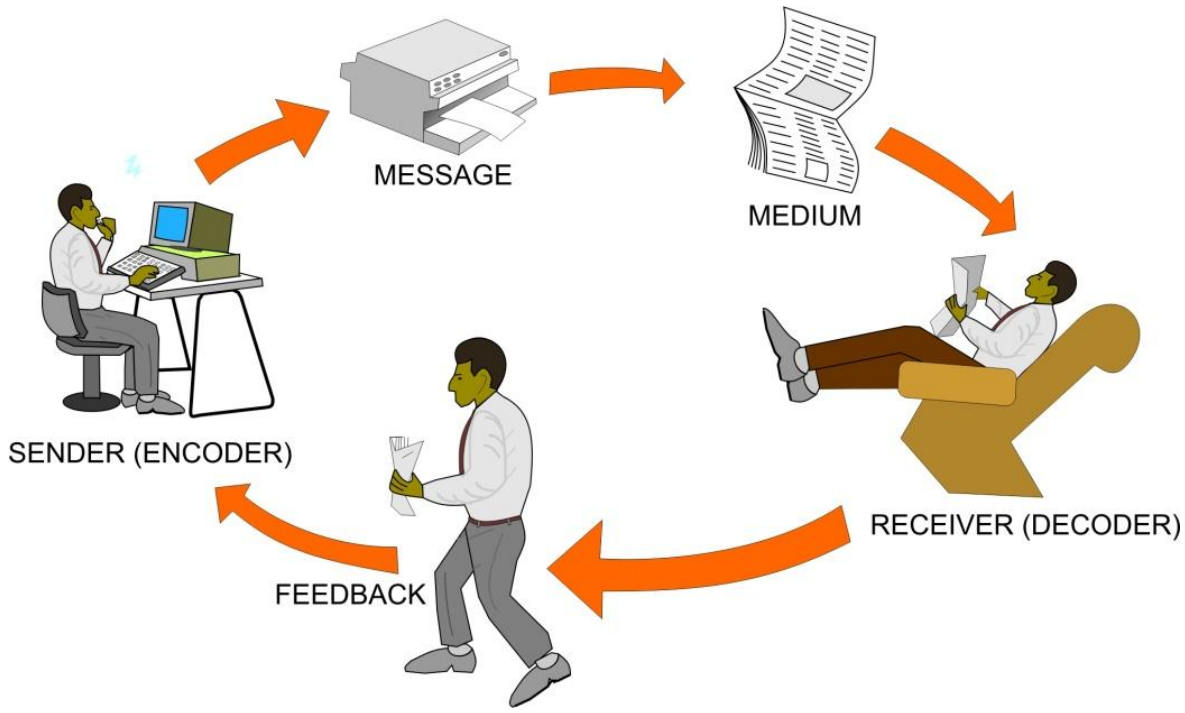


Figure 4: Information flow. Source: Redrawn from Ryan and Conover (2004) Graphic communications today, 4th edition.

According to Lester (2006), the essence of visual communications is the conveyance of ideas and information in forms that can be read or looked upon especially through visual aid. Other experts in the field of communications integrate ideas about communication as a two-way process. As a result, the job of disseminating information extends to include providing support for actual understanding of concepts and possible implementation of changes as an intended result of dissemination activities in the form of feedbacks. Effective communications is more likely to occur when the planning and overall nature of the information has been influenced by appropriate input from the potential recipient/user or audience.

The introduction of technology in communication has changed the way we perceive information. It has become very evident that all of the new technology has tremendous power to link us closer together with individuals around the world. Payne (2001) emphasised that, as with any other form of communication, communicating through technology requires that you consider the nature of your message, and then adapt the technology to fit the message. He further emphasised that the Internet and other communication technologies have indeed made communications much easier than ever. The modern communication technologies make life easier because they make it possible to communicate with anyone, anywhere, anytime, making it easier to deal with issues more expeditiously and also making it possible to increase the flow of complex information while making decisions with the best available data. In addition to timely messaging, other advantages of modern communication technologies include:

- Ease of communicating instructions to people in a remote location via interactive video conferencing;
- Reduction in physical meetings.

Visual communication has its own codes and constructions. It possesses its own grammar, syntax, styles and history as well as its own language, applications and skills to be learned. With very few expectations, our verbal literacy is learned and advanced through vision- through reading and writing skills. We study letters, words, spelling, vocabulary, grammar, style, composition, writing, and literary grammar is central to language studies for most of our entire education. Writing starts before we commence formal schooling by first learning to recognise a set of abstract symbols and then to form them. Visual literacy possesses a unique history, literature and heritage that precede written language. Khange (2011) observed that the cuneiform script and

hieroglyphic pictograms were also early forms of visual communications that evolved into what is today called alphabet. Other early forms of visual communications are cave and rock paintings that date back to pre-historic era. The most common themes in cave paintings are large wild animals, such as bison, horses, aurochs, and deer, and tracings of human hands as well as abstract patterns. The paintings were mainly drawn with red and yellow ochre, hematite, manganese oxide and charcoal. Sometimes the silhouette of the animal was engraved in the rock first. Vishny (2009) adds an alternative and more modern theory, based on studies of more modern hunter-gatherer societies, the paintings were made by Cro-Magnon shaman. The shaman would retreat into the darkness of the caves, enter into a trance state and then paint images of their visions, perhaps with some notion of drawing power out of the cave walls themselves. This goes some way towards explaining the remoteness of some of the paintings (which often occur in deep or small caves) and the variety of subject matter (from prey animals to predators and human hand-prints). However, as with all prehistory, it is impossible to be certain due to the relative lack of material evidence and the many pitfalls associated with trying to understand the prehistoric mindset with a modern mind.

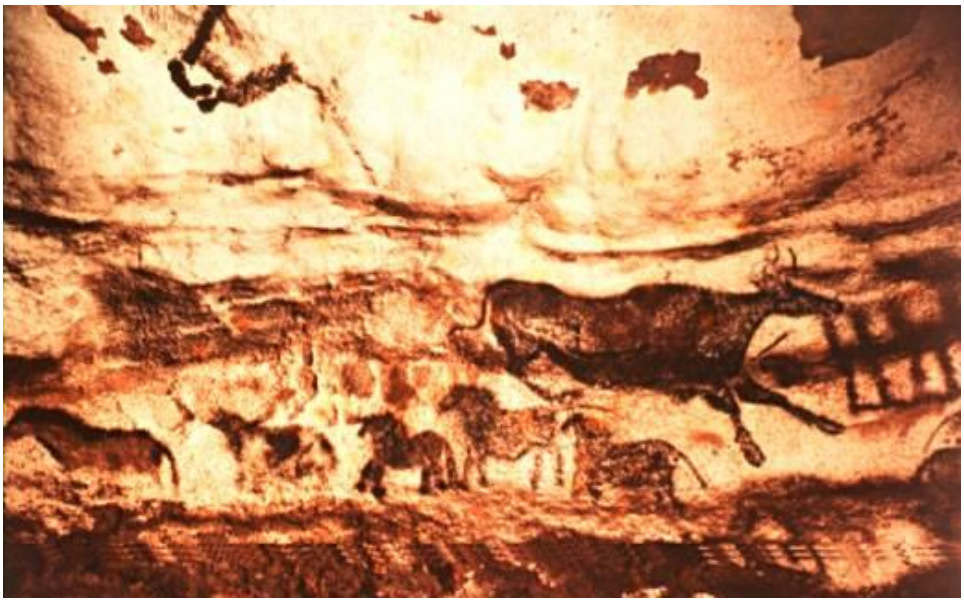


Plate I: Rock Painting, Source: Microsoft Encarta 2009

In the 21st century, visual communication by e-mail, a textual medium, is commonly expressed with the American Standard Code for Information Exchange (ASCII art), emoticons, and embedded digital images. The term 'visual presentation' is used to refer to the actual presentation of information through a visible medium such as text or images.

Pollard (1989), Westbrook and Lumbley (1990) and Talja (2002) generally observed that practical applications in planning, decision making, program administration, and the delivery of quality information services to audience may become highly effective if most of the under listed information circulation characteristics and elements are allowed.

2.2.1 Information circulation characteristics

1. Information should be oriented toward the needs of the user, incorporating the types and levels of information needed into the forms and language preferred by the user.
2. Varied information dissemination methods, including written information, electronic media, and person-to-person contact should be used.
3. Information dissemination include both proactive and reactive channels that users have identified as important, and they include information that users may not have thought how or when to request but that they are likely to need. Clear channels should be established for users to make their needs and priorities known to the circulating agency.
4. Recognize and provide for the "natural flow" of the four levels of dissemination that have been identified as leading to utilization: spread, exchange, choice, and implementation of particular information. The levels of information dissemination identified include: Strategic sharing (information sharing as a conscious strategy of maximizing efficiency in a research group), Paradigmatic sharing (information

sharing as a means of establishing a novel and distinguishable research approach or area within a discipline or across disciplines), directive sharing (information sharing between teachers and students) and social sharing (information sharing as a relationship- and community-building activity).

5. Visual communication should draw upon existing resources, relationships, and networks to the maximum extent possible while building new resources as needed by users.
6. Visual communication should include effective quality control mechanisms to assure that information to be included in the system is accurate, relevant, and representative.
7. Visual communication should also include sufficient information so that the user can determine the basic principles underlying specific practices and the settings in which these practices may be used most productively.
8. Effective visual communication should establish linkages to resources that may be needed to implement the information - usually referred to as technical assistance.

The characteristics of effective information circulation listed above would reflect in the data that is to be imputed in the research instruments to be administered in this study. The data would draw across issues pertaining to prospective students who are the major users of the proposed prototype document (prospective students), the methods and channels of circulating the documents as well as provisions for feedback/response forms.

2.2.2 Elements of effective dissemination of information

The elements of effective information dissemination highlighted by Westbrook and Lumbley (1990) are: goals, objectives, users, content, sources, medium, success, access, availability and barriers.

Goals: Determine and document the goals of your dissemination effort for your proposed project.

Objectives: Associate each goal with one or more objectives that clarifies what you are trying to accomplish through your dissemination activities.

Users: Describe the scope and characteristics of the "potential users" that your dissemination activities are designed to reach for each of your objectives.

Content: Identify, at least, the basic elements of the projected content you have to disseminate to each of the potential user groups identified.

Source(s): Identify the primary source (University website, University information centres) that each potential user group is already tied into or most respects as an information source. Consider ways to partner with these sources in your dissemination efforts.

Medium: Describe the medium or media through which the content of your message can be delivered best to your potential users and describe the capabilities and resources that will be required of potential users to access the content for each medium to be used.

Success: Describe how you will know if your dissemination activities have been successful. If data is to be gathered, describe how, when, and who will gather it.

Access: Describe how you will promote access to your information and how you will archive information that may be requested at a later date. Consider that most people will use your project-related information when they perceive a need for it not necessarily when you have completed your research project.

Availability: Identify strategies for promoting awareness of the availability of your research-based information and the availability of alternate formats.

Barriers: Identify potential barriers that may interfere with the targeted users' access or utilization of your information and develop actions to reduce these barriers.

To enhance an effective flow and possible success of the communication model, the feedback response sheet will contain structured questions and suggestions reflecting elements such as: goals, objectives, users, content, sources and medium, while success, access and availability components would form issues to be adjudged by a sample of professionals graphic artists and post graduate design students at the end of the study.

2.3. History and Principles of Print Layouts

The history of design layout in general dates back to the Middle Ages- a time when early illuminated pages and books were hand-copied- proceeding down to intricate modern catalogue and magazine layouts. With the print media, design elements mostly consist of type, images and sometimes place-holder graphics for elements such as die cutting, foil and blind embossing that are not printed in ink (Paul, Black and Kohser (2003). The print and product design industries have recorded significant land marks in recent times. According to Aboderin (2009), a series of rapid advancements have been going on in the print and design and product industry during and after the industrial revolution of the late 18th and early 19th centuries which have brought about advanced high quality products. In printing and printing equipment, Reichl (2009) acknowledged that in 1798, German Alois Senefelder invented the method of printing with stone plates called lithography. This novel technique was originally intended for reproduction of maps, music notation and other visual communication materials; it quickly spread throughout Europe and America, becoming extraordinarily important in the 19th century art and advertising.

Within a few years of its invention, the lithographic method was used to create multi-colour printed images that held all manner of cropped and embedded images as well as free running type, a process known in the middle of 19th century as chromolithography.



Plate II: Aloys Senefelder Litthography Press and a Sample Map Print Out.
Source: "History of Visual Communications" (2011)

The steam-powered press which was invented in Germany in the 19th century, and the rotary press, which prints images onto a continuous sheet of paper from a rotating drum, was introduced in the United States in 1846. The Linotype typesetting machine was then patented by the German-born American inventor Ottmar Mergenthaler in 1884. This printing evolution permitted typesetters to arrange text by typing on a keyboard rather than hand-setting each letter singularly. Together, the Linotype machine and the rotary press transformed the overall speed of printing. These letterpress printing technologies dominated the industry until the 1950s, when phototypesetting and photo-offset printing

were introduced. Recent advancement in computer typesetting and printing has dominated the 21st century, making visual design highly manipulative, and quick in rendering of graphic elements. Labuz (1993) observed that computers, word-processing and graphics software are used today to set type and compose pages on the screen just as they will look in the final print, in either black and white or colour. Page layouts can also be transmitted digitally (numerically coded into electronic pulses) via fax machines, computer modems, telephone networks, and satellite systems to other locations for editing, redesign, or printing. The spread of computer-based word processing and graphic design has led to the growth of desktop publishing. Today large, medium and small scale industries can publish newsletters, newspapers, prospectuses, books and magazines for specific audiences, using an array of efficient modern equipment.

Layout designs and other forms of two-dimensional graphics communications media have been influenced by different movements even to this modern information and digital era. The influence on print design has always had some notable guiding principles. Wallschlaeger (1992) notes that two major influences have occupied the printed page for many years. They are the grid system and the push-pin studio approaches. The oldest known is the Bauhaus-Swiss grid system where layout concepts are based on classical rules of symmetry and proportions, making such designs highly communicative.

2.3.1 The Bauhaus-Swiss style

Also known as International Style, the Bauhaus-Swiss legacy is not just concerned with the design system born in Switzerland, but also with the progressive, radical new style that many other European designers adopted. Eventually, the Bauhaus-Swiss style became an International Style in art and architecture after spreading to other parts of the world,

many other artists around the world have produced designs in that style after the 1950s. This approach to graphics communication was born in the international context. Stamps, posters, catalogues, brochures, prospectuses, magazines, institutional typographical identity and street signs are areas of design influenced by this movement. In this sense, artists are creating much more user-friendly interfaces, thereby delivering their messages in a clear fashion.

Mixed with constructivist and modernist ideals, the Bauhaus-Swiss style held the authentic pursuit for simplicity in high esteem. Most of the style craft is devoted to minimal elements of typography and content layout rather than to textures and illustrations. Minimal design, (an art movement that developed in the late 1950s and early 1960s, chiefly in the United States) is about removing the unnecessary and emphasizing the necessary; it is about a functional and simple use of fundamental elements of style, consisting of geometric shapes or other simple forms, often arranged in a series of *modules* (standard units) for the purpose of the artist's objectives. Other attributes of the Bauhaus-Swiss style include the designer’s uniform design elements, mathematical grids, simplified geometric forms, vibrant contrasting colours, and free from propaganda and commercial advertising. Keen attention to detail, craft skill, system education and technical training, precision, high standard of printing, text manipulations and abstract visuals that were used to portray their message in a very remarkable way. These refinements laid out the foundation for a new movement that characterised graphic design worldwide in the 1960's. The movement eventually gave birth to what is known as the International Style.

The geometric feature of the International Style is based mainly on symmetry where by the characteristics of design contents can be thought of as states of equilibrium and it usually culminates in a visual balance. Cheatham and Owens (1987) observed that symmetrical compositions are a state where all the component parts of a design are composed so that they can be divided by or positioned equally from a central axis. Contrarily, asymmetric designs are potentially perceived as unbalanced and unstable, with a feeling of uneasiness except when intentionally adopted to suggest a feeling of mobility or action in specific design contents.



Plate III: International Style Movement Layouts. Source: http://www.graphic-design.com/DTG/chwast/index.html (2011)



Plate IV: Centre Spread Designs of the International Style Movement.
Source: http://www.graphic-design.com/DTG/chwast/index.html (2011)

2.3.2 Grid system

A grid system is a sort of rigid structure that guides the graphic designer in a logical, consistent and meaningful organisation of information on a page. Designers use certain ideas from typographic literature in building rigid and coherent style for page layout. Donahue (1978) maintains that layouts based on grid appear clean, crisp, serene and have peaceful unprovocative balance. Similarly, Brockmann (2007) also observed that the grid systems are now established tools often used by most print and web designers to structure a framework of balanced designs. This is most evident in templates that come with modern page layout design software such as QuarkXPress, Adobe illustrator and newer versions of CorelDraw 13, 14 and 15 (X3, X4 and X5). These layout softwares allow for the importation of pictorial and typographical elements from other programmes and organise them on a page or in a sequence of pages. Pictorial elements (illustration and

images) can be rescaled, cropped, framed or given new backgrounds while typographical elements (headlines and texts) can be edited, given font, size and justification changes, framed with lines and shifted to wrap around pictorial elements.

The Swiss Style attributes make it easy for designers to embrace the grid style as a purely visual framework. However, with critical observation, we can see that the grids are much more than just a style of placing elements; there is a simple, logical and consistent structuring of elements which, despite not being inherent to the use of the grid, is a large part of the International Style's essence.

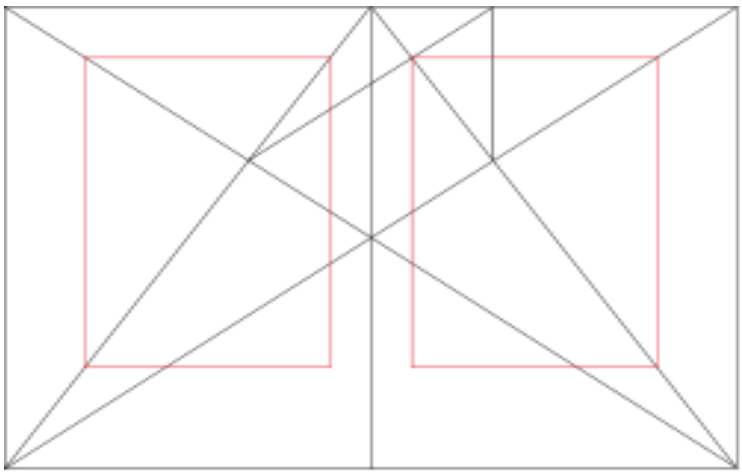


Figure 5 (a): Depiction of the Proportions in a Medieval Manuscript.
Source: (The New Typography: A Handbook for Modern Designers 1995)

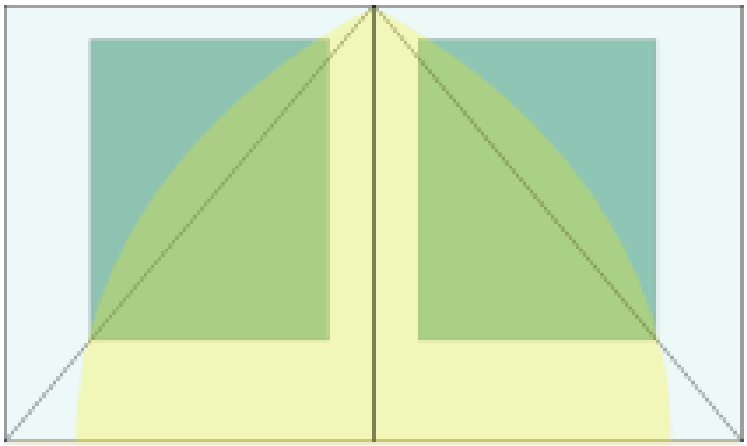


Figure 5 (b): Depiction of the Proportions in a Medieval Manuscript.
Source: (The New Typography: A Handbook for Modern Designers 1995)

2.3.3 Push-Pin style

The Push-pin studio creation shook the industry with a new nostalgic personal style that became very revolutionary, highly derivative in design, but strong and individual in character. The Push-pin studio was co-founded by Seymour Chivast and Ed Sorel in 1954 after being relieved of their jobs at Esquire Magazine on the same day. Drawing from the entire history of visual culture and German woodcuts to Art Nouveau and 1930s comic art.

Cullen (2003) observed that Push Pin created a fresh, witty, surrealist, and thought-provoking style that reunited illustration with typography and design. Plates V and VI depict the typical surrealist nature of the Push-pin style. Woodham (2006) also remarked that the Push-pin content output was prolific and included a wide variety of realizations including books, posters, packaging, record covers, animated films, magazines, brochures and prospectuses that inducted the founders into the Art Directors Hall of Fame in 1984 and earned them several international design awards.

According to Chang (2010), Push Pin represents a strong graphic personality and it often based on humours, plays, and surprises. The Push Pin style also became a pivotal reference point in the world of graphic design and several graphic designers still owe most of their design credits to this style.



Plate V: Push-pin Style Art, Source: *Push Pin Graphic: A Quarter Century of Innovative Source: Design and Illustration.* Chronicle Books, 2004.



Plate VI: Push-pin Style Art, Source: *Push Pin Graphic: A Quarter Century of Innovative Source: Design and Illustration.* Chronicle Books, 2004.

The Art Nouveau school also provided a wealth of decorative, imaginative styles and symbols that were easily converted to layout design. Designers who wanted to use the abundant symbols of art nouveau could legitimately design in an established tradition without copying an entity, but layout artists, although not by choice, ignored the opportunities for exciting visual communication. Plates VII and plate VIII below are “Wall paper designs of “Isolde” and “Mucha's Poster designs from the Art Nouveau style. Plate VIII particularly shows large portions of decorations which are notable Art Nouveau style designs.

In the course of this research, notable guiding principles of the international style art such as minimalism, classical rules of symmetry will be widely explored in conducting the prototype prospectus design layout. The review of literature indicated that the International style art allows for mixed ideas from semantic grid style structuring of visual elements in logical and consistent order.



Plate VII: “Wall paper”, “Isolde” and “Mucha's Poster” an Art Nouveau style design layout. Source: Microsoft Encarta 2009.

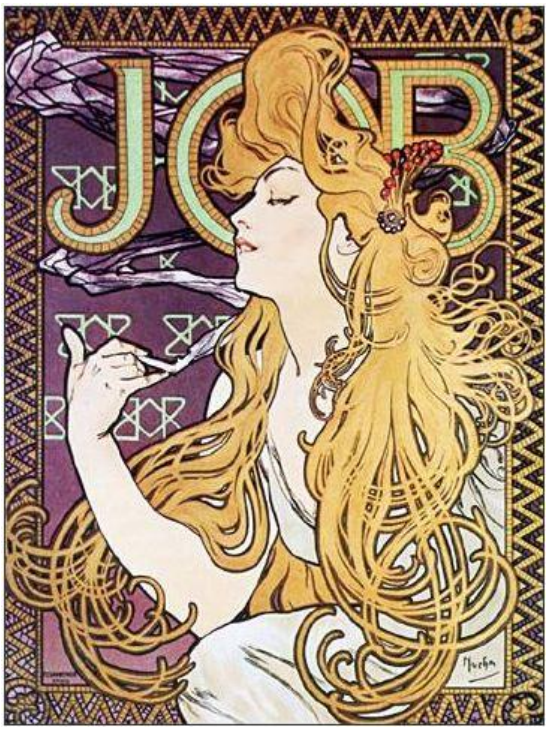


Plate VIII: “Wall paper”, “Isolde” and “Mucha's Poster” an Art Nouveau style design layout. Source: Microsoft Encarta 2009.

2.4. Review of Layout and Prospectus Designs

Layout designs of prospectuses, magazines, newspapers and journals are all aspects of publication design that differ from other forms of communication (such as broadcasting and internet) in that it involves words and pictures within a printed multi-page format (Evans 2006). Art, aesthetics and graphic communication are very essential in our lives because they shape the way we perceive and respond to visual information. Images represent the details and evolution of civilisation to preserve our collective history of visual communications from cave arts to printing, motion pictures, Uniform Resource Locators (URL) and digital codes. According to Ryan and Conover (2004), visual images truly permeate our lives; media employ imagery to attract our attention and to persuade us. Publication design involves the organisation of content and arrangement of words and pictures within this context.

Persuasion has always been the watch word in planning, designing, publishing and circulating prospectuses as well as other forms of advertorials. Faulkner (2010) observed that prospectuses are among the old tools of marketing that are still as effective as ever, that have become graphics communication materials that simple designs and high quality printing have been given utmost priority to attract and possibly persuade prospective users. According to Spencily (2010), a prospectus acts as an ambassador who conveys thoughts and mission/vision statements to customers and partners and markets products and services of institutions. It is visually and literarily a medium that advertises or describes the activities, staff and facilities of an organisation or an institution such as a college or university. Specifically, a university or school prospectus is a document available to prospective students to persuade them to apply for admissions. It usually contains information about the institution and its programmes, including advice on how to apply for admissions and the benefits of accepting a place there. University and college

prospectuses should reflect the school's achievements, ethos and professionalism. An effective prospectus is not only there for information, but also there to help enunciate the values and principles an institution embodies. To be really effective, a prospectus should project the right message and image to parents/guardians yearning to get the best education for their child or ward.

Many universities have individual prospectuses for each course or group of courses that they offer, both in paper and online, divided into undergraduate and postgraduate prospectuses. Though the Internet continues to play an ever increasing role in all marketing related aspects of our world today, However, (Winter 2011) observed that there would always be an important role for the printed prospectus document to play in advertising. Furthermore, undergraduate prospectuses are visual communications publications that most universities in developed countries use to showcase essential information about their institutions.

Generally, publication and print design explores all the structures such as pacing, sequence and hierarchy of information as well as the particular use of text and images, such as in the editorial material of books, prospectuses, brochures, magazines and newspapers. A layout design for the overall appearance of a printed page ensures that the whole design elements and principles meet up to professional graphic and print standards, especially when created by designers who possess the skills and understanding of the visual structure. The structure or syntax used to organise the visual information as well as the previous experience of the audience, contribute to the response the design gets.

Wallschlaeger and Snyder (1992) highlight that visual concepts, principles and perceptive principles of organisation are the two types of organisational principles that can be used as visual ordering systems. Each principle or theory is only a small part of the large concept of organisation with all the visual messages required, establishing a hierarchy of the message. These categories are effective in bringing order to the problem solving process and serve as structuring guidelines to create the intended message. Organisational structures are established to aid the creative form generation process. These can be achieved by using visual organisation principles to structure the harmony among the visual elements of form, the compositional elements in a page layout, and the design message. An effective application of these categories would result in an acceptable solution with visual unity, a coherence of the elements, processes and methods that solve the communications problem of a message. The resulting solutions are usually affected by personal skills, motivation, resources and creativity.

To establish a more solid basis for good design language, Buser (2006) concurs with Evans (2003) that certain design principles, such as dominance, consistency with variety and rhythm are fundamental guidelines designers and artists appropriate in their works. They apply sensitivity towards achieving wholeness, completeness, coherence as well as meeting the design goals. The proposed redesign of a modern and creative ABU undergraduate prospectus was raised as a result of some of the design flaws earlier mentioned in the statement of the problem. The content variables mentioned were incoherent monotypes, poor use of colour, low quality images and complete black and white pages. The concept of minimalism and simplicity as emphasised in the International Style art was the watch words in redesigning the prototype prospectus. This is because publication designers and some advertising agencies today owe much of their layout design concepts to these International Style design concepts.

Some prospectuses' layout design samples such as the Academy of Art University, Oxford University, Pennsylvania Academy of Arts have been studied, and their design concepts reflect harmony in colour combinations, simple typography and relevant photographic elements used together with other design elements and principles in enhancing the entire designs. Cheatham (1987) in like manner suggests that visual forms can be used to enhance the transmission of messages. Such forms like symbols, pictures with captions and dialogue can all communicate thoughts and feelings to the viewer. Meske (2007) further adds that one should not load his brochure with thousands of words. In order to maintain a simple design, prospectus layout call for a minimum rendering because designers often usually provide swipes from earlier design editions for copy specifications. This differs from standard newspaper layouts that usually specify space in inches. Donahue (1978) noted that an eight column page, twenty one inches deep, would be specified as 168 inches (8col. x 21"). Furthermore, Faulkner (2010) highlights the efficacy of good planning as a great factor in enhancing the essence of prospectuses and brochures. The skills of a graphic designer, experienced copy writers and seasoned photographers are combined by professional prospectus designers to achieve a highly planned and effective essence of the prospectus design layout concepts. Consequently, in planning an exciting and effective university or college prospectus, Kwaya (2010) surmised that in planning a good prospectus, a general introduction about the institution should be highlighted before the display of courses offered, methods of applications, fee and financial support information, academic support, sports, maps and other non-academic services.

The designs below reflect a review of some recent prospectus layout designs. Plate IX is a cover design showing images aligned on the left while a set of text is balancing the images on a contrasting block of colour to the right side.

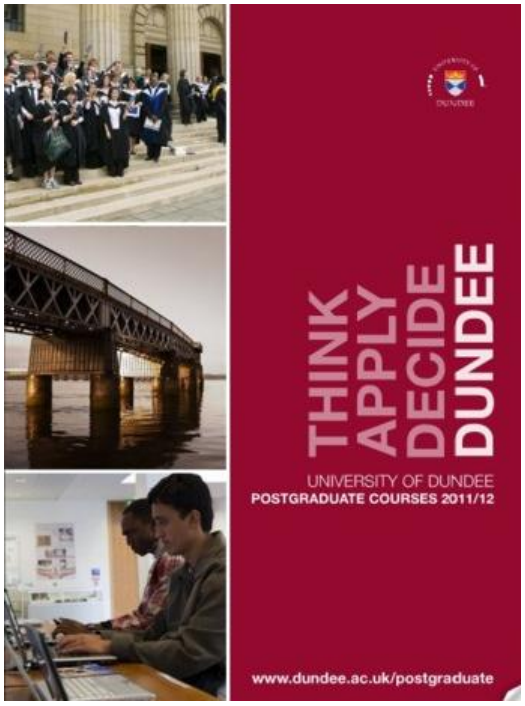


Plate IX: Cover Design (Dundee University) Source: www.dundee.ac.uk/ (2010)

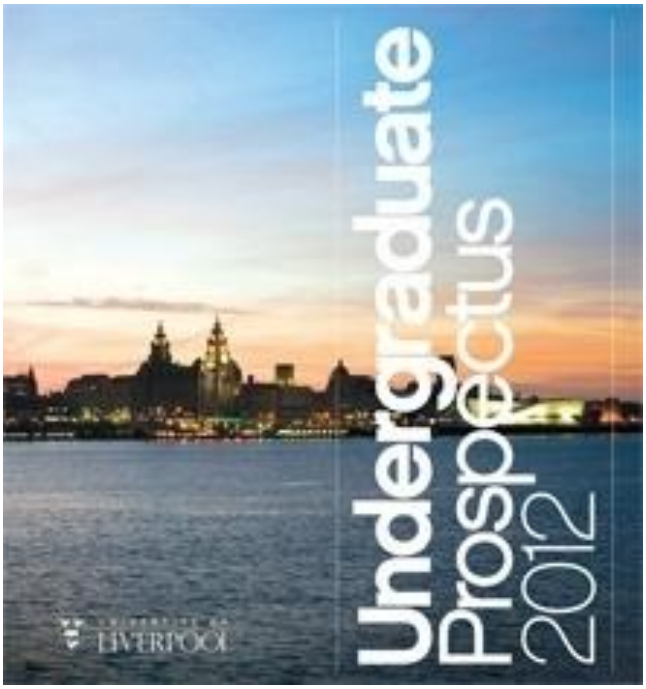


Plate X: Cover Design (Liverpool University, 2010)

Plate X is a cover design showing an image of the town of Liverpool in front of the setting sun. Then a large block of contrasting text is combined with the image. The design concept showed the simplistic characteristics of the International Style Art.

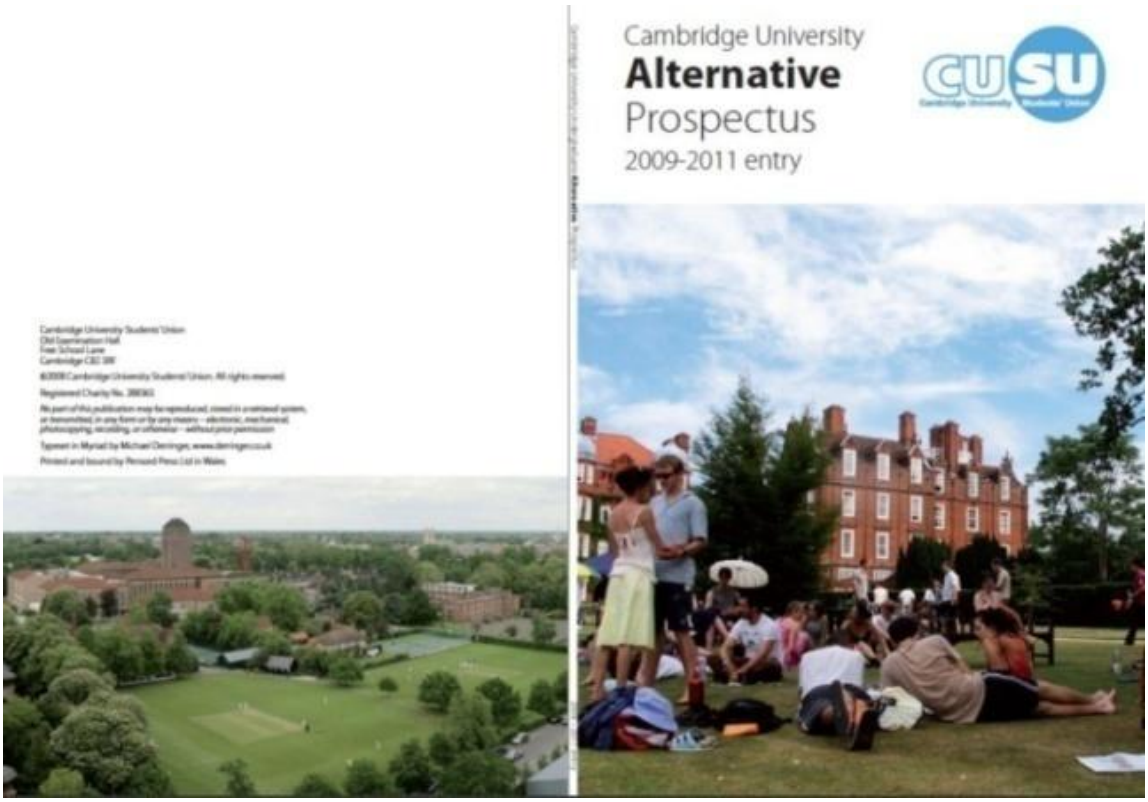


Plate XI: Cambridge University (2010)

Plate XI is a cover design of Cambridge University, showing an image of some campus activities, while the back page captures an aerial view of the campus. Sans-serif text was embedded in the top quarter of the top. The design concept also showed the simplistic characteristics of the International Style Art.



Plate XII: Inner page of the London Metropolitan University Prospectus

Plates XII shows inner page designs of layouts that explore the use of bold san-serif types rendered unconventionally, but maintain a high degree of contrast with their backgrounds. The image elements are formal structuring of photos taken from sites around the campus. The principle of dominance is also noticeable as some colours occupy large spaces. Harmonising colours were then carefully applied in organising the layouts of the entire layouts reviewed above. These range of prospectus sample design layouts and some of the design concepts will be studied together with other concepts from the international Style art and Pushpin studios to attain some modern trend style that were adopted in the redesign. The research design chapter discusses the design strategy that was adopted in this study.

2.5. Visual Elements in Designs Layout

The visual elements of prospectus' layout and other visual communication materials require the same elements and principles of design in general to effectively impact its

desired audience by a way of persuasion. Photographs, drawings, illustrations and other still images would be converted into a format that the computer can manipulate and display. Such formats include bit-mapped graphics and vector graphics. In the cause of this research, classical concepts of simplicity, symmetry of geometric forms and the minimal characteristics of the International Style art and the grid systems are design attributes to be explored. As such, these attributes would be the guiding procedures when redesigning all design layouts of the proposed prospectus. This is because of the consistent and successful design layouts that characterised these movements. Earlier emphasised in literature, Dondis (1978), Cheatham (1987) and Buser (2006) all pointed to the fact that any layout or page ordering must follow the basic principles and elements (line, shape, colour, texture, type and imagery) observing that while these elements are very fundamental in unifying a design content, they ought to be guided by some principles; hierarchy, balance, proximity, rhythm, scale, unity and variety.

2.5.1. Line

A Line is a basic element that refers to the continuous movement of a dot along a surface. The edges of shapes and forms also create lines. It is the basic component of a shape drawn on paper. Every line has length, thickness, and direction. There are curved, horizontal, vertical, diagonal, zigzag, wavy, parallel, dash, and dotted lines.

2.5.2. Shape

A shape is an area that stands out from the space next to or around it due to a defined or implied boundary, or because of differences of value, colour, or texture. They can be **geometric** (circles, squares and triangles) or **organic** (such as leaves, sea shells).

2.5.3. Colour application in layout designs

Colour, a physical phenomenon of light or visual perception associated with the various wavelengths in the visible portion of the electromagnetic spectrum. As a sensation experienced by humans and some animals, the perception of colour is a complex neurophysiological process (Microsoft Encarta, 2009). Colours can greatly enhance the aesthetic appeal of a design especially when harmonious and contrasting colours are applied to attract attention. Ogunwole (1996) remarked that colours are a rich vocabulary for visual expression and communication that can affect our feelings and influence our attention. Similarly, Dakyes (1999) obliged that colour is a communicator that adds extra attention and illustrative value to advertising materials, improving the materials realism, believability, effects and its uses in design layouts can be summarized under the three main concepts;

- Artistic value of colour;
- Attention value of colour; and
- Illustrative value of colour.

Colours can also make a design conspicuous, cheerful and stimulating. Donahue (1978) stated that layout artists prefer to design their layout works in colours because colours are emotional and subjective elements that affect intuition and very likely to persuade. Adding that coloured prints are the most expensive tasks and practice that are the least accessible to up-coming designers, but in advertising, usually the simplest use of colour is in two-colour. Black is often considered a colour, so two colours would imply black harmonised with another colour carefully considering legibility when used to print type, allowing type to be reversed into it legibly and allowing small type to be overprinted legibly.

2.5.4 Texture application in layout designs

According to Nielson and Taylor (2002), texture is perceived surface quality. Noting that in art, there are basically two types of texture: tactile and implied. Tactile texture (real texture) is the way the surface of an object actually feels. Examples of this include sandpaper, cotton balls, tree bark, and animal fur, among others. While implied texture is the way the surface of an object looks like it feels. The texture may look rough, fizzy, gritty, but cannot actually be felt. This type of texture is used by artists when designing, drawing or painting. The paper textures to be explored in the proposed design layouts would be based on a careful observation and synthesis of the tactile features of collected prospectus samples from various universities and colleges.

2.5.5. Type application in layout designs

This aspect of the review addresses some perception issues in typography as are relevant to designing print documents such as prospectuses, magazines and other publications design. Evans (2003) observed that the principles that apply to other formal design elements also apply to type. Type is a component in a page layout that is controlled and arranged with other elements in support of the design objectives. However, type plays a dual role, in that typographic forms also contain verbal meaning. It is as important for typography to effectively communicate a verbal message as well as function well in a design concept and functions as a design element. Typographic concepts could also be applied in brochures, catalogues, book covers, magazines, bulletin, maps and journal designs. Typography is crucial to almost all design projects. It is important to understand basic typography terms, how to use it effectively, how to find and identify the best fonts for a project. The principle of simplicity is one core reason why the International Style designers pay so much attention to type. This is because types are simple symbols that

quickly and easily convey a message to literate audiences and is one of the most fundamental principles of visual communication that is able to deliver the message in a very precise way.

Typography is a specialised visual concept that addresses the design elements that can be applied to letters and text on a printed page (Craig and Scala 2006). The art of typography is as old as most ancient alphabets and hieroglyphic images. Most of its terminologies and styles go back to techniques of lapidary inscriptions that were popular in ancient Rome and Athens. But more concisely, the art of typography belongs to the history of printing, since it was only in the printing era that the development of the standardized, reproducible sets of typefaces the true practical discipline of typography began to emerge.

Initially concerned solely with book publishers, newspaper and magazine editors, typography has today become a text attribute that no aspiring communicator can take lightly or ignore especially with the explosive growth of the powerful electronic-publishing and word-processing tools (Lawson, 1990). Particularly with the large variety of available font categories in recent years, the opportunity to facilitate, magnify, intensify or even subdue the impact of a message by altering typographic variables has never been greater.

Typography has become a monumental attribute in addressing compositional problems, especially when creatively combined with pictures in design layouts. Typography is mainly concerned with the style and size of typefaces. In printing, the complete set of type, consisting of letters, numbers, punctuation marks, and other special symbols of the same style and size is called a “font.” Fonts are usually classified into two categories: the

"serifs" and the "san-serifs." Serifs are the group of fonts distinguished by distinctive finished strokes that are applied to letters to make them appear chiselled and lapidary, while sans-serifs simply mean the ones without serifs.

The Swiss movement advocates minimalism in design concepts, explaining that minimal design is about removing the unnecessary and emphasizing the necessary. It is about a functional and simple use of fundamental elements of style for the purpose of the artists' objectives, and adding more elements to a design without fully exploring the potential of the basic ones can be considered a waste (Tschichold, 1995). As such, the strongest characteristic of the Swiss style typography was the use of sans-serif typefaces. Tschichold (1995) in "The New Typography" ignored any use of serif typefaces. The book later became a manifesto of modern design. He also favoured non-centered design, and codified many other Modernist design rules.

Tschichold advocated the use of standardized paper sizes for all printed matter, and made some of the first clear explanations of the effective use of different sizes and weights of type in order to quickly and easily convey information. "The New Typography" was then followed with a series of practical manuals on the principles of Modernist typography which had a wide influence among ordinary workers and printers in Germany. Yet, despite his visits to England just before the Second World War, only about four articles by Tschichold had been translated into English by 1945. With Tschichold's philosophy of simple types, graphic designers developed objective clarity, simplicity and universality in design layout content for the print page.

In this study, the use of serif typefaces was not be completely ignored, but rather, a creative manipulation of both serif fonts and san-serif fonts was combined in the design concepts, employing the basic principles of design to achieve a unified layout. From the typography theories gleaned from literature, Tschichold noted that san-serif fonts effectively convey message quickly and easily, as such, more of the san-serifs was utilised in ordering the cover page design, inner cover, centre spread and the other pages that contained forms of advertorials. Such pages are usually viewed at a glance and only attractive and legible layouts would draw more attention to intending users.

An effective application of the typography concept could only be fully explored when a variation and manipulation of different styles are rendered. The style attribute is a vital key typographic variable that can have a significant effect on the look, feel and impact of a word or message. This attribute consists of the bold (**bold**), italic (*italic*) and underline (underline) variations. Wallschlaeger and Snyder (1992) highlighted that an effective communication is a matter of emphasis and attention, the ability of the message to maintain the reader's attention and direct it specifically to the main points. Hence, style attributes, especially when combined with other typographic elements and layout principles would help in effective communication.

A variation in the appearance of text, especially a variation that highlights a specific portion of text and distinguishes it from the surrounding context, can serve to establish a great emphasis that can command the reader's attention. Typography also comes along with modern digital enhancements that could be effectively perceived especially on electronic publishing platform. Some of these effects are the marquee and blinking text. In digital and web graphics, marquee is a set of text string that is programmed to move from

one edge of the monitor to the opposite end, from left to right or from right to left, depending on the effect the designer or client may want to achieve. On the other hand, the blinking texts are also letters, words or phrases that literarily blink on a particular area of the screen or animate around the screen while still blinking.

Significant hallmarks of the style are symmetric layouts, use of a grid, the use of sans-serif typefaces like Akzidenz Grotesk, and flush left, ragged right text that emphasizes cleanliness, readability and objectivity. Fonts from sans-serif group were widely explored to help deliver the intended objective clarity and legibility. Standard paper sizes such as A4 (11.8x8.4 inches) and A5 (5.9x8.4 inches) was preferred because of their availability and universality.

2.5.6. Imagery application in layout designs

According to Evans (2003), type and imagery are not formal elements of design, but they can function as supporting design elements in any page layout. The International Style suggests a preference for photography in place of illustrations or drawings to portray reality more strongly. Lidwell (2003) acknowledged that "Pictures are generally more easily recognised and recalled than words, although memory for pictures and words together is superior to memory for words alone or pictures alone" (p152). The adage that a picture is worth a thousand words applies to advertorials and other forms of visual communications especially an institution's website and in the layout of its prospectus. Therefore, institutions need to employ imagery in advertising their programmes periodically and succinctly. The image content needs to be very attractive; otherwise an audience may be put off the school entirely. Attractive imagery from around A.B.U. were the most important element in selling an institution's main goals. So, much effort ought to

be paid to quality of images, illustrations and photographs that were used in designing undergraduate prospectuses and indeed other forms of visual communications that may be published by the information and protocol unit.

High quality pictures are essential in ordering a visual document page design. Whether the pictures are to grace the pages of a school prospectus or to illustrate a website, they will be looked at before a single word is read. With the above mentioned, it is very important to have high quality informative pictures in all communications document as it especially concerns creative prospectuses. As a branch of knowledge and practice that has a direct impact on our lives, photography is used for business, pleasure, education and even for some fraudulent tasks. Photography became the art and science that replaced a large portion of the realistic art forms of portraiture, paintings, illustration and several other forms of visual communications. The art of photography also has some highly technical practices, including document (plans, drawings) copying, as well as reducing document into micro film and micro card.

Plates XIII to XVI are a cross-section of photographs around the university. The snap shots were used as supporting graphics for the cover and inner pages of the redesigned layouts.



Plate XIII: A.B.U. Main Gate
Source: (Original Research Photograph. Snapped by Abdullahi Kasimu, 2012)



Plate XIV: ABU Senate Building
Source: (Original Research Photograph. Snapped by Abdullahi Kasimu, 2012)



Plate XV: A.B.U. Dam
Source: (Original Research Photograph. Snapped by Bonaventure Zirra, 2011)



Plate XVI: A section of Biology Department
Source: (Original Research Photograph. Snapped by Bonaventure Zirra, 2011)

Photographs of various sites, buildings, sporting and social activities from around A.B.U. main campus, Congo campus, Teaching hospital, among others will continually be shot, edited and stored using graphic software to enhance the appeal when finally adopted in designing the prototype prospectus layouts.

Digital photography, a modern and more preferred photo technology today, comes with time saving attributes as well as high resolution images that supersede the halftone plates of conventional analogue imaging. For this reason, design companies and professionals rely heavily on this digital leverage. One major difference between the halftone plate and digital image is that, the digital image stores dots in a computer instead of in a metal printing plate.

Devries and Rosen (2002) observed that there are two main technologies used in storing, processing, displaying and printing of graphic images electronically- "vector graphics" and "bit-mapped graphics." In vector graphics, the image is composed of lines, dots and geometric shapes that are most useful for drawing tasks. In a bit-mapped (also known as "raster graphics"), the image is composed of patterns of dots called picture element or pixels conceptually similar to the halftone dots. Bitmapped graphics are most useful for representing photographic images. The term bit-mapped attests to the fact that the image is mapped onto the screen based on numerical codes made up of only the digits 1 and 0, or binary digits, called bits. These binary coded data determine which colour pixels are activated as well as their brightness values.

All the activated pixels with their different colours and brightness values, create an overall model that depict the original, continuous tone colour image especially when it is printed

on coated quality papers. According to Newlyn (2008), coated papers reduce dot grain by restricting ink from absorbing into the surface of the paper noting that this sealant allows for crisper printing, particularly photos, gradients and fine detailed images. Some of the coated stocks sheen options include: gloss, matte, dull and satin finishes. With digital imagery and the advent of flexible software such as Adobe Photoshop, Adobe Illustrator, CorelDraw, Photo paint, Quack express and Picasa, several successive images could be shot and rendered within a couple of minutes.

In today's digital world, the art of photography has been explored in portable products and hand held devices such as mobile phones, laptops, palmtops and music players (MP3/MP4). As such, several non professionals continuously engage in the business of digital photography. Sanders (2004) explain that the use of camera is so wide that aspects of it which can be called art are not given their due attention, but only recently, professionals have taken bold steps to publicise cameras and their working techniques in newsletters, digital blogs and photography magazines. Dondis (2000) in Ryan and Conover, (2004) also observed that "if the invention of movable type created a mandate for universal visual literacy, surely the invention of the camera and all its collateral and continually developing forms makes the achievement of universal visual literacy an educational necessity long overdue."

The ability of a photographer to capture topical scenes for effective visual communication depends largely on his creative compositional fluency, to choose a subject, camera equipment and settings; printing techniques and design that coordinates the entire visual elements.

2.5.7. Relevance of aesthetic theory in layout designs

Aesthetics defines a concept in philosophy that discuses the nature of beauty, art and taste, and with the creation and appreciation of beauty. Adorno (1997) noted that the concept of aesthetics would be very vital in designing effective visual communication and layout designs. Similarly, Lidwell (2003) observed that it is a universal principle that aesthetic designs are perceived as easier to use than less-aesthetic designs. This is the reason universities and colleges need to effectively leverage on modern appeals to create designs with some sense of aesthetics in the layouts, especially on the cover designs. Just as people that dress attractively attract people quickly, thereby confirming the saying "first impression matters," so do aesthetic designs appeal more to people than designs with less-aesthetic qualities. Aesthetic appeal in design layout is very effective in communicating a message and it is an efficient means of enhancing positive attitudes that may evoke feelings of affection and loyalty by the audience. On the other hand, designs that lack aesthetic appeal result in narrowed thinking and disrupt creativity. One very prominent principle of modernism earlier discussed, is the principle of simplicity, as such, a few harmonious colour combinations would be attempted in this study to suggest a more creative, aesthetic and simplistic visual communications. Contrarily, if the elements of design are improperly used in a layout, they can constitute a significant harm to the form and function of the entire design layout.

2.6. Branding Application in Layout Designs

The American Marketing Association (AMA) defines a brand as a name, term, sign, symbol or design, or a combination of them intended to identify the goods and services of one seller or group of sellers and to differentiate them from those of other sellers. It therefore makes sense to understand that branding is about getting your target audience to

choose you over the competition, and also your prospects to see you as the only one that provides the best solution to their problems.

The purpose of advertising a brand is to establish consumer demand for products and services as well as to create influences that bring about acceptance and recognition and possession of such brands. To successfully achieve this objective, Daniel (1978) in Dakyes (2012) observed that a brand should;

- Attract attention; (visually attractive)
- Arouse interest (it must be simple and legible);
- Convey an objective message (effectively);
- Create conviction (it must be convincing);
- Impress memory (it must be easy to remember); and
- Produce response (it must be acted upon).

These goals are not too contrasting from the American Marketing Association (AMA) objectives which state that a good brand should:

- Deliver a message clearly;
- Confirm credibility;
- Connect your target prospects emotionally;
- Motivate target audiences;
- Concretise user loyalty.

The core of all school communication, whether via website, interaction with students, the prospectus, recruitment advertising and any other outward vestige of a university life is the school brand, which usually reflects the mission and visions of the institution (Schurz, 2008). Branding goes beyond a nice logo and corporate colours. It is much more about

delivering a promise that has a true meaning to the school and all its stakeholders. A great brand in education will guarantee standards, create differentiation, build on emotional bond with stakeholders and afford protection from competition. Faulkner (2008) noted that well managed brands are created from conception to implementation across the brand communications mix. The components of the brand creation process are:

- Stakeholder research;
- Creating a value proposition;
- Designing a visual identity;
- Effective and dynamic brand management.

Confident branding and a strong branding strategy use design to communicate a message that attracts the target audience that you want to attract - a message that creates confidence in your brand while differentiating between you and your competitors.

The philosophy of the Ahmadu Bello University mission and visions must be adequately reflected in its entire visual communication materials and even more especially in the proposed prospectus template design layouts. The Ahmadu Bello University vision statement clearly says that:

> *Ahmadu Bello University shall be a world-class university comparable to any other, engaged in imparting contemporary knowledge, using high quality facilities and multi-disciplinary approaches, to men and women of all races, as well as generating new ideas and intellectual practices relevant to the needs of its immediate community, Nigeria and the world at large*.

While the mission statement says:

> *To advance the frontiers of learning and break new grounds, through teaching, research and the dissemination of knowledge of the highest quality; to establish and foster national and international integration, development and the promotion of African traditions and cultures; to produce high-level human power and enhance capacity-building through*

retaining, in order to meet the needs and challenges of the catchment area, Nigeria and the rest of the world (www.abu.edu.ng).

2.7. The Role of Computer and Communications Technology in Layout Designs

The conventional design practices come with a whole lot of disadvantages. For instance, accurate rendering and arrangement of shapes, types and images can be extremely time-consuming and any change in design might call for an overhaul of the entire process. Secondly, less work is achieved with greater effort, making the entire procedure of drafting and completing a design layout quite longer than using computers and digital devices. The advent of computers introduced the era of digital designs, making images, texts and symbols highly manipulative.

Labuz (1993) defined the computer as a machine that works with electronic signals which were first invented to calculate complex figures and formulas and to sort data. Today, it has become useful for all kinds of human tasks, enabling the machine to complete otherwise tedious manual tasks quickly, easily and reliably. According to Poggenpohl (1993) computers have been around since the 40's but were not a reasonable tool for graphic designers until the first set of Macintoshes came out in 1984. Computer language in full technology range can be complex because of the intricate programming encoded with hypertext and scripting languages. Programming is a set of simple rules and commands employed to achieve specific results. Through programming, design language, methods and procedures for generating lines, shapes, and type elements in desired colours, shades and patterns are available at the click of a mouse and their alignment, distribution and transformation can be done almost instantaneously.

This new visual tool has completely redefined our traditional techniques. After creating a satisfactory and unified design layout, the finished digital work could be exported to either the Joint Photographic Export Group (JPEG), the Portable Document Format (PDF) or the Portable Network Graphics (PNG) to make it easily uploaded on DVDs, personal computers and also to interface with the world wide web and other internet application options.

To deal effectively with the technologies, communications will improve as we learn to manage the new technologies that keep us in touch with the world around us. Payne (2001) described technology as a double-edged sword that has multiple channels for communications. Some of these channels include video conferencing or real time video streaming on the internet which brings people closer together. Communication technology in its full array can present both verbal and non-verbal messages even if a receiver is not physically in the same place with the message sender.

2.8. Summary

In assessing the impact of the visual communications approach of ABU information and protocol unit, with a view to redesigning an undergraduate prospectus, the retrieved literature gleaned from the background of visual communications, history and principles of print layouts, visual elements and perceptive principles of layout organization, and the role of computers in modern graphics design. The background of the visual communications theory and the basic communications model, introduced the idea of effective information circulation which gave birth to one of the specific objective of redesigning a prototype prospectus which would eventually be circulated among prospective students. The history of visual communications drew us back to early visual

forms that gradually evolved to modern day communications approach that depicts effective and structured and enhanced page layout organization. The modernist style of simplicity, logic and consistency, together with layout designers' strategy of combining photos and types using design principles revealed how quickly, easily, reliably and clearly visual communications can be relayed and perceived. Also, the International style concepts of symmetry and grid principle of page ordering would be attempted in the proposed design layouts to produce an effective visual unity, with high regards to computer aided applications. Cheatham (1987) ascertained that not every work can communicate to every possible audience, but an effective composition of text, images and symbols in simple colour harmonies would help maximize the appeal of the design and which may likely produce a persuasive and effective emotional impact on the audience.

CHAPTER THREE

3.0. Research Methodology

3.1. Introduction

A research design is basically a structural way of investigating, collecting and analysing data. This chapter describes the overall operational framework within which the research questions are placed so that their objectives may be clearly understood. According to Kerlinger (1977), the success and quality of any research depends on the procedure employed in the planning of the research design and the reporting of all findings.

3.2. Research Design

This study design is primarily based on a descriptive analysis to address the problems of the visual content of the existing A.B.U. prospectus in particular (against the proposed document layout and template design). This approach of analysing communication materials is preferred to the historical, experimental or scientific research alternatives because of the nature of the problem. This process would require identifying, describing, analysing and interpreting the existing materials. Proposed layout designs were conducted in the studio to reorganise visual elements using computer technology to reorganise a range of process colours, typography, images and good print quality.

In assessing the impact of visual communications materials of the A.B.U. Publication Unit, the description of the problem of this study highlighted some of the challenges encumbering the quality of print and publication materials of the unit, especially the design concepts, in the existing undergraduate prospectus.

In this study, practical attempts were made to redress the design concepts of the visual materials in the existing ABU, Zaria undergraduate prospectus with a view to come up

with a more appealing prototype design. To achieve this, samples of prospectuses from across renowned institutions were critically examined, using content analysis to determine the fundamental patterns of prospectus' layout design. In line with the application of the elements and principles of design earlier acknowledged in the review of literature, the content analysis technique was relevant in answering questions directly relating to the prospectuses' layout designs being analysed. Budd (1967) acknowledged that content analysis is most ideal for a systematic and quantitative contrasting of two or more contents of communication. As such, this study sought to undertake a content analysis of the existing prospectus against the backdrop of principles and concepts that were adopted in the proposed prospectus layout. The various compositional concepts of the observed samples were explored in designing and redesigning the prospectus templates for the purpose of this study. The methods and procedure that are explained in this chapter include:

- The research design;
- Population of the study;
- Sampling method;
- Instrumentation;
- Instrument validation;
- data collection; and
- Procedure for data analysis.

3.3. Population of the Study

According to Adetoro (1997), Population is a universe or a totality of elements or members that possess a specified set of common objects and characteristics and events to be studied. The population sampled in this study consist of both human and non-human

population. The non-human population consist of sample brochures and existing prospectuses retrieved mainly from web libraries; while the human population basically consist of three clusters of students. The first group is made up of prospective students seeking admissions to Nigerian universities to determine how they will respond to the designed publication. The second cluster comprise of fresh university students to obtain their responses (in their opinions) on how they had gone about seeking admission into ABU, that is, their basic admissions processes. The third cluster was a selection of fresh university students undergoing diploma programmes in A.B.U. to obtain their responses (in their opinions) on how they had gone about seeking admission into A.B.U. The prospective students' cluster comprised of final year secondary school students/ Universities Matriculation Examinations (UME) candidates. The group of fresh students comprised of students already in 100level, 200level (Direct Entry) and the third group, students of Diploma programme.

3.4. Sampling Method

A cluster sampling technique was used in this study. Pfeffermann and Rao (2009) observed that this sampling technique is used when "natural" but relatively homogeneous groupings are evident in a large statistical population. This is different from stratified sampling in that you will use the entire group, or cluster, as a sample rather than a randomly selected member of all groups. Then a purposive selection was applied within each cluster which improved the representativeness of the sample by reducing sampling error.

A total of one hundred and ninety respondents were sampled in the study. The selection was done purposively and clustered into focus groups of ten respondents per group,

based on those that volunteered to participate in the study. The First cluster was a selection of prospective students whom were selected from A.B.U. Demonstration Secondary School (DSS), the second and third clusters were then purposively selected from across the twelve faculties in A.B.U. to achieve an evenly spread opinion from across the university. A random internet search was also conducted to retrieve samples of existing prospectuses from across higher institutions across Africa, America, Asia, and America.

Respondents were randomly selected from each of the clusters of the population (final year secondary school students/ UME, fresh students in A.B.U.). The clusters selected a cross section that is reflective of the prospective students and the twelve Faculties of A.B.U. One focus group was determined from each of the cluster category: Senior Secondary School Certificate Exams (SSCE) category and representation from across the 12 Faculties of ABU.

The selection of respondents for each focus group was mainly purposive, based on availability and volunteering. In the case of the fresh university students, consultations were made in class rooms and lecture theatres where the respondents were asked if they would be willing to participate in a survey to seek their opinions regarding their mode of entry into the university. With the assistance of class representatives, the students were asked if they were willing to participate in a masters' research, concerning prospective university students, and only between eight and twelve students opted to participate, as such a generalisation was drawn on an average of ten in a given group. Two focus groups were randomly selected from DSS, one focus group from each of the twelve Faculties in A.B.U. were selected from the second cluster, summing up to twelve focus groups and

five random groups which were randomly selected from the third cluster. Ten participants from each sub cluster were then eventually adopted for focus groups from across the entire cluster of the main study. According to Henderson (2009), a focus group is a suitable means of conducting a qualitative research in which a group of people are asked about their perceptions, opinions, beliefs, and attitudes towards a product, service, concept, advertisement, idea, or packaging to attain a high level of feedback.

3.5. Data Collection

Relevant data were sought using the various research instruments designed for this study. Information such as historical accounts of Ahmadu Bello University, undergraduate programmes offered, mode of entry, registration procedure, extra-curricular activities of the university and information on publications/other visual communications/advertising materials were sought from staff of the A.B.U. information and protocol unit, A.B.U. official website (www.abu.ng.edu), Academic Planning and the Student's Affairs Division of ABU. Bulk information were collected and assessed which were partly used as the text elements for designing the prototype prospectus.

Existing prospectus samples were also retrieved from web libraries of universities across Africa, America, Asia, Australia and Europe, after which their design concepts were studied, observed and used as a road map for the proposed redesign. Photographs were also taken around the university using digital camera; some selected images were then explored for the visual structuring of the proposed template design while the excess photographs were stored onto digital libraries (CDs, Hard drives or USB drives) for future visual communications design.

After developing drafts of layouts, the designs were shown to some graphic design professionals, who are the thesis supervisors and post graduate students of graphic design. Assessments and formative evaluation of layout was carried out by the professionals who made valid contributions that later informed certain redesigned aspects of the layout templates. After printing the developed prototype prospectus, bound copies were shown to the sampled population and the impact was determined by the responses obtained from the focus group discussions and some of the questions they filled in. In the study, copies of questionnaires were administered to the study population in the different focus groups and obtain responses to assess their level of appreciation and acceptance or rejection of the redesigned prospectus.

3.6. Instrumentation

The instruments used for data collection included a set of semi-structured and open ended questions which were administered in focus groups. The questionnaire allow for collection of extensive amount of information such as demographics, behaviour and opinions from a large number of issues, as such it was used as a guide to collect information concerning admissions processes and choices of university in focus groups from population cluster.

The Semi-structured approach is informal and produces descriptive data. Using this technique can bring in new ideas for the researcher, and the participants may discuss something which the researcher had not previously considered related to research. Lindlof and Taylor (2002) observed that this form of instrument is suitable for qualitative research, observing that as the interview is informal, participants may feel a lot more at ease in the situation that may help them to build up a relationship of trust with the

researcher which may encourage honesty in their answers which will give the researcher a more accurate view on the inquiry.

Research assistants largely necessitated this study. The aspect of conducting the Focus Group Discussions (FGD) was quite tedious initially but by introducing three assistants, the entire procedure became less demanding. An assistant from the Department of Industrial Design also aided in snapping of wide range of photographs in and around the A.B.U. campuses. The photographs were used as supporting elements of design and were explored in developing the proposed prospectus layouts.

3.7. Instrument validation

To achieve the stated objectives of this research, as well as to answer the research questions, the questions that served as a interview guide in conducting the Focus Group Discussions served as evidence to support inferences drawn by the researcher. The instruments were evaluated by the researcher's supervisors, who are seasoned designers on the subject matter (Professor D. J. M. Yakubu and Dr. S. U. Dakyes) for the effectiveness of the entire process of navigation, grammar, readability, and clarity from the viewpoint of persons that are not familiar with the content. The assessment was done, in order to ascertain the reliability of the instrument by administering the questionnaires firstly were at the pilot stage and then modified to aid data collection from the Focus Groups during the main study. Based on respondents that volunteered to participate in the exercise, ten respondents from each of the three main clusters were selected, which summed up to a total of thirty. Responses, observations, suggestions and conclusions were obtained which aided reorganising certain aspects that enhanced the main study. Analysis was conducted using tables and simple standard deviation techniques based on the various

levels of responses provided that facilitated both the statistical interpretation and the qualitative interpretations.

The next set of images are shots from scenes where the focus group discussions were held and opinions pertaining to admissions and choice of course were sought from respondents.

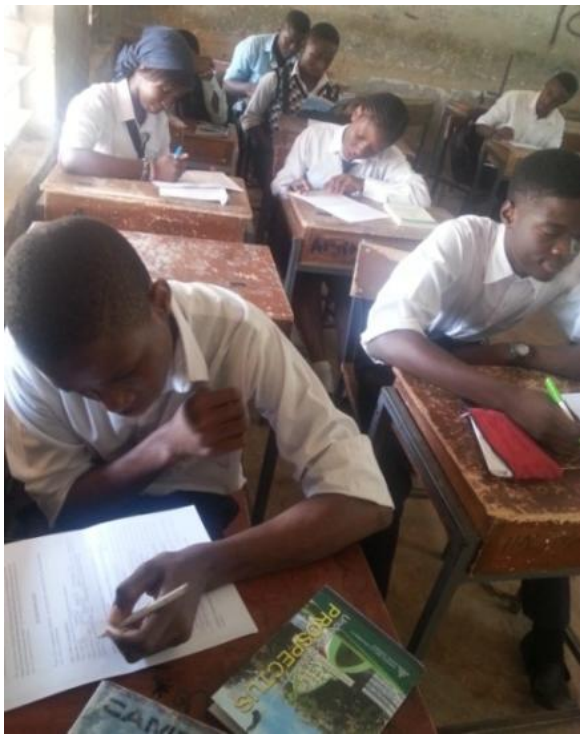


Plate XVII: Scene from Study in Focus Group Discussions.
Source: (Original Research Photograph, snapped by Jonah Baba, 2014).

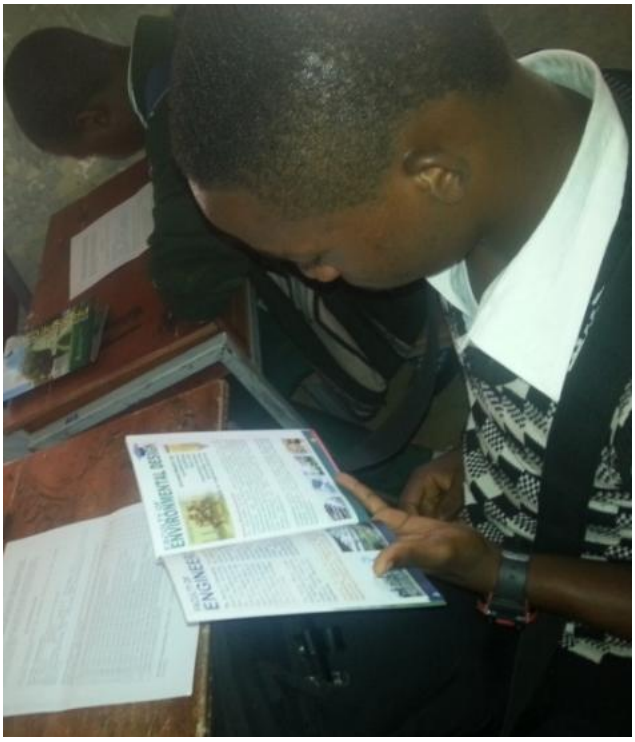


Plate XVIII: Scene from Study in Focus Group Discussions.
Source: (Original Research Photograph, shot by Bonaventure Zirra, 2014).

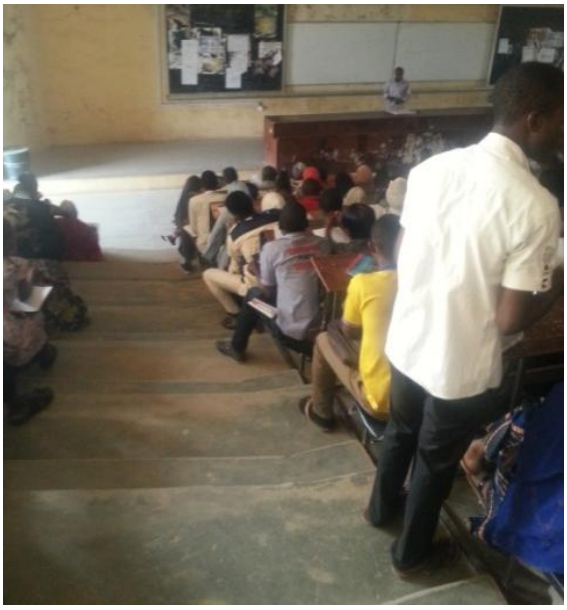


Plate XIX: Scene from Study in Focus Group Discussions.
Source: (Original Research Photograph, shot by Bonaventure Zirra, 2014).

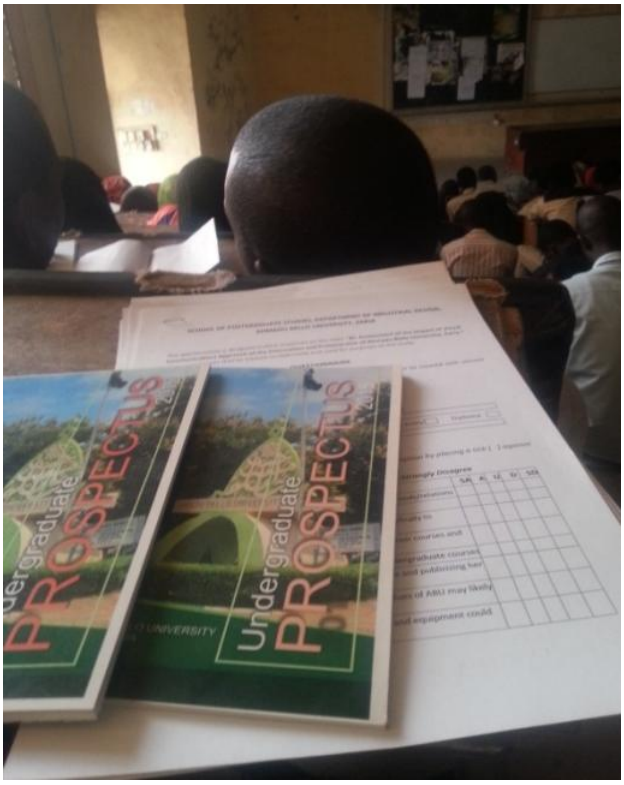


Plate XX: Scene from Study in Focus Group Discussions.
Source: (Original Research Photograph, shot by Bonaventure Zirra, 2014).



Plate XXI: Scene from Study in Focus Group Discussions, Faculty of Environmental Design. Source: (Original Research Photograph, shot by Bonaventure Zirra, 2014).



Plate XXII: Scene from Study in Focus Group Discussions. Source: (Original Research Photograph, shot by Jonah Baba, 2014).

CHAPTER FOUR

4.0 PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

4.1. Introduction

This chapter presents the statistical analysis of the responses on assessing the visual communications approach of the publication unit of A.B.U. Directorate of Public Affairs. Each of the items and variables in the respective sections are analyzed from the data generated for the study.

The study earlier highlighted some contextual problems that were discovered in the print and visual resources of the Ahmadu Bello University Information and Protocol Unit, with particular reference to the design of undergraduate prospectus layout templates. The design flaws emphasized were issues of:

- Typography;
- Images;
- Colours and
- Print quality.

4.2. Analysis of Layout Designs

The entire process of redesigning the prospectus layouts started with the process of making sketches, then making rough designs before going ahead to design the comprehensive designs. Samples of the thumbnail sketches are presented on Figures 6, 7, 8 and 9, while the other sketches are presented in appendix 5. This procedure involved using pencil and pen on paper to produce drafts of ideas and perceived concepts. The rest of the thumbnail sketches are placed in appendix 5.

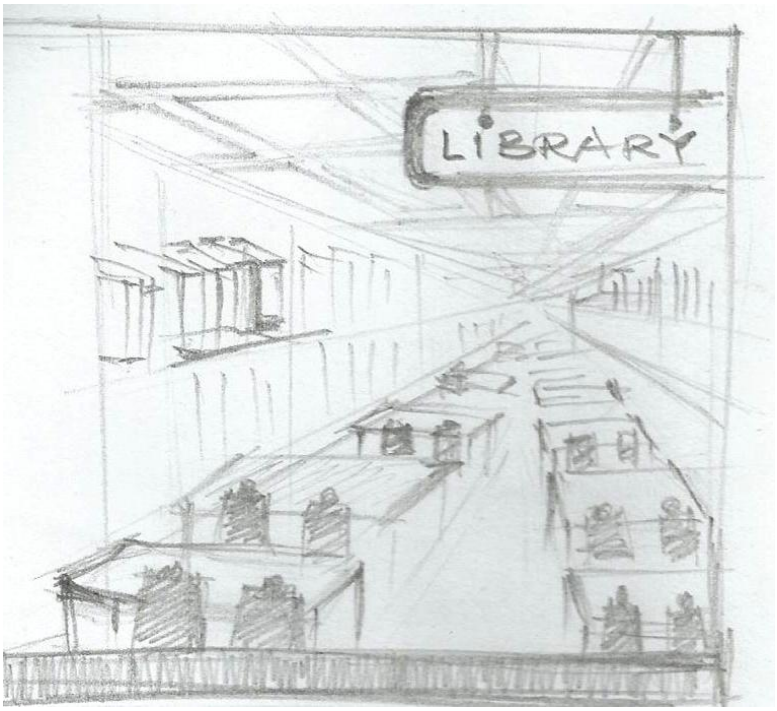


Figure 6: Thumb Nail Sketch for Prospectus Layouts, Source: (Original Design by Bonaventure Zirra 2012)

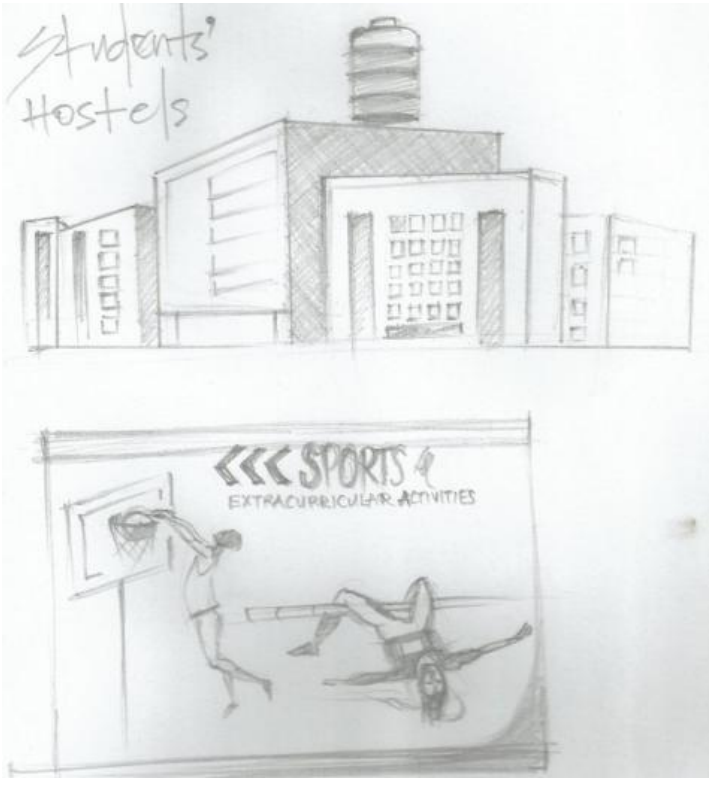


Figure 7: Thumb Nail Sketch for Prospectus Layouts, Source: (Original Design by Bonaventure Zirra 2012)

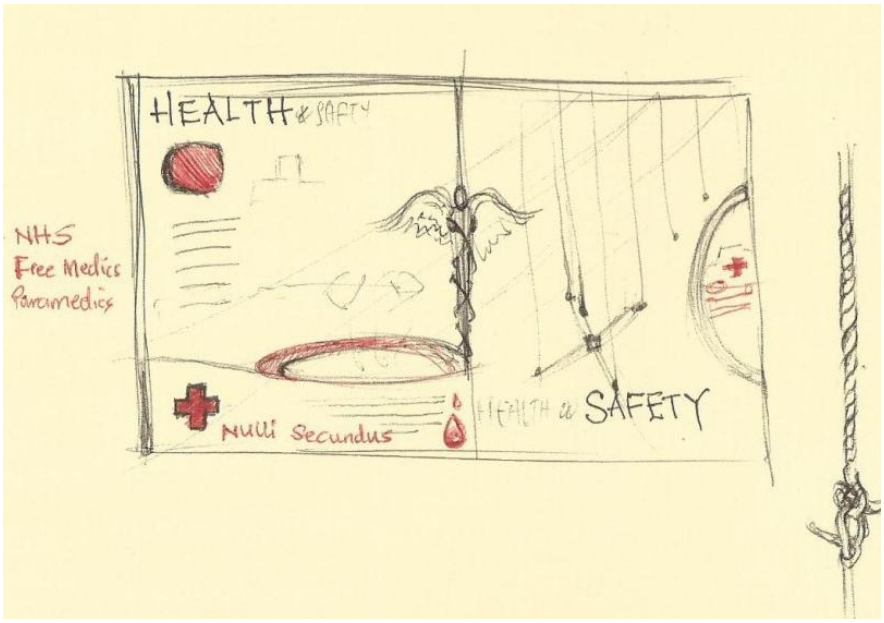


Figure 8: Thumb Nail Sketch for Prospectus Layouts,
Source: (Original Design by Bonaventure Zirra 2012)

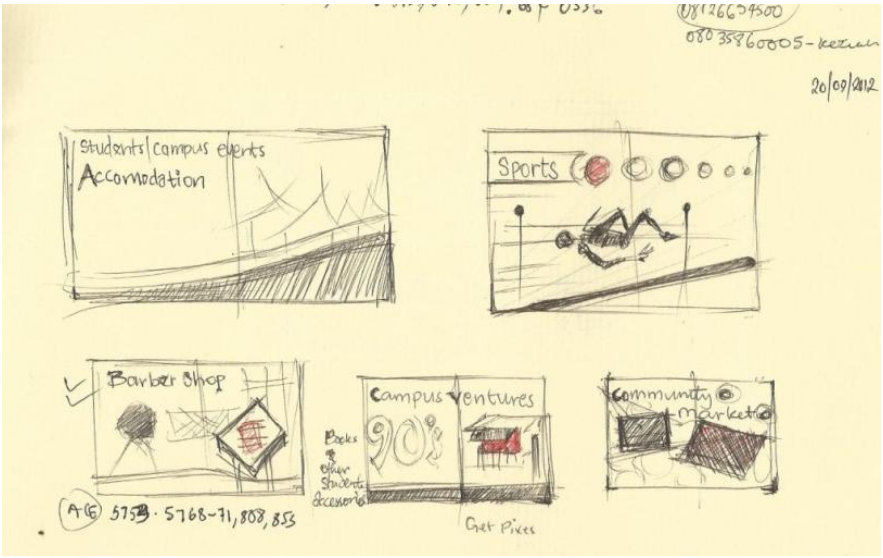


Figure 9: Thumb Nail Sketch for Prospectus Layouts,
Source: (Original Design by Bonaventure Zirra 2012)

After preliminary sketches were made, Corel Draw and Adobe Photoshop softwares were used to graphically render and modify the layout designs of the proposed prospectus layouts. The concepts of the layouts laid emphasis on design principles and theories gleaned from the review of related literature that enhances visual communications. This

approach of following design standards were in direct contrast with the manual design approach used in the former layout designs. Figures below present drafts of the preliminary computer swatches before enhancing them into comprehensive designs.

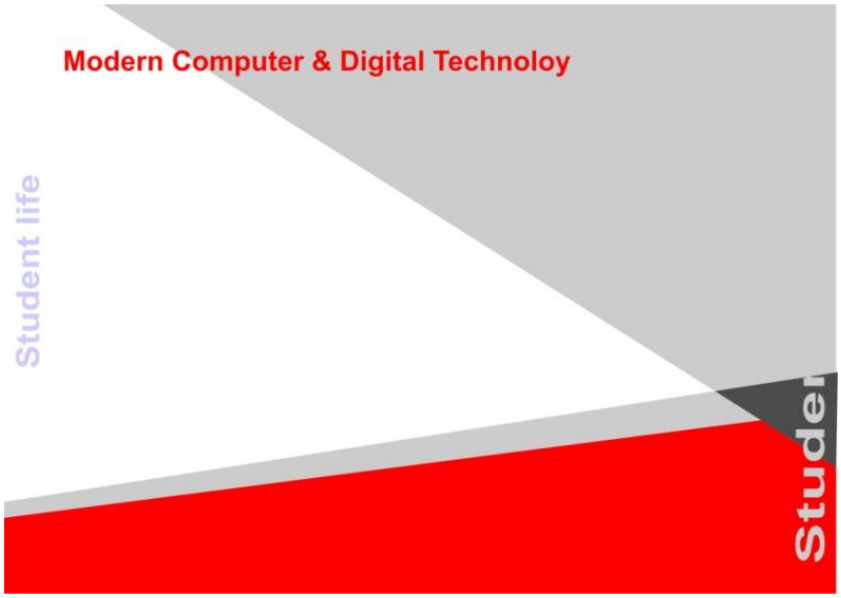


Figure: 10 Preliminary Computer Swatch, for Prospectus Layouts, Source: (Original Design by Bonaventure Zirra 2012)



Figure: 11 Preliminary Computer Swatch, for Prospectus Layouts, Source: (Original Design by Bonaventure Zirra 2012)



Figure 12: Preliminary Computer Swatch, for Prospectus Layouts, Source: (Original Design by Bonaventure Zirra 2012)



Figure 13: Preliminary Computer Swatch, for Prospectus Layouts, Source: (Original Design by Bonaventure Zirra 2012)

Below (Plates XXIII to XXIX) are page samples of the developed comprehensive prospectus layout designs which were bound in booklet format and eventually used as

instructional material in the pilot study, after which certain enhancements were made and reprinted for the main study.



Plate XXIII: Cover Design of the Redesigned Prospectus Layouts. Source: (Original Design by Bonaventure Zirra 2012)

Plate XXIII is the cover design of the developed prospectus. The dominant element is an image of A.B.U's main gate with some touch of green geometric patterns, and with a touch of a little yellow to harmonise the background.



Plate XXIV (a): Inner Cover of the Redesigned Prospectus, Source: (Original Design by Bonaventure Zirra 2012)



Plate XXIV (b): Redesigned Inner Cover of the Prospectus,
Source: (Original Design by Bonaventure Zirra 2012)

Plate XXIV is the front inner cover which dominantly captures a section of the A.B.U. senate building, which is a unique architectural style and a recognisable site attraction in A.B.U. Plate XXIV (a) is the initial design while (b) is the modified version used for the final prospectus layout.

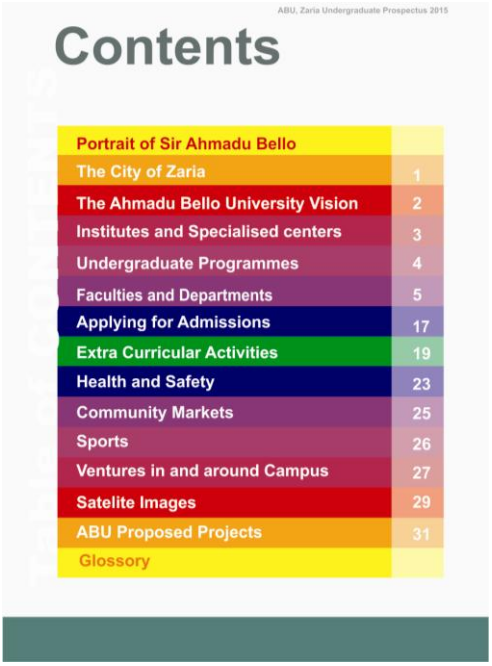


Plate XXV: Inner Page (Table of Contents) of the Comprehensives
Source: (Original Design by Bonaventure Zirra 2012)

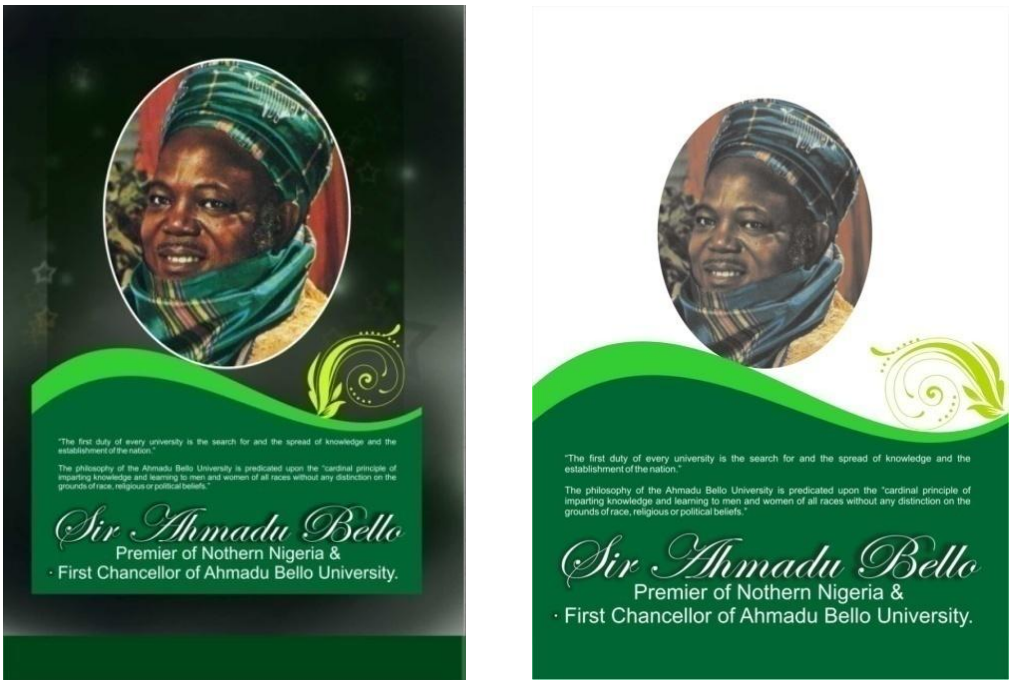


Plate XXVI (a and b): Inner Pages of the Comprehensive Designs
Source: (Original Design by Bonaventure Zirra 2012)

Plate XXVI: is a fold of the two first pages of the inner cover design, containing the Portrait of Sir Ahmadu Bello (Première of Northern Nigeria and founder of A.B.U.) Plate XXVI (a) is the initial design while (b) is the modified version rendered with more white spaces and was adopted for used in the final prospectus layout. The plates (XXVII-XXXVII) are layout designs of the redesigned prospectus. The layouts were rendered by using design principles to combine images, text, colours and other design elements.



Plate XXVII: Pages from the Redesigned Prospectus (Centre Spread Design Containing Image from the University ICT Centre.
Source: (Original Design by Bonaventure Zirra 2012)



Plate XXVIII: Inner Page Layouts.
Source: (Original Design by Bonaventure Zirra 2012)

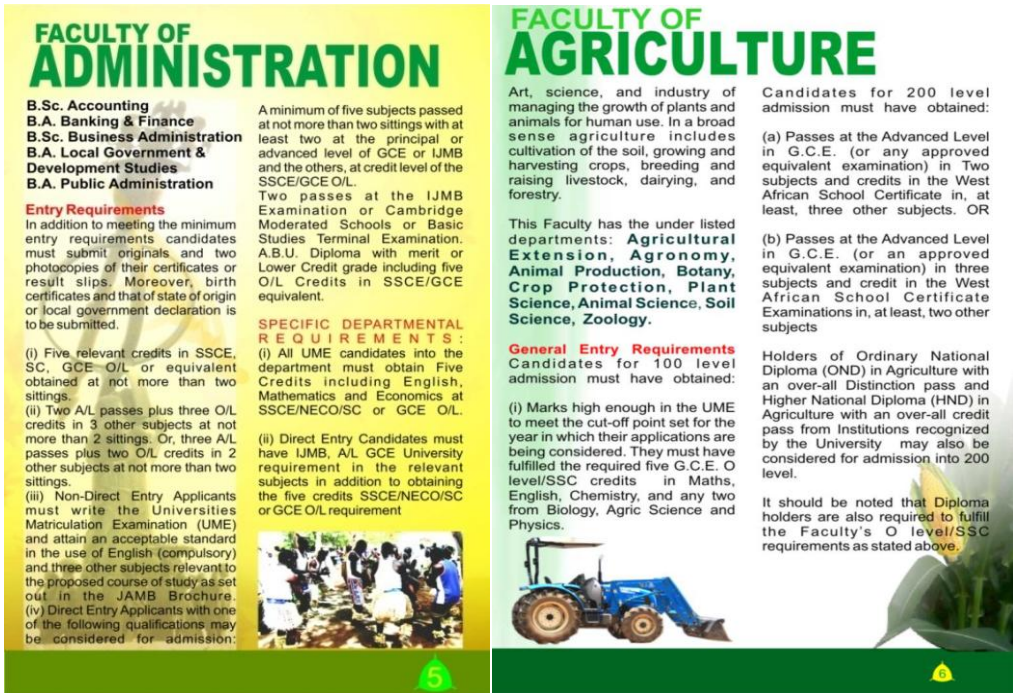


Plate XXIX: Inner Page Spread (Faculty of Administartion and Agriculture) Source: (Original Design by Bonaventure Zirra 2012)

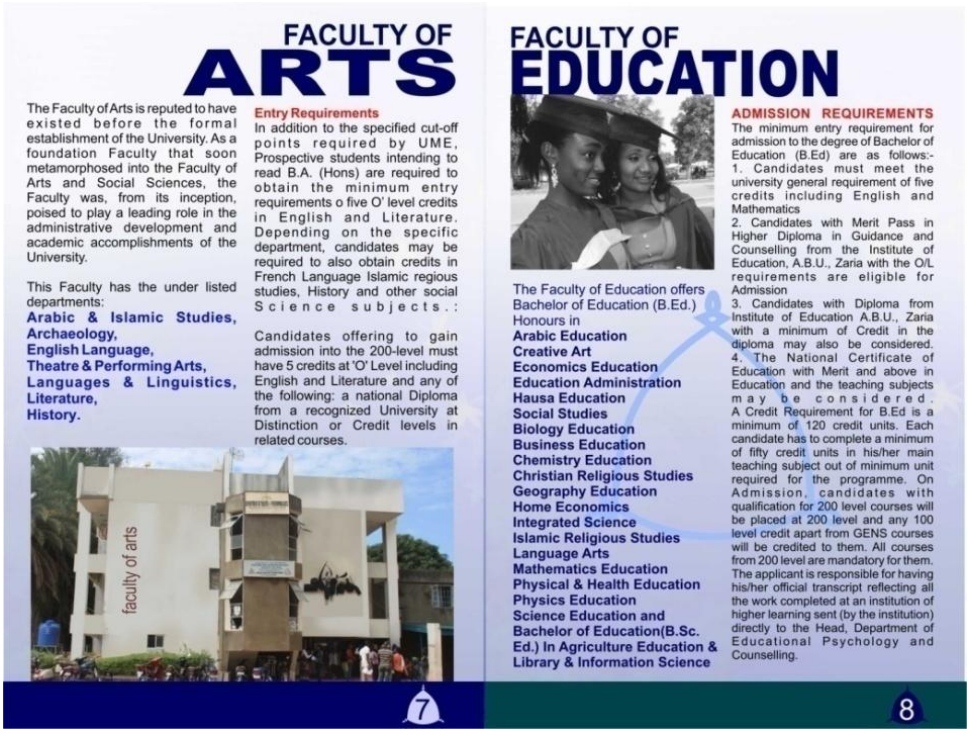


Plate XXX: Inner Page Spread (Faculty of Arts and Education) Source: (Original Design by Bonaventure Zirra 2012)



Plate XXXI: Inner Page Spread (Faculty of Engineering & Env. Design)
Source: (Original Design by Bonaventure Zirra 2012)



Plate XXXII: Inner Page Spread of the Redesigned Prospectus:
Source: (Original Design by Bonaventure Zirra 2012)



Plate XXXIII: Inner Page Spread (Faculty of Science and Social Science) Source: (Original Design by Bonaventure Zirra 2012)

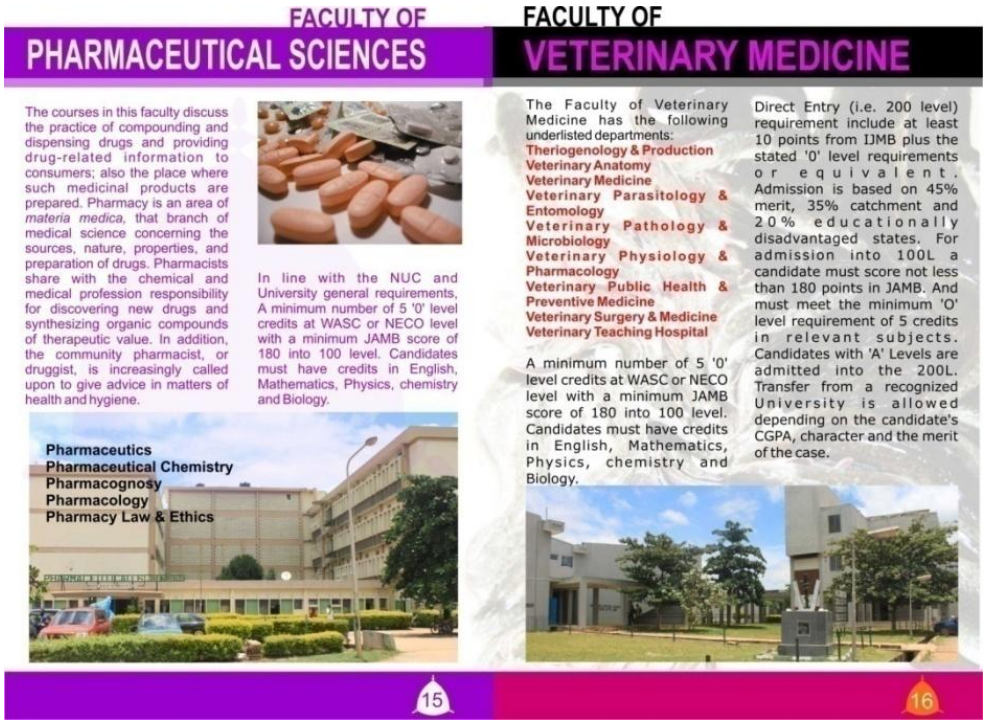


Plate XXXIV: Inner Page Spread (Faculty of Pharm. Science and Vet. Medicine) Source: (Original Design by Bonaventure Zirra 2012)

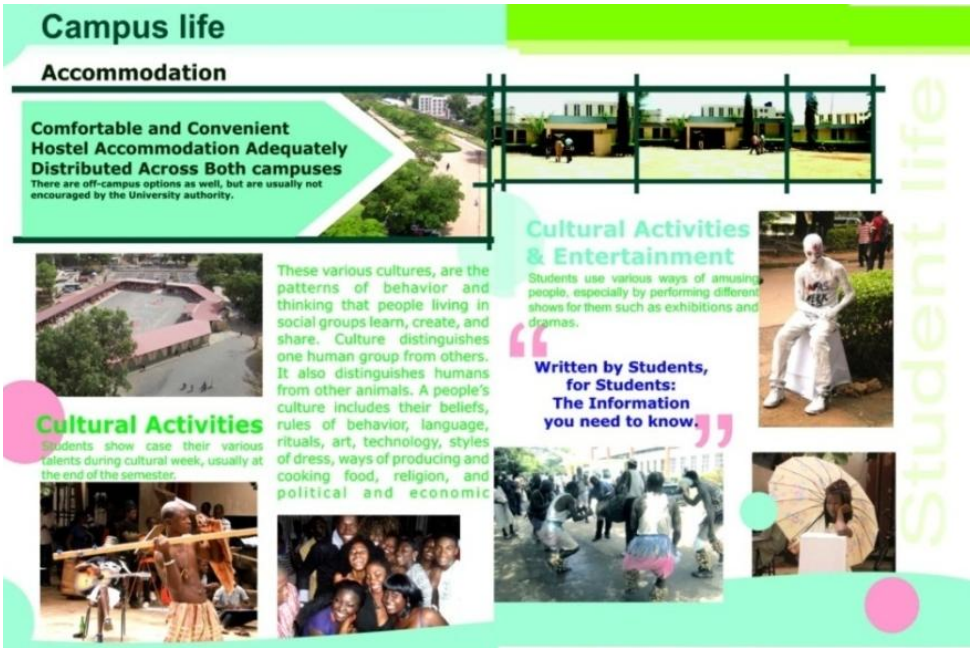


Plate XXXV: Inner Page Spread (Students Activities)
Source: (Original Design by Bonaventure Zirra 2012)



Plate XXXVI: Inner Page Spread (Ventures around campus)
Source: (Original Design by Bonaventure Zirra 2012)



Plate XXXVII: Proposed ABU Phase II Development Plans.
Source: www.abu.edu.ng.

This study sought to redesign the A.B.U. undergraduate prospectus based on creative VC approaches drawn from the review of literature. The existing A.B.U. prospectus was observed to contain some design flaws as has been raised in the problem statement. These flaws are the non use of colours in the design layouts, poor typographic elements, low quality of images and poor paper quality. Practical attempts were made to address these design flaws based on the aspects from review of literature that discussed topical layout styles rendered in clear, simple and attractive fashion. The variables (colours, images, typography and paper quality) that fundamentally guided the formative process of layout designs are discussed below.

4.2.1 Use of colour in layout designs

One of the design flaws pointed out earlier in the statement of problem was the absence of colour element in the entire publication. It was observed in the review of literature that colours are very vibrant sensations that mainly persuades and attracts attention. Literature

further surmised that colours are a rich vocabulary for visual expression and communication that can affect our feelings and influence people's attention (Ogunwole, 1996).

The interface between colour, individual and environmental stimuli is observed to be a highly complex one and opened to a large number of factors. Literature showed that individuals have different colour preferences depending on age, gender, culture, region, psychology and brand preferences, depending on gender, age, culture and region. Ahmadu Bello University already has an established brand colour which is Green. Using only green may not induce any form of excitement or make the design look attractive since it was a design intended for prospective students, a younger generation that mainly range between the ages of 15-19 years. As such, the green colour was explored as the dominant colour in redesigning the prototype prospectus, with touches of some other harmonious colour schemes. As such, a variety of creative and harmonious colour schemes as prescribed by Evans (2006) in the review of literature were explored in the design layouts to possibly induce a strong perceptive and persuasive influence on the audience. The use of harmonious colour scheme as suggested by the Munsell's colour theory was a major guide in this selection. Morton (2012) noted that the concept of colour harmony is a pleasing arrangement of colours in visual experiences that are pleasing to the eyes, by engaging a sense of order and balance in the viewer's perception. When a design is not harmonious, it is either boring, chaotic or under-stimulating and thereby does not engage the viewer because the human brain tend to reject what it cannot organise and what it cannot understand (Morton, 2012).

4.2.2 Use of types in layout designs

The problem statement also observed that an incoherent monotype was used throughout the publication design. A more legible and concise font variation was attempted in the proposed design to deliver a message in a very precise manner. The designs sought to explore the simplicity of the international style concept of typography such as "Akzidenz" "Grotesk", "Ariel", "Heveltica" or other type family that may have similar characteristics as the suggested ones. The selection of this group of font types was considered because they are sans-serifs texts, which make them appear simple, attractive, legible and interesting. The non-serif nature of the types belongs to a family of types that that are identified without any extensions at the end of their main strokes that make them appear complex. The research sought to adopt the principle of simplicity, which supported the selection of this group of types in the prospectus layouts better. These typographic elements were supported by corresponding images. This combination of text together with supporting images is essential in layout as remarked by Lidwell (2006), noting that memories for text and images is superior to memory than words alone.

4.2.3 Use of images in layout designs

The images in the old prospectus are rendered in 'line drawn illustrations' which made them appear flat. The redesign explored the use of digital photographs because of their strong representation of realism. Drawing from the design concepts of existing prospectus samples, digital images of sites, buildings, sporting events, learning and social activities within A.B.U. were rendered in realistic high quality photographs. The images were edited using computer softwares, such as Coreldraw, Adobe Photoshop and Creative Suit 4, and then combined with other elements of design to develop both the page layouts for the redesigned prospectus. The digital photographs that were snapped, captured images in

colours, which were afterwards stored as pixels by default. The use of digital photographs in the design layouts, sought to produce mid-tone values that were absent in the illustrations and images of the old prospectus. Digital photographs produce enhanced tonal information (highlights, mid tones and shadows) the mid tone values sought to balance the component pixels in order to make the images more realistic and easily recognisable. The digital photographs in the plates presented below were taken for the purpose of this study. The photographs were then used to enhance the thumb nail and computer sketches. The rest of the digital photographs as are presented in appendix 4.



Plate XXXVIII: ABU Main Gate, Main Campus,
Source: (Original Research Photographs, Shot by Abdullahi Kasimu, 2012)



Plate XXXIX: ABU Senate Building
Source: (Original Research Photographs, Shot by Abdullahi Kasimu, 2012)



Plate XL: Perspectives along the ABU Dam
Source: (Original Research Photographs, Shot by Abdullahi Kasimu, 2012)



Plate XLI: Perspectives along the ABU Dam
Source: (Original Research Photographs, Shot by Abdullahi Kasimu, 2012)

4.2.4 Paper and print quality in layout designs

The bond paper used in printing the existing prospectus was of low grade newsprints which easily absorb ink and moisture and does not give crisp print texture. The paper used in the redesigned layouts are acid free gloss papers to enhance the look and tactile appearance when the document is being perused. Plates XLII and XLIII shows the printing quality of layouts on plain papers while Plates XLIV and XLV presents the same layouts on gloss paper. Coated High grade art papers were used in the proposed prospectus to enhance the print quality of the final publication. Coated papers generally reduce dot grain by restricting ink from absorbing into the surface of the paper, allowing for crisper printing (Newlyn, 2008). Modern printing techniques, such as Direct Imaging (DI) laser printing was used to print the redesigned layouts as against the chord print technique used in the old publication. In the preceding chapter, the review of literature spelt out that several advancements have taken place in the design field since industrial revolution (Aboderin 2009). This modern printing equipment possesses a technological

advantage of reproducing layouts and print designs in clear and crisp formats. HP desk jet printer was initially used at the studio design stage to produce proof print layouts for analysis and critiquing. The desk-jet printers have a combined sharpness of prints, availability and low costs. Initially used at the studio design stage to produce proof print layouts for analysis and critiquing. The desk-jet printers have a combined sharpness of prints, availability and low costs.



Plate XLII: Cover Design on Plain Paper
Source: (Original Design by Bonaventure Zirra 2012)



Plate XLIII: Inner Page Design on Plain Paper
Source: (Original Design by Bonaventure Zirra 2012)



Plate XLIV: Cover Design on Coated Paper
Source: (Original Design by Bonaventure Zirra, 2012)

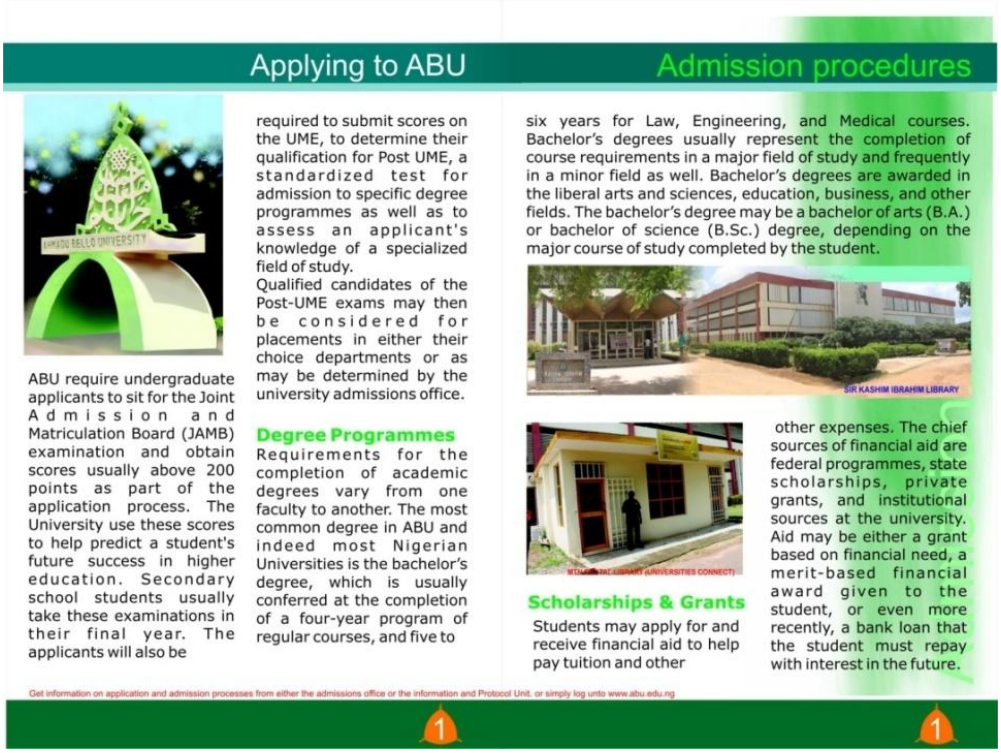


Plate XLV: Inner Page Design on Coated Paper
Source: (Original Design by Bonaventure Zirra, 2012)

4.3. Focus Group Discussion

The objective of the focus group discussion is to observe what a respondent within a specified cluster knows about prospectuses; and this was achieved primarily by discussing with the participating respondents, while they recorded their input in the columns provided in the questions section. The focus group discussion entails using a representative sample of prospective undergraduate students from demonstration Secondary School. However, in this study, the researcher decided to widen the scope to include fresh students so as to ascertain the mode which the used to get admissions into A. B. U. and from across the faculties in Ahmadu Bello University Zaria. This discussion assisted the researcher to ascertain the students' level of acceptance of the redesigned prospectus. Below are the questions asked and the responses of the students. Table 4.3.1 presents the typical questions that were directed to the respondents.

4.3.1 Questions Asked During Focus Group Discussion

1.	My choice of University was influenced by my parents/guardian
2	My choice of University was influenced by my friends/peers
3	My choice of University was solely my decision
4	My choice of University was influenced by an advertisement I have seen
5	My choice of University was influenced by the proximity to where I reside
6	My choice of course of study was solely my decision
7	My choice of course of study was influenced by advertisements I have seen
8	My choice of course of study was influenced by course counsellor
9	A proper advertisement of the rich academic and cultural values, facilities and equipment of ABU may likely attract me to the University.
10	Prospectuses could serve as the best medium for advertising courses and attractions to prospective students?

From the redesigned prospectus shown to you, do think the information in the advertisement relate to your choice course or University in any way? Yes ☐ No ☐

Have you heard of Ahmadu Bello University before now? Yes ☐ No ☐

Would you recommend a copy of this prospectus to a prospective friend? Yes ☐ No ☐

How would you like it to be sent? Postal Order ☐ E-mail ☐ others ☐

How would you recommend improving on the design quality of this prospectus? ☐

During the focus group discussions, the respondents were given the existing and the redesigned prospectus to view the pages before making comments. This was done to ascertain their level of acceptance or rejection of the redesigned prospectus. It was obvious to the researcher that the redesigned prospectus actually attracted the respondents and some of them were demanding copies of the prospectus for themselves.

During the pilot stage, certain issues were discovered that needed to be reshaped to validate the questionnaire. Initially, the questionnaire contained questions that demanded for respondents first and second university choices, but the respondents remarked that the Universities Matriculation Exams (UME) has excluded second choices of universities and courses of study. Also, when the respondents were asked about the factors that influenced their admissions, some of the respondents admitted to the fact that they had some course counsellors that advised them on their decisions, so the validated questionnaire introduced that aspect. A summary of the responses from the pilot study are presented below.

Table 4.3.2. Summary of Responses from Cluster A

	SA	A	U	D	SD	
My choice of University was influenced by my parents/guardian	3	2	2	1	2	**10**
My choice of University was influenced by my friends/peers	1	1	2	4	2	**10**
My choice of University was solely my decision	2	2	3	2	1	**10**
My choice of University was influenced by an advertisement I have seen	-	-	-	4	6	**10**
My choice of University was influenced by the proximity to where I reside	3	3	2	2	-	**10**
My choice of course of study was solely my decision	2	2	1	1	2	**10**
My choice of course of study was influenced by advertisements I have seen	-	1	2	2	4	**10**
My choice of course of study was influenced by course counsellor	2	2	1	1	-	**10**
A proper advertisement of the rich academic and cultural values, facilities and equipment of ABU may likely attract me to the University.	4	5	-	-	-	**10**
Prospectuses could serve as the best medium for advertising courses and attractions to prospective students?	6	3	-	-	-	**10**

Table 4.3.2 above presents the results obtained from the first cluster of the sample population. The table shows that advertisements do not really influence the choice of gaining admissions into universities but rather parents/guardian's influence admissions processes.

Table 4.3.3. Summary of Summary of Responses from Cluster B

	SA	A	U	D	SD	
My choice of University was influenced by my parents/guardian	1	2	1	3	3	**10**
My choice of University was influenced by my friends/peers	3	4	1	2	-	**10**
My choice of University was solely my decision	1	2	2	2	3	**10**
My choice of University was influenced by an advertisement I have seen	-	-	-	6	4	**10**
My choice of University was influenced by the proximity to where I reside	1	3	2	2	2	**10**
My choice of course of study was solely my decision	2	2	1	4	1	**10**
My choice of course of study was influenced by advertisements I have seen	-	1	3	4	2	**10**
My choice of course of study was influenced by course counsellor	1	2	3	2	2	**10**
A proper advertisement of the rich academic and cultural values, facilities and equipment of ABU may likely attract me to the University.	3	4	2	1	-	**10**
Prospectuses could serve as the best medium for advertising courses and attractions to prospective students?	4	4	1	1	-	**10**

Table 4.3.3. presents the results obtained from the second cluster (Group B: fresh students in 100 level and 200level-Direct Entry) of the study population. The table shows that advertisements do not really influence the choice of gaining admissions into universities but rather parents/guardian's influence admissions processes, while more respondents agreed that a proper advertisement of the rich academic and cultural values, facilities and equipment of ABU may likely attract me to the University.

Table 4.3.4: Summary of Responses from Cluster C

	SA	A	U	D	SD	
My choice of University was influenced by my parents/guardian	1	3	2	3	1	**10**
My choice of University was influenced by my friends/peers	1	2	2	2	3	**10**
My choice of University was solely my decision	2	2	3	2	1	**10**
My choice of University was influenced by an advertisement I have seen	-	0	2	5	3	**10**
My choice of University was influenced by the proximity to where I reside	1	3	3	2	1	**10**
My choice of course of study was influenced by my parents/guardian	1	2	3	2	2	**10**
My choice of course of study was influenced by my friends /peers	-	1	2	4	3	**10**
My choice of course of study was solely my decision	1	3	2	2	2	**10**
My choice of course of study was influenced by advertisements I have seen	-	-	-	4	6	**10**
My choice of course of study was influenced by course counsellor	1	2	4	2	1	**10**
A proper advertisement of the rich academic and cultural values, facilities and equipment of ABU may likely attract me to the University.	4	3	3	-	-	**10**
Prospectuses could serve as the best medium for advertising courses and attractions to prospective students?	5	3	1	1	-	**10**

Table 4.3.4 presents the results obtained from the third cluster (Group C: fresh students undergoing predegree programmes) of the study population. This cluster of the population was drawn from the respondents offering diploma programme (a pre degree course that leads to an undergraduate course of study).

Table 4.3.5: Total Summary of Responses from the Three Clusters: (A, B & C)

	SA	A	U	D	SD	
My choice of University was influenced by my parents/guardian	5	7	5	7	6	**30**
My choice of University was influenced by my friends/peers	5	7	6	8	5	**30**
My choice of University was solely my decision	5	6	8	6	5	**30**
My choice of University was influenced by an advertisement I have seen	0	0	2	15	13	**30**
My choice of University was influenced by the proximity to where I reside	5	9	7	6	3	**30**
My choice of course of study was solely my decision	5	7	6	7	5	**30**
My choice of course of study was influenced by advertisements I have seen	-	2	6	10	12	**30**
My choice of course of study was influenced by course counsellor	4	6	11	5	4	**30**
A proper advertisement of the rich academic and cultural values, facilities and equipment of ABU may likely attract me to the University.	11	12	6	1	0	**30**
Prospectuses could serve as the best medium for advertising courses and attractions to prospective students?	15	10	3	2	0	**30**

Table 4.3.5 above shows that a total of fifteen out of the thirty respondents strongly agreed, while Ten agreed that prospectuses could serve as the best medium for advertising courses and attractions to prospective students, while no respondent disagreed to that opinion and three were undecided.

The next set of tables analyses and present data obtained from the main study after certain readjustments were made on the research questionnaire. The various responses given to these questions were quantitative, so the results are presented in simple percentages in the subsequent tables. During the pilot study, ten respondents were selected from each of the three clusters, while a total of one hundred and ninety respondents were selected from nineteen focus groups of ten participants each; drawn

from three main clusters that made up the population of the study. The practical process of the pilot study (data collection, analysis and conclusion) covered a period of about two weeks while the main study and data analysis covered a total period of five weeks.

Table 4.3.6: Summary of Responses from Cluster A

	SA	A	U	D	SD	
My choice of University was influenced by my parents/guardian	8	5	4	2	1	**20**
My choice of University was influenced by my friends/peers	-	2	3	10	5	**20**
My choice of University was solely my decision	10	4	1	4	1	**20**
My choice of University was influenced by an advertisement I have seen	-	2	3	12	3	**20**
My choice of University was influenced by the proximity to where I reside	4	6	4	3	3	**20**
My choice of course of study was solely my decision	3	7	4	3	3	**20**
My choice of course of study was influenced by advertisements I have seen	-	1	4	7	8	**20**
My choice of course of study was influenced by course counsellor	4	8	3	2	3	**20**
A proper advertisement of the rich academic and cultural values, facilities and equipment of ABU may likely attract me to the University.	6	9	3	1	1	**20**
Prospectuses could serve as the best medium for advertising courses and attractions to prospective students?	9	9	2	-	-	**20**

Table 4.3.6 above illustrates in summary, the opinions of respondents from the first cluster (group A). The opinions were measured using the five point Likert Scale to determine the various degrees of agreement or disagreements.

Table 4.3.7: Summary of Responses from Cluster B

	SA	A	U	D	SD	
My choice of University was influenced by my parents/guardian	42	34	19	17	8	**120**
My choice of University was influenced by my friends/peers	9	27	28	22	34	**120**
My choice of University was solely my decision	35	30	15	23	17	**120**
My choice of University was influenced by an advertisement I have seen	3	5	23	61	28	**120**
My choice of University was influenced by the proximity to where I reside	27	31	18	24	20	**120**
My choice of course of study was solely my decision	13	28	8	65	6	**120**
My choice of course of study was influenced by advertisements I have seen	2	6	21	59	32	**120**
My choice of course of study was influenced by course counsellor	7	25	2	47	39	**120**
A proper advertisement of the rich academic and cultural values, facilities and equipment of ABU may likely attract me to the University.	81	29	8	2	-	**120**
Prospectuses could serve as the best medium for advertising courses and attractions to prospective students?	52	47	13	8	-	**120**

Table 4.3.7 above also summarily presents the data from the second cluster. In Cluster B, the questions sought to retrieve data from twelve random sub clusters representing the twelve Faculties of Ahmadu Bello University. The opinions from respondents were also measured using the five point Likert Scale to determine the various degrees of agreement or disagreements over various conditions that led to their choice of universities.

Table 4.3.8: Summary of Responses from Cluster C

	SA	A	U	D	SD	
My choice of University was influenced by my parents/guardian	28	5	7	7	3	**50**
My choice of University was influenced by my friends/peers	3	11	9	17	10	**50**
My choice of University was solely my decision	19	15	8	6	2	**50**
My choice of University was influenced by an advertisement I have seen	-	2	10	17	21	**50**
My choice of University was influenced by the proximity to where I reside	5	5	1	11	28	**50**
My choice of course of study was solely my decision	13	15	4	10	8	**50**
My choice of course of study was influenced by advertisements I have seen	-	2	12	12	24	**50**
My choice of course of study was influenced by course counsellor	5	12	10	16	7	**50**
A proper advertisement of the rich academic and cultural values, facilities and equipment of ABU may likely attract me to the University.	21	19	10	-	-	**50**
Prospectuses could serve as the best medium for advertising courses and attractions to prospective students?	19	26	3	2	-	**50**

Table 4.3.8 also presents the data from the third cluster (group C). Group C comprised of pre degree students and sought to retrieve information from them in focus groups. The respondents' opinions were also measured using the same five point Likert Scale that was used in the two other strata (Group A and Group B) to determine the various degrees of agreement or disagreements.

Table 4.3.9: Total Summary of Responses from Cluster A, B and C

	SA		A		U		D		SD		Total Freq	Total %
	No.	**%**	**No.**	**%**	**No.**	**%**	**No.**	**%**	**No.**	**%**		
My choice of University was influenced by my parents/guardian	78	41.1	44	23.1	30	15.8	26	13.7	12	6.3	**190**	**100**
My choice of University was influenced by my friends/peers	12	6.3	40	21.1	40	21.1	49	25.8	49	25.8	**190**	**100**
My choice of University was solely my decision	64	33.7	50	26.3	24	12.6	33	17.3	20	10.5	**190**	**100**
My choice of University was influenced by an advertisement I have seen	3	1.6	9	4.7	36	18.9	90	47.3	52	27.4	**190**	**100**
My choice of University was influenced by the proximity to where I reside	36	18.9	42	22.1	23	12.1	20	20	51	26.8	**190**	**100**
My choice of course of study was solely my decision	29	15.3	50	26.3	16	8.4	78	41.0	17	8.9	**190**	**100**
My choice of course of study was influenced by advertisements I have seen	2	1.1	9	4.7	37	19.5	78	41.0	64	33.7	**190**	**100**
My choice of course of study was influenced by course counsellor	16	8.4	45	23.7	15	7.9	65	34.2	49	25.8	**190**	**100**
A proper advertisement of the rich academic and cultural values, facilities and equipment of ABU may likely attract me to the University.	108	56.8	57	30	21	11.0	3	1.6	1	0.5	**190**	**100**
Prospectuses could serve as the best medium for advertising courses and attractions to prospective students?	80	42.1	82	43.15	18	9.5	10	5.2	-	-	**190**	**100**

Table 4.3.9 presents the total outcome of responses from the three main clusters (Clusters A, B and C). The total number of respondents of the study was one hundred and ninety, from which opinions pertaining to factors that determined their choice of university programmes were analysed and discussed.

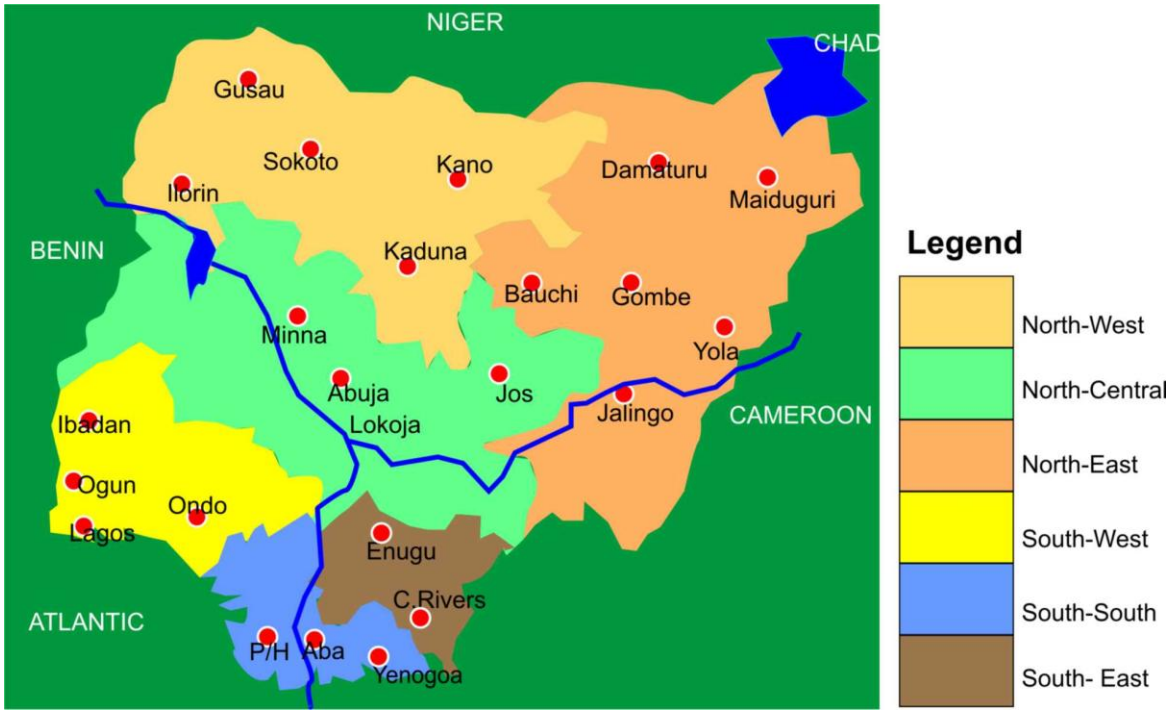


Figure 14: Map of Nigeria showing the Geographical Distribution of Zones

Figure 14 was shown to the respondents to graphically support the data on table 4.3.10 below. In the table the responses obtained from the third section of the research questionnaire sought information on the location where the respondents from the cluster A prefer to gain university admissions.

Table 4.3.10: Which Part of the Country Would You Like the Location of Your Choice University?

Location	(Cluster A) Frequency	(Cluster B) Frequency	(Cluster C) Frequency	Total Frequency	(%)
Invalid	0	0	0	5	2.6
North-west	17	37	33	87	43.6
North-east	0	4	1	5	2.6
North-central	0	29	10	39	20.5
South-west	2	30	3	35	18.4
South-east	1	11	2	14	7.4
South-south	0	9	1	10	5.3
Total	**20**	**120**	**50**	**190**	**100.0**

Table 4.3.10 shows that 89 (43.6%) which is the highest percentage chose North-West as their preferred location for schooling; 5 (2%) chose North-East; 39(20.5%) said North-Central; and 35 (18.4%) chose South-West; 5 (7.4%) said South-east and 10 (5.3%) said South-South. This implied that majority of the respondents preferred the South-West zone. Ahmadu Bello University happens to fall within the North-West region. Proximity appeared to be a factor that also influenced the respondents' decision in this study.

Table 4.3.11: Have You Read any University Brochure or Prospectuses

	(Cluster A) Frequency	(Cluster B) Frequency	(Cluster C) Frequency	Total Frequency	Percentage (%)
Invalid	0	3	6	9	**4.7**
Yes	11	78	31	120	**63.2**
No	9	37	15	61	**32.1**
Total	**20**	**120**	**50**	**190**	**100.0**

Table 4.3.11 shows that 120 (63.2%) said yes to whether they have seen any university brochure or prospectus, while 61 (32.1%) said they have not seen any of such publication. This reveals that more respondents have read one university brochure or the other.

Table 4.3.12: If yes, which university brochure or prospectuses have you seen?

	(Cluster A) Frequency	(Cluster B) Frequency	(Cluster C) Frequency	Cumulative Frequency	Percentage %
A.B.U. Zaria	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**
Other Federal Universities	1	3	1	5	4.1
State Universities	0	2	0	2	1.7
Private Universities	3	8	3	14	11.7
Foreign Universities	2	22	12	36	30.0
JAMB Brochure	5	43	15	63	52.5
Total	**11**	**78**	**31**	**120**	**100.0**

The table 4.3.12 describes the distribution of types of prospectuses the respondents have come across. In the table, no single frequency was recorded when the respondents were asked if they had seen an ABU undergraduate prospectus. Five (4.1%) respondents have seen prospectuses of some Federal universities; two respondents, which is 1.7% of the total respondents have seen prospectuses of State universities; fourteen (11.7%) have seen prospectuses of private universities; thirty six (30%) admitted that they have come across prospectuses of foreign universities while sixty three (52.5%) 'others' option, and further specified the option as JAMB brochure. The table reveals that State and Federal universities across Nigeria do not use the advantage of a prospectus to advertise their universities and programmes while literature reveals that the foreign universities utilise the print version of prospectuses to advertise universities and other higher institutions.

Table 4.3.13: Have You Encountered any Other Forms of Advertising a University?

	(Cluster A) Frequency	(Cluster B) Frequency	(Cluster C) Frequency	Total Frequency	%
Invalid	0	6	1	7	**4.7**
Yes	16	88	38	142	**63.2**
No	4	26	11	51	**32.1**
Total	**20**	**120**	**50**	**190**	**100.0**

Table 4.3.14: What Other Media of a University Advertisement Have You Encountered?

Advert Material	(Cluster A) Frequency	(Cluster B) Frequency	(Cluster C) Frequency	Cumulative Frequency	%
TV	2	9	2	13	9.2
Banner	2	4	3	16	11.3
Newspaper/Magazine	0	7	0	20	14.1
Radio	3	11	6	9	6.3
Poster	8	48	21	7	4.9
Internet	1	9	6	77	54.2
Total	**16**	**88**	**38**	**142**	**100.0**

From table 4.3.14, a total of 13 (9.2%) said through Television; 16 (11.3%) said through banners; 20 (14.1%) said from either magazines or newspapers and 9 (6.3%) said through Radio while 77 (54.2%) said they have seen universities being advertised through the internet. This implied that most (54.2%) respondents have seen alternative advertisement through the internet, while the remaining 55.8% of the population were distributed among the other advertisement media listed in the table above.

Table 4.3.15: Does the Information in the Prospectus Relate to Your Choice Course or University?

	(Cluster A) Frequency	(Cluster B) Frequency	(Cluster C) Frequency	Total Frequency	Percentage (%)
Invalid	1	6	3	10	**5.3**
Yes	17	112	44	173	**91.0**
No	2	2	3	7	**3.7**
Total	**20**	**120**	**50**	**190**	**100.0**

The table above showed that 91% of the respondents admitted that the redesigned prospectus would actually be handy. The respondents admitted that they would have needed such a guide in making decisions about universities and the programmes being offered in A.B.U. and 95.8% of the respondents said they were willing to recommend a copy of the redesigned prospectus to other prospective students because it was quite attractive to them.

The next set of tables present the results obtained from respondents that compared and contrasted between the contents of the existing prospectus and the redesigned prospectus. The variables assessed in the prospectuses were the issues raised from the statement of the problem. The design problems highlighted were the use of Images; use of Typography; use of Colours; and Paper/print quality.

Table 4.4.1: Responses from Assessment of Prospectus Content from the First Cluster (Cluster A)

		Old (Existing) Prospectus						New (Redesigned) Prospectus					
		Very Good	***Good***	***Fair***	***Poor***	***Very Poor***	**Total**	***Very Good***	***Good***	***Fair***	***Poor***	***Very Poor***	**Total**
i	Use of Images	-	1	3	15	1	**20**	14	4	2	-	-	**20**
ii	Use of Typography	-	3	10	5	2	**20**	11	8	1	-	-	**20**
iii	Use of Colours	-	-	-	2	18	**20**	16	4	-	-	-	**20**
iv	Paper Quality	-	9	5	6	-	**20**	16	3	1	-	-	**20**
v	Cover Design	-	10	1	7	2	**20**	10	7	3	-	-	**20**
vi	Binding Style	-	12	8	-	-	**20**	4	15	1	-	-	**20**

In table 4.4.1 above, the respondents attempted to assess use of Images; Typography; Colours; and Paper/print quality in the old and redesigned prospectus. Most of the scores were very unfavourable to the content of the old prospectus version, while the responses favoured the redesigned prospectus.

Table 4.4.2: Responses from Assessment of Prospectus Content from the First Cluster (Cluster B)

	Old (Existing) Prospectus						New (Redesigned) Prospectus					
	Very Good	***Good***	***Fair***	***Poor***	***Very Poor***	**Total**	***Very Good***	***Good***	***Fair***	***Poor***	***Very Poor***	**Total**
Invalid						**19**						**19**
Use of Images	1	4	7	84	5	**101**	66	29	6	-	-	**101**
Use of Typography	-	8	21	65	7	**101**	49	43	8	1	-	**101**
Use of Colours	-	-	6	78	17	**101**	62	35	4	-	-	**101**
Paper Quality	-	3	34	57	7	**101**	83	17	1	-	-	**101**
Cover Design	-	30	58	13	-	**101**	44	54	3	-	-	**101**
Binding Style	-	53	41	7	-	**101**	25	38	35	3	-	**101**

Table 4.4.2 also presents the respondents opinions in assessing the use of Images; Typography; Colours; and Paper/print quality in both the old and redesigned prospectus in Group B. Most of the scores were also unfavourable to the content of the old prospectus version, while the responses favoured the redesigned prospectus.

Table 4.4.3: Responses from Assessment of Prospectus Content from the First Cluster (Cluster C)

	Old (Existing) Prospectus						New (Redesigned) Prospectus					
	Very Good	***Good***	***Fair***	***Poor***	***Very Poor***	**Total**	***Very Good***	***Good***	***Fair***	***Poor***	***Very Poor***	**Total**
Invalid						**6**						**6**
Use of Images	-	11	29	4	-	**44**	17	21	6	-	-	**44**
Use of Typography	-	15	27	2	-	**44**	14	22	8	-	-	**44**
Use of Colours	-	-	3	9	32	**44**	21	18	5	-	-	**44**
Paper Quality	-	8	27	3	-	**44**	26	18	-	-	-	**44**
Cover Design	-	10	25	9	-	**44**	14	22	8	-	-	**44**
Binding Style	-	31	11	2	-	**44**	11	20	13	-	-	**44**

In table 4.4.3, Group C respondents assessed the use of Images; Typography; Colours; and Paper/print quality in both the old and redesigned prospectus. In the three groups (A, B and C) the scores were unfavourable to the content of the old prospectus version because they had much "fair" and "poor scores" but the use of colour in the old design was the only variable to have had very poor scores occurring. The table showed that the responses favoured the redesigned prospectus.

Table 4.4.4: Responses from Assessment of Prospectus Content from the First Cluster (Clusters A, B and C)

	Old (Existing) Prospectus												
	Very Good	**%**	***Good***	**%**	***Fair***	**%**	***Poor***	**%**	***Very Poor***	**%**	**Total %**	**Total Freq.**	
Total Invalid													**25??**
Use of Images	1	0.60	16	9.69	39	23.63	103	62.4	6	3.60	100	**165**	
Use of Typography	-	-	26	15.75	58	35.15	72	43.63	9	5.45	100	**165**	
Use of Colours	-	-	-	-	9	5.45	89	53.93	67	40.6	100	**165**	
Paper Quality	-		20	12.12	66	40.00	66	40	7	4.24	100	**165**	
Cover Design	-		50	30.30	84	50.90	29	17.57	2	1.21	100	**165**	
Binding Style	-		96	58.18	60	36.36	9	5.45	-	-	100	**165**	
Total valid													**165**

Table 4.4.4 presents the total summary of respondents' opinion in scoring the layout designs of the existing prospectus using the following guidelines: use of Images; Typography; Colours; and Paper quality. Every stratum was homogenous in nature; as such the results of their responses were summed up in group totals.

Table 4.4.5: Total of responses and percentages from the assessment of the redesigned prospectuses' content from the three strata (Groups A, B and C)

	New (Redesigned) Prospectus												
	Very Good	**%**	***Good***	**%**	***Fair***	**%**	***Poor***	**%**	***Very Poor***	**%**	**Total %**	**Total Freq.**	
Total Invalid													**25**
Use of Images	97	58.78	54	32.72	14	8.48	-	-	-	-	100	**165**	
Use of Typography	74	44.84	73	44.24	17	10.30	1	-	-	-	100	**165**	
Use of Colours	99	60	57	34.54	9	5.45	-	-	-	-	100	**165**	
Paper Quality	125	75.75	38	23.03	2	1.21	-	-	-	-	100	**165**	
Cover Design	68	41.21	83	50.3	14	8.48	-	-	-	-	100	**165**	
Binding Style	40	24.24	73	44.24	49	29.69	3	1.81	-	-	100	**165**	
Total valid													**165**

Table 4.4.5 also presents respondents' total summary and cumulative percentages from the analyses of Image usage; Typography; Colours; and Paper/print quality. Since each of the three stratified groups was homogenous in nature, the results of their responses were summed up in group totals. The overall results from the three groups were also summed up to determine the percentages of all the occurrences. Also, all the results from the three groups tended to be unfavourable toward the content of the old prospectus version because they had some fair and poor scores but the use of colour in the old design was the only variable to have had the highest very poor scores occurring

with a frequency of 67 and 40.6 percent of the entire population that was studied. The table showed that the responses favoured the redesigned layouts more.

4.4. Discussion of Results

After establishing the problem of this study from the background of the Publication Unit of ABU, data were collected and analysed. This study explored the Functional Context Learning Paradigm (FCLP), which is a concept which mainly helped to identify a problem within a given environment or institution and proffer practical solutions to the problems identified. This FCLP concept affirms the explanation given by Yakubu (2011) and Sticht (1985) in Tibekilem (2011) where the exploration of acquired technical graphic skill, backed by an informed awareness, the learning activities (creativity, execution resourcefulness that achieved compelling results) were geared towards practical outcomes that related to real functional contexts that emphasised the significance of making solutions relevant to the experience of learners and their work setting. The finding of new information was facilitated by making it possible for the designer to relate it to knowledge already possessed and transform it into new knowledge.

In line with the objectives, and supported by relevant literature, some sample of layout styles of prospectuses and other visual communications materials were randomly selected from within and outside A.B.U. to be assessed and examined. A formative evaluation was done on some of these materials and some concepts from the samples were considered in the redesigning procedures. The results from the three clusters tended to be unfavourable toward the content of the existing prospectus since the results had “poor” scores but the use of colour in the old design was the only variable to have

had the highest “very poor” scores occurring with a total frequency of 67 and 40.6 percent of the entire population that was studied. Fifteen respondents in the first cluster rated the images in the existing prospectus as poor, 84 in cluster B and 4 in cluster C making a sum total of 103 respondents (62.42%). The use of typography was also rated poorly as a total of 43% rated it poor while only 35.15% rated it to be fair. In the use of colours, 53.9% of the respondents rated the colour usage to be poor while 40.6% rated it to be very poor.

The tables (4.4.1 to 4.4.4) showed more favourable responses toward the redesigned prospectus. Table 4.4.5 presents the summary of the favourable responses. In responding to the redesigned prospectus, no single respondent rated image usage; typography, colours and paper feel under the ‘very poor’ and ‘poor’ category. Tables 4.4.1 to 4.4.5 implied that the respondents significantly preferred the redesigned prospectus. In the preceding tables (4.3.7 and 4.3.8) over 90% admitted that such a design would be relevant and that they would even recommend a copy to prospective friends. After attempts were made to reproduce the template visuals, the reproduced version was shown to respondents to give their opinions about how they perceived it terms of the use of images, typography and colours. Already in the review of literature, Lidwell (2006) affirmed the positive combination of imagery and typography and how it impacts on an audience.

A conscious combination of both images and types was a guiding factor in the studio procedure of designing the layout templates which made respondents like the redesigned prospectus more. The assessment of the typographic elements showed that the non-serif and grid proved to be more legible, appealing and communicative as

observed by Wallschlaeger and Snyder (2002) earlier in literature. In the redesigned layout designs, digital images were used to replace the illustrations of the existing design. In addressing the problems of halftones observed in the existing layout designs, Devries and Rosen (2002) confirmed that digital images store bits and pixels in binary codes that aid digital display. Also, the theory of combining text and images appeared to be very relevant in exploring such VC materials. This theory further affirms the statement of Lidwell (2003) noting that the impact of combining text and images supersedes that of using only images or only text in a layout design. Relevant digital photographs of Buildings, equipment and campus activities were taken within the two campuses of ABU (Samaru and Kongo campuses) and were used as supporting graphics for the layout templates. All layout designs were then executed using computer and computer design programmes (CorelDraw and Photoshop). The developed visual communication design was done creatively using computer skills and transferred from the confines of the studio to the "real world" where it was enhanced.

The redesigned prototype was administered to respondents in focus groups of an initial sample of thirty (30) respondents during the piloting and a cluster of one hundred and ninety (190) during the main study. The FGD procedure was eminent in this regard as it largely conforms to Lindlof & Taylor's (2002) assertion that relevant aspects of qualitative research in which an interactive group of people are asked about their perceptions, opinions, beliefs, and attitudes towards a product, service, concept, advertisement, idea, or packaging are computed and analysed.

The data collected were analysed using statistical tables and percentages to facilitate a concise interpretation. The responses obtained from respondents were categorised in

four different sections of the questionnaire designed for the study. Section A contained information on the demography of the respondents. Section B contained questions designed to collect responses and opinions on factors that may possibly influence prospective students' admissions using the five-point Likert scale. Section C sought to retrieve information about the respondents' knowledge of visual communications resources and especially advertising of universities through the use of prospectuses. The last section of the questionnaire was used to collect information on a content analysis of the aspects of design the third objective set out to achieve. Stemler (2001) affirmed that the content analysis enables researchers to sift through large volumes of data with relative ease in a systematic fashion, noting that it can be a useful technique for allowing us to discover and describe the focus of individual, group, institutional, or social attention. It also allows inferences to be made which can then be corroborated using other methods of data collection.

When the draft or prototype was subjected to a sample of the study population during the piloting, it was observed that they liked the paper texture, but some of the respondents found it tasking to easily navigate around the pages of the redesigned prospectus because of the initial stretched binding format. As such, the comprehensive redesigns were then executed in the simple conventional bound style.

The last objective of the study was to develop a prototype print prospectus template that attempted to address the issues of poor images, typography, colours and print/paper quality. These variables (images, typography, colours and print/paper quality) were listed in rows of two tables. One table contained the existing prospectus columns for assessment while the corresponding table contained the redesigned assessment column.

The points of assessment were modelled after the five point Likert Scale that addressed the second section of the questionnaire. The points were given in a descending order of Very Good, Good, Fair, Poor and Very Poor. These variables (types, images and colours) formed the empirical basis that guided the redesign of the proposed prototype prospectus that was administered to respondents in focus groups and the impact it had on the respondents. The responses gave practical and analytic antecedents about the complete design. This task is purely in line with Payne (2001) and Wallschlaeger (1992) who noted that there ought to be a feedback component in message dissemination before any communication flow could be termed complete.

In line with the principles of the FCLP, the interrogation of the state of visual communications resources of the publication Unit of ABU unravelled the problems that informed this inquiry, leading to proffering graphic design solutions. The proposed prospectus layouts attempted to solve these problems in the redesign phase by rendering the designs in line with some guiding concepts that were gleaned from the review of literature. In table 4.3.3, the question was targeted at knowing if the respondents have come across any university prospectus/brochure. 11 respondents from group A, 78 from Group B and 31 from the third stratum making a total of 120 (63%) of the entire 190 respondents sampled agreed that they have come across such a publication, while 61 (32.1%) said they have not seen any and 9 (4.7%) did not respond to that question, making the figure invalid. At the pilot stage of this study, a list of the following options was provided: A.B.U. Zaria, Other Federal Universities, State Universities, Private Universities, Foreign Universities, and others that should be specified. The respondents that have seen the JAMB brochure are about 52% of the population, and were much more than those that have seen all the other options put together. From table 4.3.6, none

of the respondents from the three stratified groups have seen any ABU prospectus. One respondent from the first stratum, 3 from the second and 1 from the third stratum, making a total of 5 respondents have seen prospectuses of other Federal Universities, Two respondents from group B and none from Groups A and C have seen a State University prospectus, 3 respondents from group A, 8 from Group B and 3 from Group C totalling 14 (11.7%) have seen prospectuses from private universities. 2 respondents from Group A, 22 from Group B and 12 from Group C, totalling 36 (30%) of the respondents said they have seen prospectuses of foreign universities.

The table 4.3.12 significantly implied that State and Federal universities across Nigeria do not use the prospectus as a medium of advertising university programmes while the foreign universities make use of prospectuses as the choice tool to advertise universities and programmes in higher institutions. Since the findings show that no respondent have seen an ABU prospectus, this result therefore, implies that there has not been any form of circulating or issuing undergraduate prospectuses in ABU, Zaria in recent times.

The elements and perceptive principles of design are effective in ordering good layouts systems. In the review of related literature, Wallschlaeger and Snyder (1992) remarked that perceptive principles of design are very effective in ordering problem solving process and also serve as structuring guidelines to create the intended message. The design was achieved through a conscious rendering of elements that constituted the entire page layouts using available graphic resources. Having established fundamental design principles from theory, the effect of types, images and colours were chiefly selected as the dominant elements that made up the supporting graphics that actualised the final design.

Evans (2003) earlier in the review of literature noted that imagery and type are not formal elements of design, but they can function as supporting design elements in any page layout. In ordering these design elements, simplicity was a major consideration to keep the whole layout design clear and concise. The Bauhaus and International style art emphasised simplicity and functionality in design as modes of expressing communication more easily. The principle asserts that simplicity of design elements in visual communication relays visual messages in clear and concise manner (Lester 2006). As such, the types used in the designs were simple sans-serifs letter alphabets and numbers. The group of sans-serifs appear simpler than the serif types because they do not possess any forms of crisp lapidary extensions on either their heads or tail extensions. The types used include “heveltica”, “ariel”and the like. These types were selected based on their legibility, simplicity and availability on the graphic design software that were used in executing the layout designs.

4.5. Summary of Findings

From the data collected in this study and in an attempt to respond to the research questions, the findings of the study are:

1. The process and application of a Functional Context Learning Paradigm has opened up a practical graphic involvement that guided the course of this research. The Visual Communications materials do not seem to adequately communicate. The graphic designers’ role in the restructuring of policies of the University cannot be looked down upon especially as the study showed that there is a desire to rebrand the publication Unit through a renewed redesigning, publishing and circulating of prospectuses and other visual communications resources. Results from the three clusters appeared to be unfavourable towards the content of the existing prospectus because they had some fair

and poor scores. The use of colour in the old design was the only variable to have had the highest very poor scores occurring with a total frequency of 67 and 40.6 percent of the entire population that was studied.

2. In relation to the size of Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, Information Officers of the Publication Unit highlighted that the circulation of visual communications materials published by the publication Unit are not effective enough to inform prospective students as well as generate adequate feedbacks. In the review of literature, the Claude Shannon's model of communication demonstrated the ideal channel of communication and information flow: from the sender to the receiver-through a medium, and back to the sender (Ryan and Conover 2004). Unfortunately, these goals have not been adequately met.

In this study, the respondents that have seen the JAMB brochure (52% of the population) were much more than those that have seen all the other advertising options put together and since the findings showed that no respondent has seen an A.B.U. prospectus, this result therefore, reveals that there has not been any form of circulating or issuing undergraduate prospectuses in A.B.U. in recent times.

3. A careful combination of imagery, types and corresponding colours rendered using Coreldraw, Photoshop graphic programmes proved to be the ideal way of executing layouts for such publication designs. After several test prints in studio, the results show that paper types invariably determine the texture and appearance of the printed material. Generally, prints executed on coated papers appeared to be more appealing, as such, the

prints were carried out on coated art paper. This enhanced the looks and also attracted the respondents.

In the last section of the research questionnaire, some respondents suggested that they would have preferred soft-copies of redesigned prospectus sent to them, via email or other forms of social media. This idea also informed the final redesign which was done and converted to other digital extensions such as the JPEG, PNG and PDF extensions that made the designs compatible for uploading on the internet and other portable devices.

- A lot of prospective university students find difficulties in getting adequate and relevant information about gaining admissions into higher institutions of learning in general. A lot of these students rely heavily on parents, guardians and peers whom may not also be adequately informed themselves. In the review of related literature, the study pointed out that prospectuses are still very much a prolific advert medium for informing prospective students about Universities and their programmes and they are still very much effective in Universities of the developed countries (Faulkner, 2010). This information implies that there is a penchant need to continually redesign, and distribute to intending students of Universities. In the presentation of data, Table 4.3.11 to 4.3.14 show that courses and university programmes in ABU and indeed other Nigerian Universities are not advertised using the visual communications resources of prospectuses.

- It was also established from literature that a combination of types and images are the most effective means of ordering visual communications materials. In the review of related literature, Lidwel (2003) emphasized that memory for visual designs are more effective in conveying messages rather than memory for text alone or images alone.

- It was also found that the Functional Context Learning Paradigm (FCLP) is an effective means of exploring and delineating certain problems that may abound in institutions, faculties, departments or organizations. Without a careful observation, assessment or evaluation, through the direct implementation of the principles of FCLP, certain challenges (design and others) may continue to linger to the detriment of such organizations.

  The assessment carried out on the Publication Unit of A.B.U. opened up some contextual design loop-holes that may have continued to be ignored. The research objectives proffered possible practical solutions to some of these problems that were raised using concepts from literature as a guide in executing the studio based prototype layouts.

CHAPTER FIVE

5.0 SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1. Introduction

In the statement of the problem, this study observed a functional graphic issue in the Publication Unit of the Ahmadu Bello University Registry. The problems were directly related to the design and publication of printed visual communication materials with particular reference to undergraduate prospectuses. The variables specifically highlighted were typography, images and colours of the existing prospectus which the objectives of the study offered practical graphic solutions using the theories and concepts gleaned from the review of literature.

5.2. Summary

This study explored the principles of the FCLP, a concept which largely guided, informed and identified an existing problem within a given environment and made efforts to proffer practical solutions to the problems identified which yielded practical outcomes that related to real functional contexts. The finding of new information as specified in the A.B.U. special bulletin made it possible for the designer to relate it to the design knowledge already possessed by transforming it into new knowledge of the redesigned layouts.

The objectives of the study was drawn from the background of the problem, and supported by relevant literature that discussed theories and perceptive principles of layout and publication designs, the Bauhaus style, layout and prospectus design styles, aesthetic relevance, Branding and the role of computer in design layout by combining typography, digital images together with other formal elements of design (line, Shape, Colour)

revealed how visual communications can be enhanced and perceived quickly, clearly and reliably.

The study used a descriptive approach to explain its content. Samples of layout styles of prospectuses and other visual communications materials were randomly selected from within and outside A.B.U. to determine their design concepts. After that, a formative evaluation was done on these materials and some of them were considered in the redesigning procedures. The layout designs were developed with the aid of graphic design softwares, after which professional graphic designers were approached to make certain suggestions by assessing the designs by a way of formative evaluation. From the comments raised by the graphic designers, re-designs were executed, printed using Direct Imaging (DI) printing process and finished in gloss surfaces.

During the pilot stage, the finished designs were introduced to a sample of respondents in focus groups to obtain responses and opinions. The pilot study was carried out mainly within the confines of Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria for a period of about two weeks while the main study covered a period of about five weeks, where opinions pertaining to the factors that actually impacted on the respondents' choices of course and choice of university were sought. The data were gathered together with the help of three research assistants. The data retrieved were analysed using statistical tables to represent frequencies and percentages in a clear manner. Certain adjustments were then made to validate the research instrument and also enhance the process of the main study.

In the results from the analysis of the redesigned prospectus, no single respondent rated image usage, typography, and colours under the 'very poor' and 'poor' category. The

respondents showed favourable responses toward the redesigned prospectus. Tables 4.4.1 to 4.4.5 present the summary of all the responses and the results implied that the respondents significantly preferred and recommended the redesigned prospectus.

5.3. Conclusion

The aim of this study was set out to develop a prototype prospectus for undergraduate studies in Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria. Based on conceptual issues in graphic design, the idea of a Functional Context Learning Paradigm was explored in assessing the impact of visual communications approach of the public Affairs Unit of the A.B.U. registry.

The reviewed literature gathered concepts that cut across design elements and perceptive principles that govern publication and layout design in general.

In the results from the analysis of the redesigned prospectus, no single respondent rated image usage, typography, and colours under the 'very poor' and 'poor' category. The respondents showed favourable responses toward the redesigned prospectus. Tables 4.4.1 to 4.4.5 present the summary of these responses, revealing that the respondents significantly preferred the redesigned prospectus and recommended that such publications should be continually reproduced and circulated.

The study revealed that prospectuses are still very much a prolific advertising medium for informing prospective students about Universities and their programmes and they are still very much effective in the developed countries. After analysing the data retrieved in this study, the results significantly inferred that there is a penchant need to continually redesign, publish and distribute prospectuses and to intending students for advertising

university courses. This assertion was determined from the data analysis section which significantly showed that an effective use of a prospectus can actually influence specific advertisements of universities and programmes offered.

5.4. Recommendations

This study raised some obvious design problems that were discovered in the print publications of the Public Affairs Unit in Ahmadu Bello University registry. Attempts were made to offer practical graphics solutions in line with the principles of FCLP and the following recommendations are made:

1. In order to ease the application and admissions processes, it is recommended that the Management of Ahmadu Bello University should make great effort in plotting a cause for the reproduction of the prototype prospectus developed during this study. Prospectuses have been proven to be an effective marketing tool; therefore, it is highly recommended that the staff of the Public Affairs Unit in collaboration with the Department of Industrial Design should follow up this idea with the University management to continually improve on quality design standards for prints as well as electronic and internet applications.

2. When designing layout publications, special considerations should be given to the use and application of colour, images and typography. The applications of these variables (colour, images and typography) in harmony with the various elements of design should be rendered in compliance with the principles of design so as to achieve attractive layouts.

3. The Information and Protocol Unit and the University registry, should endeavour to solicit the services of a Graphic Designer and information/ communication officers to complement the efforts of the few staff on ground. The designer and communication expert are to design, develop, and publish the visual communications resources produced by the University, while adequate means of distributing the publications should be put in place.

4. The concept of a Functional Context Learning Paradigm (FCLP) should be given more emphasis in the Department of Industrial Design and the Faculty of Environmental Design at large so that practical solutions could be rendered to certain organisational problems.

5. It is recommended that students should be given the liberty to make certain suggestions pertaining to the kind of features they would like to see reflect in subsequent editions of prospectuses as well as other subsequent visual communications that relate to their needs.

5.5. Implication for further studies

Further studies can be carried out in the areas of advertising university programmes and career options. Further research could be carried out in the areas of Magazine design, Newsletters design and other visual communications resources that may be published by the Public Affairs unit of A.B.U. to find more possible and practical means of improving her visual communications design.

Studies in the areas of colour psychology could also be carried out on prospective students to understand their visual perception to possibly enhance subsequent visual communication designs that are targeted towards them.

5.6. Short Falls of the Research

During the course of this study, certain pitfalls had to be contended with. Firstly, at the point of accessing information from the ABU Public Affairs unit, some affiliated units of concern were introduced. Units such as the Academic Planning, Students Affairs and the University Security services had to be drawn into the study. The entire protocols involved in getting the officers' consent and approvals in the course of the study took several weeks and involved some sorts of lobbying before the Academic Planning Unit, Students' Affairs division and the University Security Service later afforded approvals to snap photographs around the university.

During the course of the research, the opportunity to easily access respondents also proved to be tasking. The respondents were mostly engaged in one academic activity or the other. Initially, it took about a week to establish a tangible contact with class representatives and staff who eventually provided the platform to organise and select the various focus groups. The cost incurred while undergoing this study was another pitfall the study had to contend with. The procedure of snapping of photographs around the campuses, transporting research assistants to and from both campuses and the digital printing of both the draft and redesigned prospectus layouts were the aspects that consumed the major chuck of the research budget.

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APPENDIX 1: Research Instruments

SCHOOL OF POSTGRADUATE STUDIES, DEPARTMENT OF INDUSTRIAL DESIGN, AHMADU BELLO UNIVERSITY, ZARIA

This score sheet is designed to elicit responses from professional graphic designers on the topic **"An Assessment of the Impact of Visual Communications Approach of the Information and Protocol Unit of Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria."** All your responses shall be treated confidentially and used for purposes of this study.

Please indicate your years of working experience as a professional graphic designer by ticking [ ] the appropriate entry.
Working Experience: 5-7 years[ ] 8-10[ ] 11 -13[ ] 14 and above[ ]
Name of organization: ……..

Please assess the layout concepts by scoring between 1 and 5 points for each design category. 5 is the highest score, while 1 is the lowest score.

SCORE SHEET

	Layout Concepts	**Highest Score**				**Lowest Score**	**Remarks**
		5	4	3	2	1	
A	Use of Typography						
B	Use of Images						
C	Use of Colours						
D	Cover design						
E	Pint Quality						
F	Paper quality						

Research Instruments

SCHOOL OF POSTGRADUATE STUDIES, DEPARTMENT OF INDUSTRIAL DESIGN, AHMADU BELLO UNIVERSITY, ZARIA

This questionnaire is designed to elicit responses on the topic **"An Assessment of the Impact of Visual Communications Approach of the Information and Protocol Unit of Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria."** All your responses shall be treated confidentially and used for purposes of this study.

QUESTIONNAIRE

Please fill-in appropriate responses. Any information obtained from you shall be treated with utmost confidentiality.

SECTION A (Demography)

Instruction: *Please Tick and Fill in appropriate responses*

Sex: Male ☐ Female ☐

Age: 15-19 ☐ 20-25 ☐ 26-30 ☐ 30 and above ☐

Marital Status: Single ☐ Married ☐ Others ☐

Educational Level: SSCE/UME ☐ 100 Level ☐ 200 Level (Direct Entry) ☐ Diploma ☐

SECTION B (*Instruction):* *Answer all questions. Choose only the most appropriate option by placing a tick [ ] against only one.*

Key: SA=Strongly Agree, A= Agree, U=Undecided, D=Disagree, SD=Strongly Disagree

		SA	A	U	D	SD
1.	My choice of University was influenced by my parents/guardian					
2	My choice of University was influenced by my friends/peers					
3	My choice of University was solely my decision					
4	My choice of University was influenced by an advertisement I have seen					
5	My choice of University was influenced by the proximity to where I reside					
6	My choice of course of study was solely my decision					
7	My choice of course of study was influenced by advertisements I have seen					
8	My choice of course of study was influenced by course counselor					
9	A proper advertisement of the rich academic and cultural values, facilities and equipment of ABU may likely attract me to the University.					
10	Prospectuses could serve as the best medium for advertising courses and attractions to prospective students?					

SECTION C (*Instruction):* *Please tick [ ] and fill in appropriate responses where necessary*

Preferred choice of University ☐

Preferred choice of course of Study ☐

Have you seen or read any University prospectuses? Yes ☐ No ☐

If yes, which of these categories of University prospectus have you seen?

a. [ ] ABU, Zaria
b. [ ] Other Federal Universities
c. [ ] State Universities
d. [ ] Private Universities
e. [ ] Foreign Universities
f. [ ] Others (Specify)

Have you seen any University or courses being advertised? Yes ☐ No ☐

If yes, what medium of advertisement material have you encountered?

a. [ ] Television
b. [ ] Banners
c. [ ] Poster`
d. [ ] Radio
e. [ ] Newspaper/ magazine
f. [ ] others (specify)

From the redesigned prospectus shown to you, do think the information in the advertisement relate to your choice course or University in any way? Yes ☐ No ☐

Have you heard of Ahmadu Bello University before now? Yes ☐ No ☐

Would you recommend a copy of this prospectus to a prospective friend? Yes ☐ No ☐

How would you like it to be sent? Postal Order ☐ E-mail ☐ others ☐

How would you recommend improving on the design quality of this prospectus? ☐

SECTION D (*Instruction):* *Please Kindly rate this redesigned prospectus in comparison to the older version in terms of Image usage, typography, colours and Paper quality.*

		Old (Existing) Prospectus						**New (Redesigned) Prospectus**				
		Very Good	***Good***	***Fair***	***Poor***	***Very Poor***		***Very Good***	***Good***	***Fair***	***Poor***	***Very Poor***
I	Use of Images											
Ii	Use of Typography											
iii	Use of Colours											
Iv	Paper Quality											
V	Cover Design											
vi	Binding Style											

Thank You for your Cooperation!

APPENDIX 2: Letter of Introduction



DEPARTMENT OF INDUSTRIAL DESIGN
AHMADU BELLO UNIVERSITY, ZARIA - NIGERIA
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Head of Department: Dr. Salihu Maiwada, B.A., M.A., Ph.D(ABU) MSNA, MATTN

Tel: 08028185081
069879415

5th February, 2014

To Whom It May Concern

Dear Sir/Madam,

LETTER OF INTRODUCTION IN RESPECT OF ZIRRA BONAVENTURE

The above named is a student in this Department who is currently undergoing his research on Admission into Higher Institutions of Learning. He is administrating questionnaire in focus groups.

Please kindly assist him in any possible way you can

Thank you.

Yours sincerely,

Mal. Aliyu Umar
Head of Department

Sections: • Basic Design • Ceramic Design • Graphics Design • Textile Design • Glass Technology

Letter from the department to solicit for Research assistance where required.

APPENDIX 3: Collection of Prospectus Layouts from Across Various Universities.



Plate XLVI: Inner Pages from the University Cambridge Prospectus



Plate XLVII: Cover Sample of South African College of Music prospectus

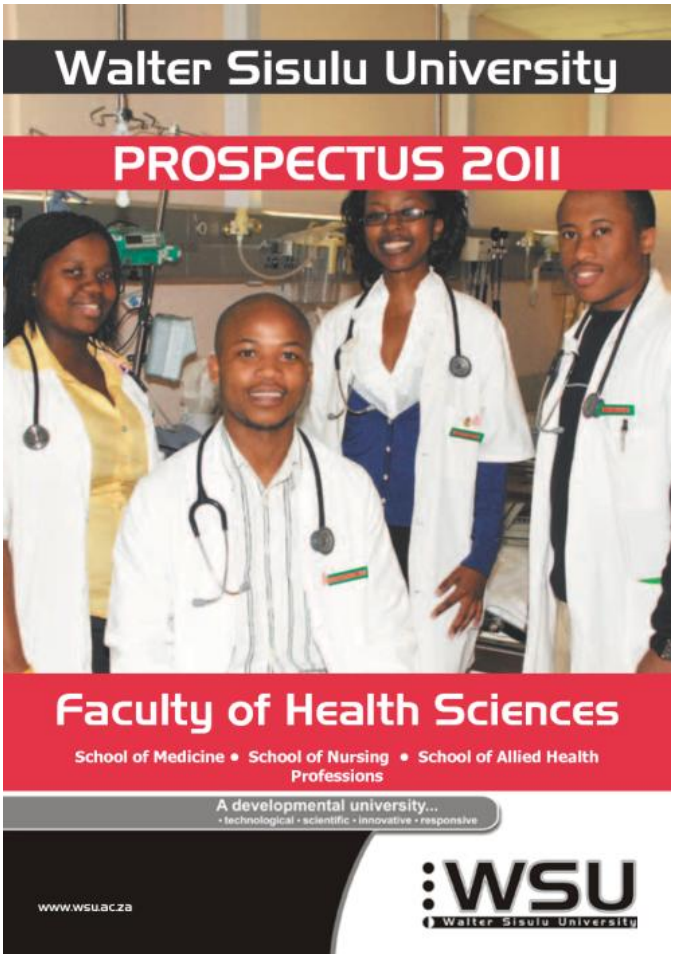


Plate XLVIII: Walter Sisulu University prospectus



Plate XLIX: LMU Prospectus Cover

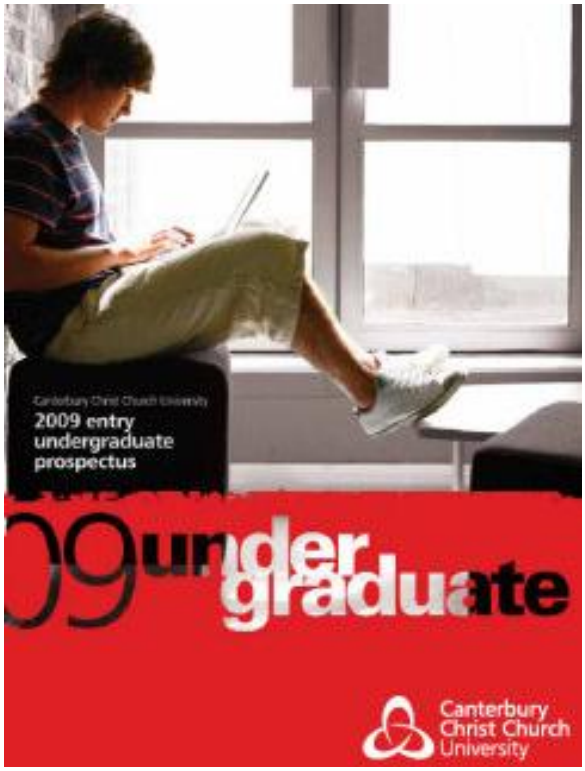


Plate L: CCCU prospectuses cover (2009)

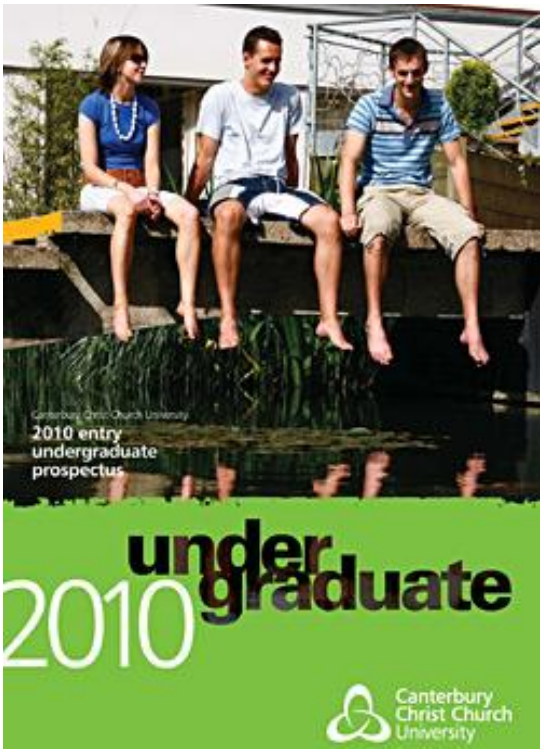


Plate LI: CCCU prospectuses cover (2010)

Appendix 4: Digital Photographs of Scenes Around A.B.U.



Plate LII: Arts Exhibition at the Department of Fine Arts
Source: (Original Research Photographs. Snapped by Bonaventure Zirra 2012)



Plate LIII: Faculty of Pharmaceutical Sciences, ABU.
Source: (Original Research Photographs. Snapped by Abdullahi kasimu 2012)



Plate LIV: Faculty of Medicine, ABU.
Source: (Original Research Photographs. Snapped by Abdullahi Kasimu 2012)



Plate LV: Faculty of Veterinary Medicine
Source: (Original Research Photographs. Snapped by Abdullahi Kasimu 2012)



Plate LVI: ABU Stadium
Source: (Original Research Photographs. Snapped by Bonaventure Zirra 2012)



Plate LVII: Media Crew During the ABU @ 50 Event
Source: (Original Research Photographs. Snapped by Bonaventure Zirra 2012)



Plate LVIII: A. B. U. Security Forces at a Briefing During the ABU @ 50 Event
Source: (Original Research Photographs. Snapped by Bonaventure Zirra 2012)

Appendix 5: Redesigned Layout Designs
(Preliminary Thumb Nail Sketches)

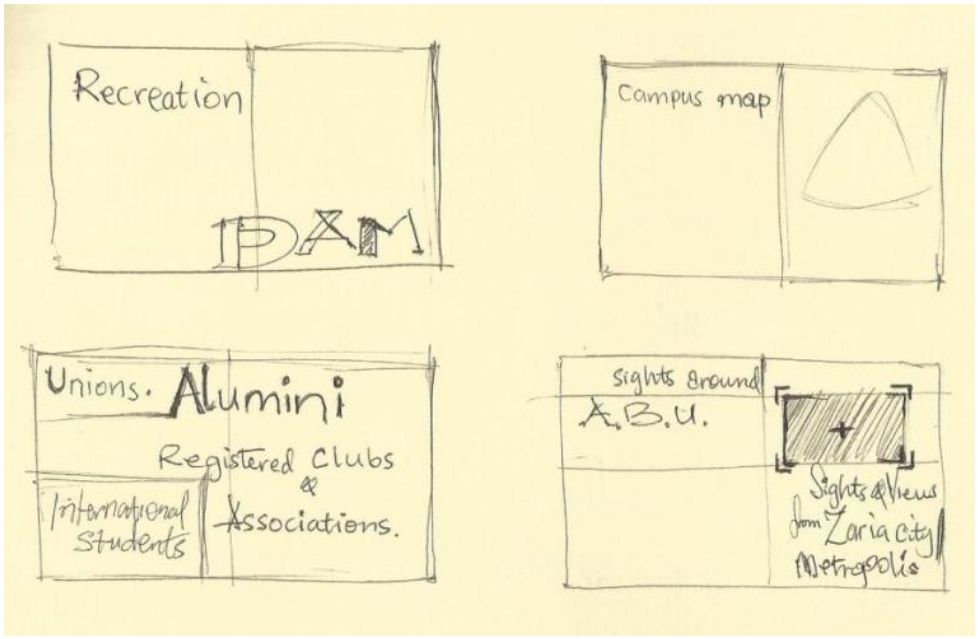


Figure 15: Thumb Nail Sketches.
Source: (Original Design by Bonaventure Zirra 2012)

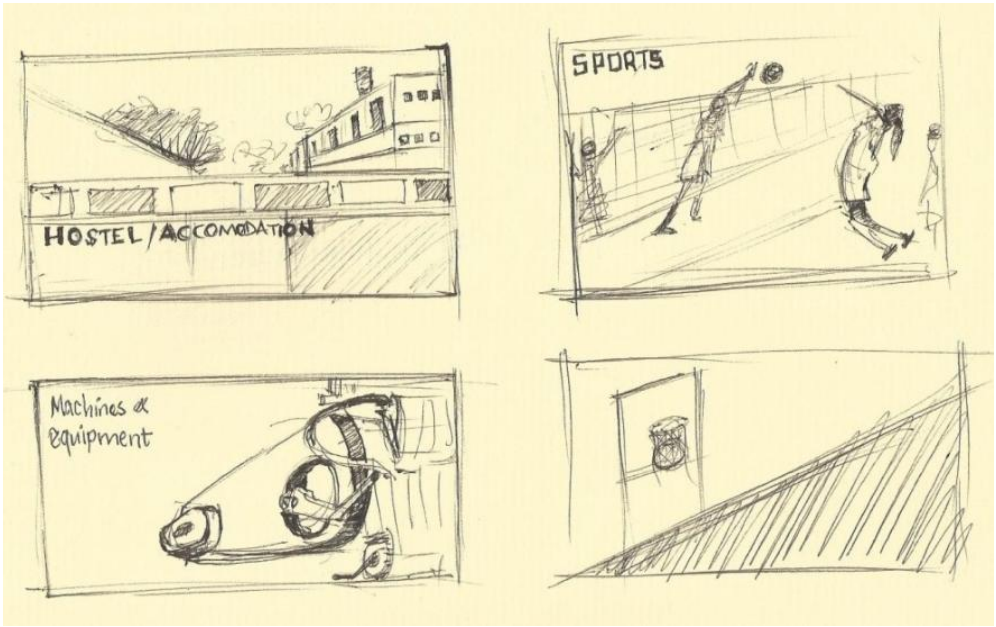


Figure 16: Thumb Nail Sketches
Source: (Original Design by Bonaventure Zirra 2012)

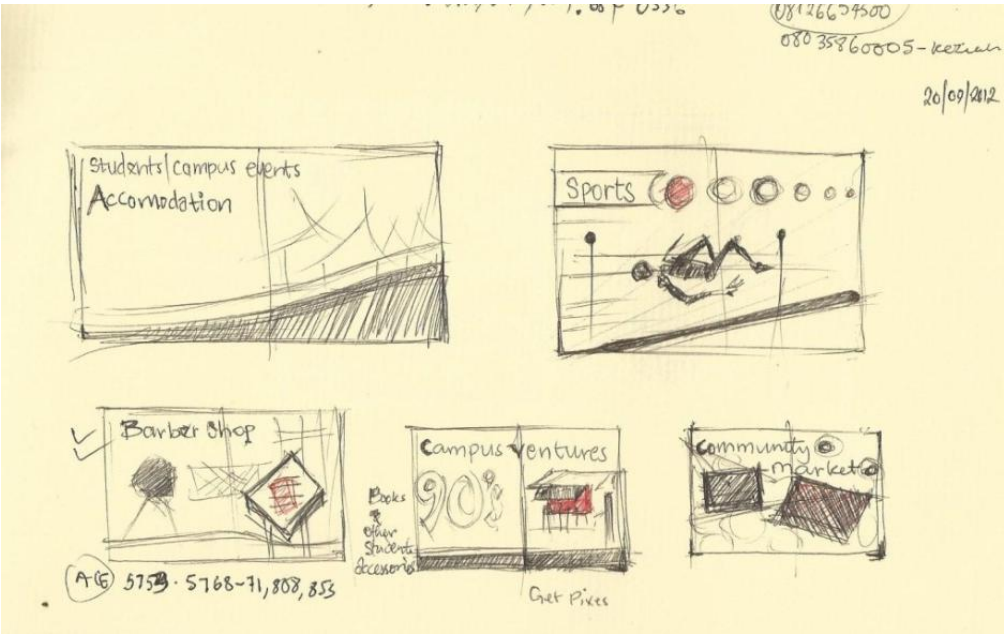


Figure 17: Thumb Nail Sketches for initial layouts 4
Source: (Original Design by Researcher 2012)

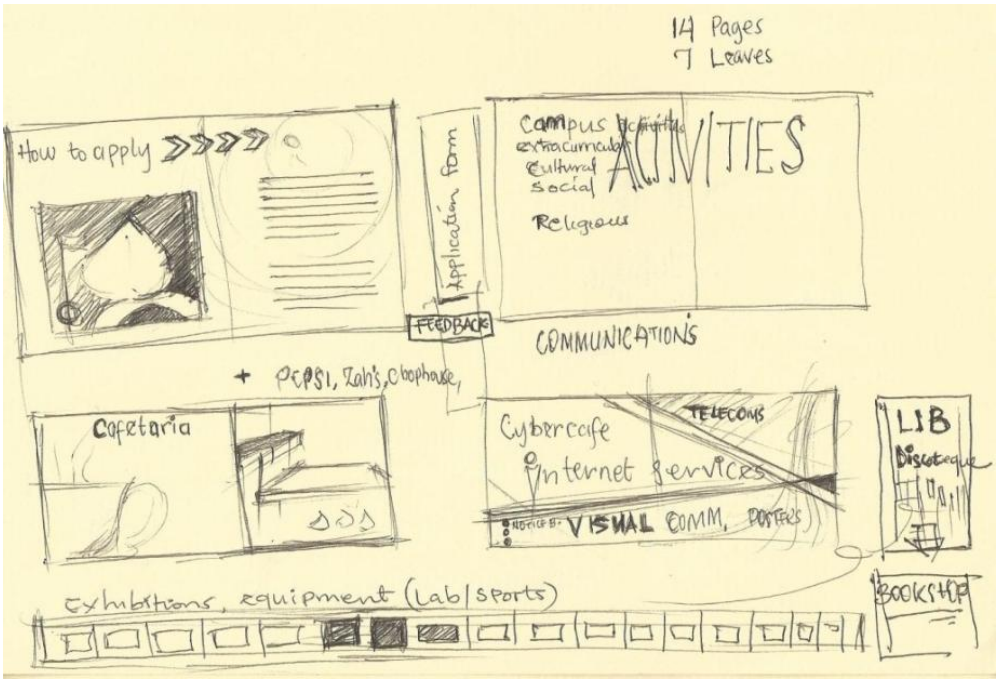


Figure 18: Thumb Nail Sketches
Source: (Original Design by Bonaventure Zirra 2012)

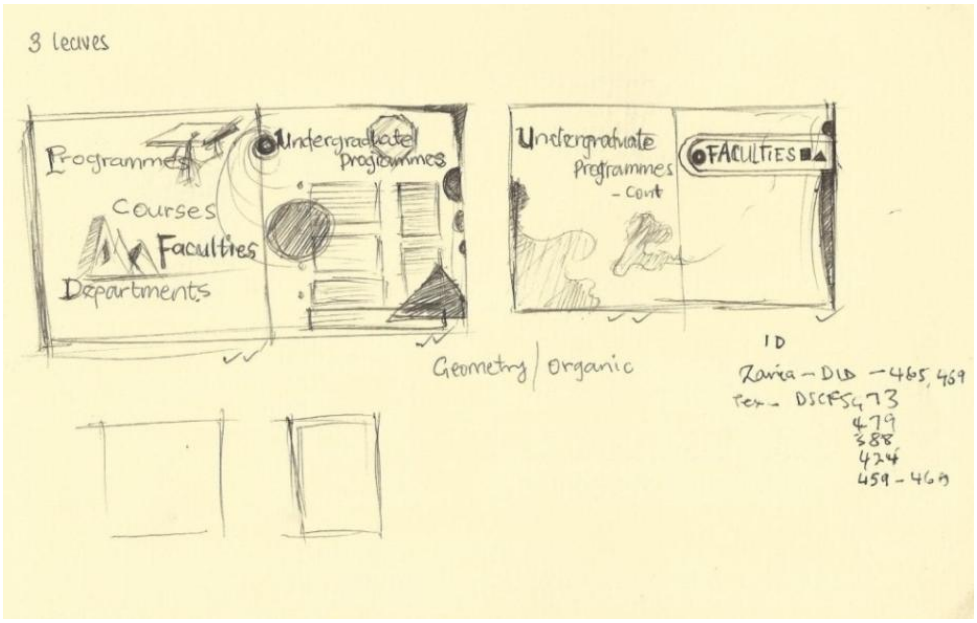


Figure 19: Thumb Nail Sketches
Source: (Original Design by Bonaventure Zirra 2012)



Figure 20: Thumb Nail Sketches
Source: (Original Design by Bonaventure Zirra 2012)



Figure 21: Thumb Nail Sketches (Campus ventures)
Source: (Original Design by Bonaventure Zirra 2012)



Figure 22: Preliminary Computer Colour Swatches (Campus Life)
Source: (Original Design by Bonaventure Zirra 2012)



Figure 23: Preliminary Computer Colour Swatches (Campus Life)
Source: (Original Design by Bonaventure Zirra 2012)

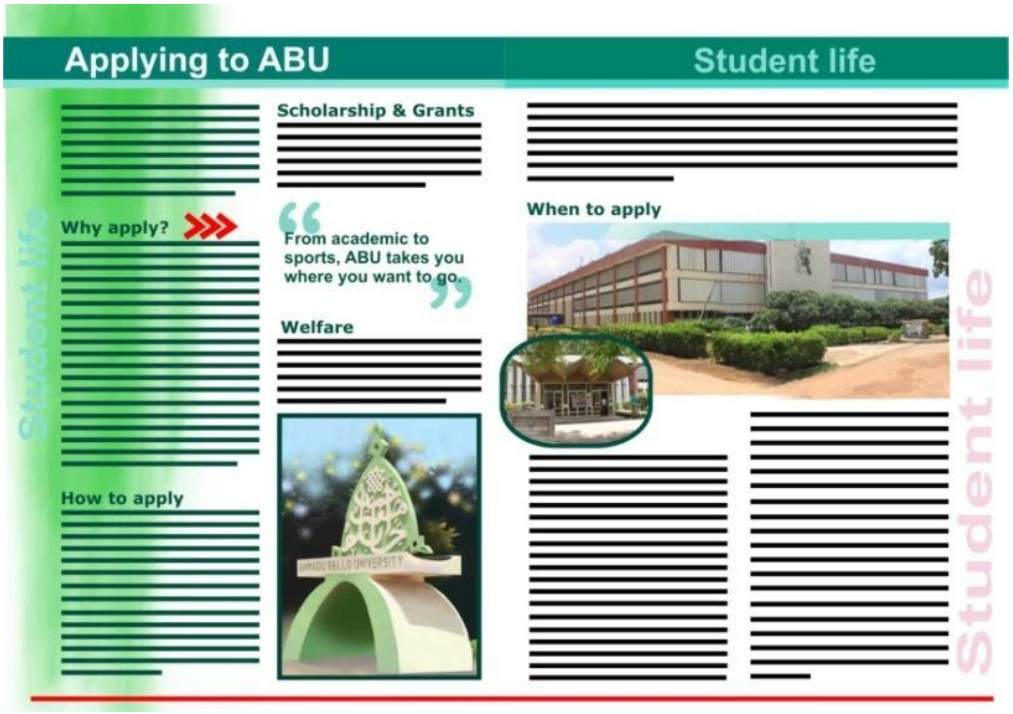


Figure 24: Preliminary Computer Colour Swatches (Admissions)
Source: (Original Design by Bonaventure Zirra 2012)

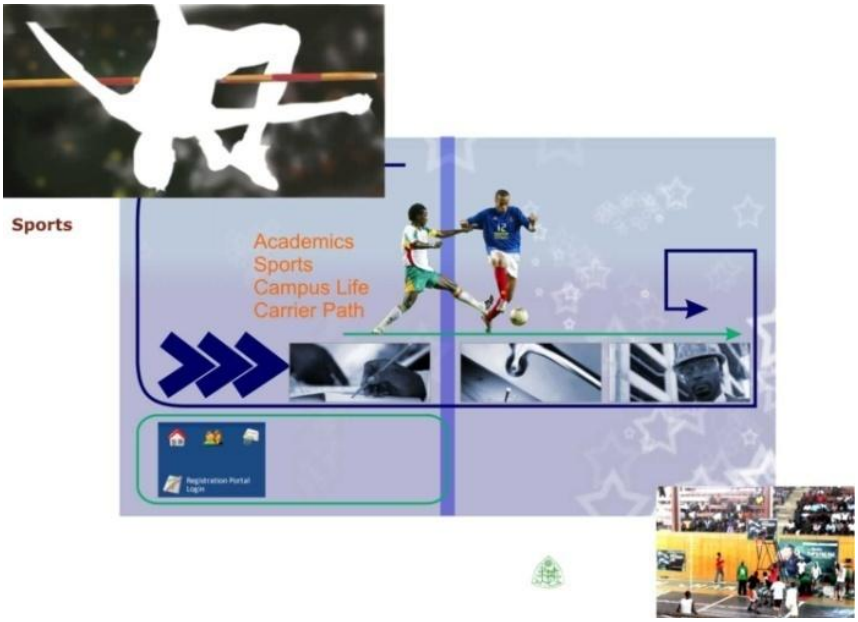


Figure 25: Preliminary Computer Colour Swatches (Sports Activities)
Source: (Original Design by Researcher 2012)



Figure 26: Preliminary Computer Colour (Health and Safety)
Source: (Original Design by Researcher 2012)

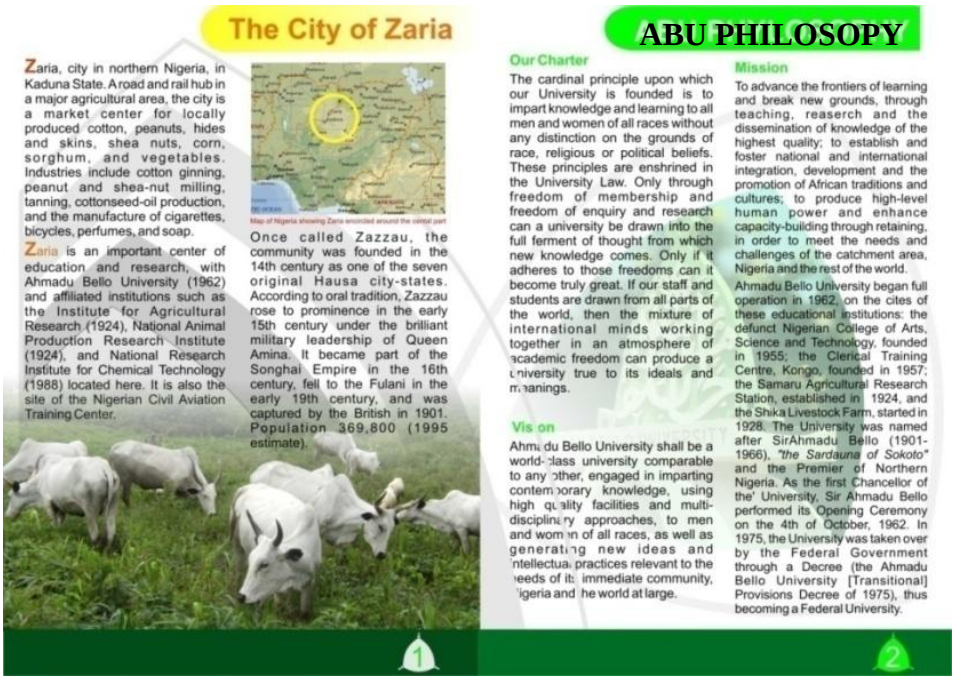


Plate LIX: Inner Pages
Source: (Original Design by Bonaventure Zirra)

APPENDIX 6: Photographs from Focus Group Discussions

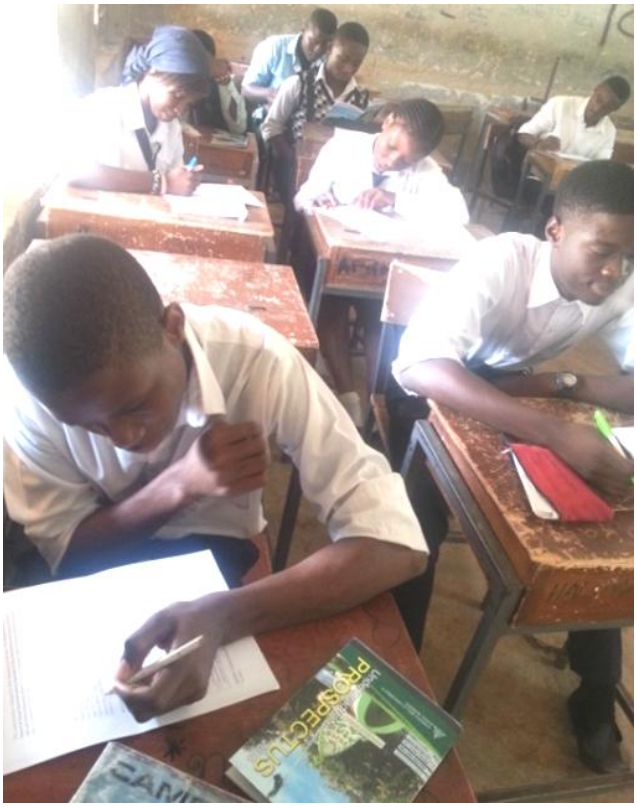


Plate LX: Scene from Focus Group Discussions.
Source: (Original Research Photograph snapped by Bonaventure Zirra 2012)

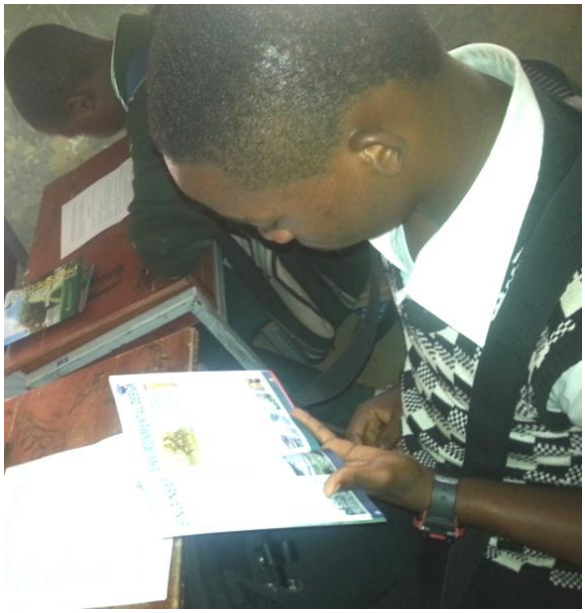


Plate LXI: Scene from Focus Group Discussions. Source: (Original Research Photograph snapped by Bonaventure Zirra 2012)

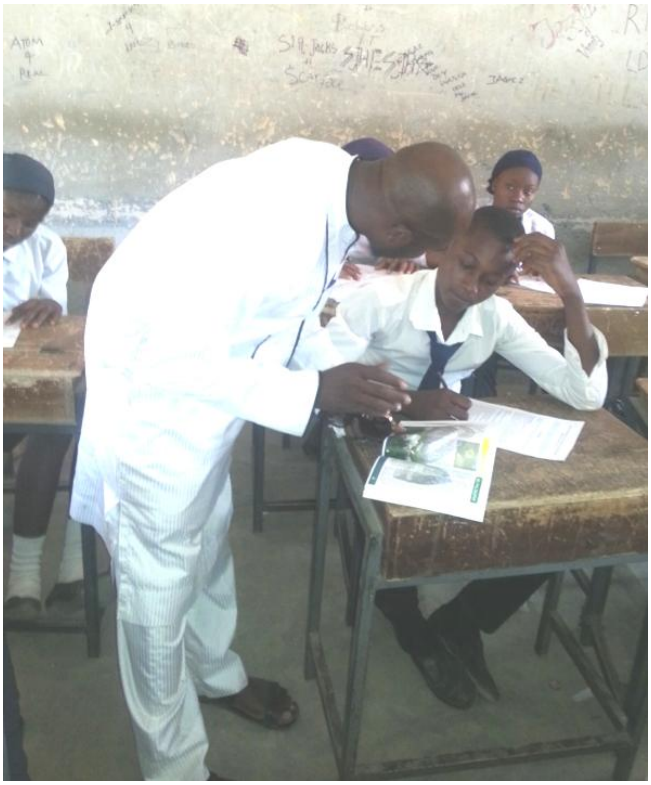


Plate LXII: Scene from Focus Group Discussions.
Source: (Original Research Photograph snapped by Bonaventure Zirra 2012)



Plate LXIII: Scene from Focus Group Discussions.
Source: (Original Research Photograph snapped by Bonaventure Zirra 2012)

CONTRIBUTION TO KNOWLEDGE

The study has:

1. Availed the opportunity for graphic designers to utilise their products and designs in impacting their audience. Particularly, prospectuses would make a concise and sustainable way finding for prospective university students.

2. Recommended the implemented final design templates to also serve as an interface between two-dimensional graphic designs (2D) and Graphic User Interface (GUI) for advertising on the ever growing internet and digital domain.

3. Shown that the approach of using the Focus Group Discussion is a veritable tool for conducting such forms of study and several other social and practice led researches.