

Survey on users' satisfaction level with the outdoor signboards throughout the signboard improvement project

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Abstract: Beginning with Jong-Ro and Chunggechun in 2003, the city of Seoul has been continuously progressing projects for improvements to city landscapes. In Myeong-dong, the center of shopping and culture, a sign remodeling project was executed from September 2008 to improve the disorganized signs on the main streets. The advance study (Study on visual factors of outdoor signboards by Hyun-Jung Kim, 2008), which was carried out for the signboards in the Myeong-dong street before the project was launched, indicated that the signboards were too big for the buildings, provocative in coloring, extremely numerous and complicated in their locations.

In this research, 23 store owners and 105 pedestrians were surveyed for preferences and satisfaction degrees. Their results were analyzed in order to improve the aesthetic refreshment of street spaces and the conveyance of effective information to pedestrians and to find out the degree of recognition regarding signs which were improved to be more suitable to the local area related to store sales for establishment owners targeting the Myeong-dong area.

Key words: *outdoor signboard, visual factor, signboard improvement project*

1. Introduction

Outdoor signs, an important media shaping the image of the city, were not considered during construction design and are disorganized and lowering the quality of city image. With commercial areas, the degree of sign disorganization is severe due to fierce competition among establishments. To improve upon such problems, government organizations and local governments are recently pursuing 'Exemplary Outdoor Sign Project'. Its purpose is to establish a new sign culture by improving the deteriorated signs and establishing upgraded city landscapes that enliven the characteristic and dignity of the area by encouraging sign designs which consider area specialties. In this research, the preference and satisfaction degree before and after improvements are studied through surveys and interviews targeting Myeong-dong, the representative commercial area of Seoul, where the sign remodeling project is presently partially completed (For the first phase, improvements of 88 out

of a total of 150 target establishments were completed). Based on the results obtained through the survey, users' recognition of effective information conveyance and visual factors of city street landscapes will be studied.

1.1 Research contents and methods

As the research method of this study, first, outdoor signs and guidelines for sign remodeling projects are understood through literary surveys and precedent studies. Second, user satisfaction with outdoor signs in target areas will be studied by performing surveys and interviews performed by comparing the before and after the improvement project through location visitations.

2. Survey on User Satisfaction of Outdoor Sign Visual Factors

2.1 Analysis of Target Areas



According to the Seoul city survey, commercial area signs averaged 2.4 per establishment and were factors of visual pollution among users indiscriminately exposed to them. Myeong-dong St. and Myeong-dong Main St., penetrating the center of Myeong-dong, is a representative condensed, complex commercial area of Seoul

where brand stores and strip malls are clustered and distributed where the number of signs was surveyed as 2.64, somewhat higher than the average (2.4). However, it is judged that more signs than the actual surveyed numbers are actually posted because of illegal signs and advertisement pieces which impede the sidewalk. On Myeong-dong Main St., there are 82 establishments and 204 signs while on Myeong-dong St., there are 183 establishments and 337 signs.

2.2 Guidelines for Exterior Signs in the Myeong-dong Area

With Myeong-dong areas applicable to a specialized zone of the standard notice plan for Seoul City outdoor signs guidelines (Minister of city landscape-2908(2008.3.21)), there are several cases being restricted and eased for marks. While in the past horizontal signs affixed above the second floor were not allowed to be displayed while being connected to more than 2 sides of the wall on the intersections, it is allowed in the case of Myeong-dong, a specialized zone. Also, one electric light sign may be affixed on the front, side, and back wall surfaces of buildings above 4 stories high. The sign must be no more than 8m in height and less than 80% of the width of the horizontal area of the wall while the height to the top must be no more than 52m high. Although signs may not block doors or windows, this excludes buildings whose exterior walls are completely made up of tempered glass. Protruding signs follow the management act for street advertisement pieces and more, the enforcement ordinance of the same act, and the indication methods of district ordinances while they can be affixed within a 5-store building and must be less than 4m for its vertical size. With the previous establishment of street advertisement pieces, there are no distance restrictions in Myeong-dong and the Dongdaemun Special Tourist Zones only even though there is a no-less-than-50-meter restriction for other street advertisement pieces. Signs using props can be affixed as independent prop-using signs after passing the deliberation of the Advertisement Inquiry Commission

while its indication methods are based on enforcement ordinances of the district ordinance regulations and the management act for street advertisement pieces.

2.3 Evaluation Clauses for Survey on Satisfaction of Outdoor Signs

Based on the guidelines for Myeong-dong area outdoor signs, the satisfaction survey was performed composed of questions about satisfaction regarding interior visual factors of outdoor signs (form, size, color, lettering, formative image, lighting layout) and exterior visual factors (the relationship between the sign and the surrounding area) and questions about overall opinions about the sign remodeling project targeting the owners of the establishments involved and pedestrians who visited the Myeong-dong area.

2.4 Survey Results of User Satisfaction regarding Outdoor Signs

2.4.1 Satisfaction Survey Targeting Establishment Owners

There were 88 establishments which participated in the sign remodeling project of the Myeong-dong area while 13 construction companies participated in the improvement of the signs. The satisfaction survey was performed targeting 23 owners among the sign remodeling establishments, and through this, the degree of recognition among owners on sign remodeling projects was estimated. Regarding the range of owners, employees who have worked for a long period of time were included in the range of owners even though 'owners' means employers of establishments who are operating or running an establishment under their own investment, operation, and responsibility for profit. Most owners showed a positive reactions(30.4%) because the disorganized signs were organized and provided aesthetic freshness to the street landscape while most owners showed negative opinions about noticeability(21.7%) and numbers(26%), size(34.8%) since signs were small and difficult for consumers to see even though they showed an overall positive opinion regarding shape(52%), texture (47.8%), color(43.5%), and writing style(65.2%) among interior visual composition factors. Moreover, there are many opinions noting that the second and third levels are relatively weak in their noticeability and exposure since they are only allowed to use 3-D signs compared to first floor signs which are allowed to be both board and 3-D. There were also negative reactions regarding reflections of local specialties. There were no noticeable differences in establishment sales but there were numerous complaints regarding harmony with surroundings. The reasons seemed to be the rise of antipathetic feelings in the owners because establishments which both did or did not remodel signs coexisted in one building and the effectiveness of the remodeled signs is relatively less than the non-remodeled establishments in regards to size and noticeability.

2.4.2 Satisfaction Survey Targeting Pedestrians

A survey was performed targeting 105 pedestrians who visited the Myeong-dong area by attaching pictures of establishments which participated in the sign remodeling project. Regarding gender, 21 males and 84 females; age teenagers took up 2.8%, 20s took up 70.5%, 30s took up 14.3%, 40s took up 9.5%, and 50s took up 2.8%. Users were surveyed as being 56.2% students, 12.4% housewives and professionals, 8.6% office clerks, 6.7% service employees, 2.9% self-employed, and 0.9% management. Visiting times appeared as 2.8% being over 6 hours, 24.8% between 3-6 hours, 57.1% between 1-3 hours, 12.4% less than 1 hour, and 2.8% less than 30 minutes.

Pedestrians had many satisfied opinions regarding the interior visual factors such as shape(60%), color(62.9%), writing style(65.7%), texture(54.3%), numbers(40%), size(47.6%), and more while there were many 'noncommittal' opinions regarding exterior visual factors which are harmony with surroundings(40%), building exteriors, and store atmospheres(44.7%). There were complaints regarding reflections on establishment types and regional specialties: it seemed that the signs by individual construction companies were similar and did not seem to be improved by reflecting establishment types and regional specialties; accordingly, noticeability(34.3%) fell greatly compared to non-remodeled establishments even though the signs were organized by the guidelines and were comparatively cleaner than before. But it was seen that the satisfaction degree was comparatively high in regards to the effectiveness of information conveyance.

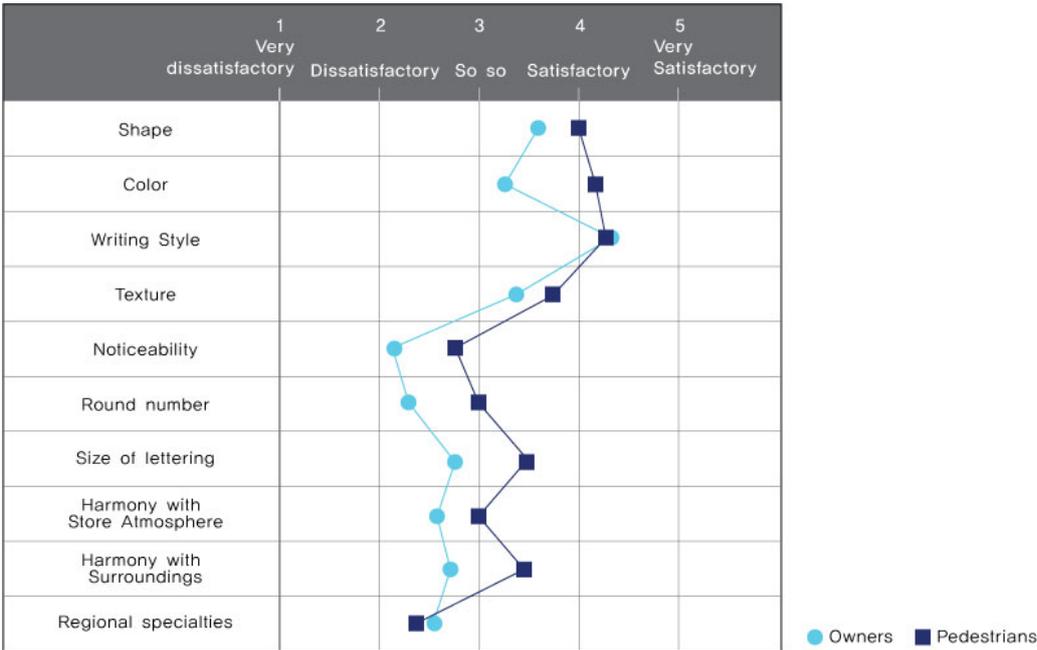


Table1. Satisfaction Survey on Visual Factors of Outdoor

3. Conclusion

In this research, the purpose was searching for the degree of user satisfaction regarding the visual factors of outdoor signs delivering effective information through the sign remodeling project. In the satisfaction survey targeting the users of outdoor signs, owners and pedestrians; pedestrians showed an overall satisfied opinion on interior visual factors of outdoor signs while owners showed a negative opinion regarding size and numbers. Both owners and pedestrians showed negative opinions on exterior visual factors regional specialties, and noticeability issues. The cause is considered as being the fact that the remodeled establishments look relatively worse compared to the non-remodeled establishments in regard to noticeability because the remodeled and non-remodeled establishments co exist in Myeong-dong, the survey target, while there are less cases where the establishment and regional specialties were enlivened even though basic arrangements based on design guidelines were partially executed. Regarding noticeability, a compassion survey is required in the future since the sign remodeling project is expected to improve overall once it is completed. By actively reflecting the opinions of the users revealed through the satisfaction survey, outdoor signs with high level designs should be encouraged for supplementary future improvement projects.

4. Reference

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