

## **An Assessment of Local Government Councils on the Regulation of Outdoor Advertisement in Kogi State**

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DOI: 10.56201/jpslr.v11.no1.2025.pg29.42

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### **Abstract**

*Advertisement no doubt, plays a significant role in bridging the gap between the producers and consumers of goods and services and thus, represents a fundamental linking pin among layers of critical players and stakeholders in any given competitive market economy. However, like every element of an organized market system, its practice is expected to conform to the larger expectation of maintaining minimum standards, decency and orderliness necessary for the realization of public safety and environmental stability which makes its effective regulation very crucial. Like most cities in Nigeria, indiscriminate display of billboards, posters as well as the blaring of horn speakers of different shapes and sizes in towns and cities in Kogi state is increasingly becoming worrisome. They have altered, not just the aesthetic balance but also the appeal of these fast growing towns and cities thereby generating the question of existence or otherwise of an effective regulatory instrument or institutional framework for the management of outdoor advertising in Kogi State. Ostensibly, this study observed a surfeit of structural codes and conventions sharing in this assignment of outdoor advertisement regulation by local government councils in Kogi State, Nigeria. In a contradiction of some sort, while the volume of outdoor advertisement practices and the regulatory framework is on the increase, the level of effectiveness of outdoor advertisement regulation, especially decent activities is on the decline. In addition, there is the need to interrogate the extent to which the Local Governments in the state have demonstrated their capabilities of*

*handling this responsibility. In answering these questions, this study assessed the role of local government councils in the regulation of outdoor advertising in Kogi State, Nigeria. Using a mixed-methods approach, including surveys, interviews, and data analysis, this research indicates that there is an inverse relationship between the regulatory framework and the degree of propriety in outdoor advertisement in Kogi State and Nigeria. This study advocates for strengthening the regulatory framework and governance through legislative reforms to enhance funding and build the capacity of local government personnel.*

**Key Words:** *Local Government Councils, Outdoor Advertisement, Advertisement Regulation, Environmental Assessment.*

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## **Introduction**

The growing competition among producers of goods and services either for market sharing or domination sake over has given rise to the adoption of various strategies to reach out to new consumers while maintaining the old ones. Consequently, marketing landscape is boldly dominated by strategies to disseminate convincing information to real or potential consumers of goods and services. Advertisement refers to non-personal communication from an identified sponsor, disseminated through various channels to influence or encourage purchasing behaviour or brand recognition among consumers (Belch & Belch, 2020). From this impression, advertisement is not only consumer focused but is equally open to multiple strategies, depending on the goal the sponsor intends to achieve. Thus, the choice of outdoor advertising is relevant to a particular set of goals in which deliberate structure and procedure. Outdoor advertising has emerged as one of the key marketing activities in the urban environments with wide spread features and influences on the commercial, physical and aesthetic landscape across most semi-urban and urban communities across Nigeria. In Nigeria, local government councils are constitutionally mandated to regulate the proliferation of these practices for the purpose of maintaining orderliness, ensure safety and generate revenues. However, with rapid urbanization, outdoor advertising has seen exponential growth, sometimes leading to visual clutter, traffic distractions and safety concerns. This study investigates how well local government councils in Kogi State are managing the regulation of outdoor advertisements with the aim of identifying gaps in policy implementation and enforcement.

Outdoor advertisements are a vital component of modern urban landscapes, serving as powerful tools for communication, brand promotion and public awareness. They contribute significantly to the visual aesthetics and economic dynamics of cities, influencing how residents and visitors perceive and interact with their environment. Thus, outdoor advertising, is subject to some regulatory frameworks, for example, local government councils in Kogi State, Nigeria, are in charge of regulating outdoor advertisements. They have the job of making sure that these advertisements improve public safety, comply with urban planning regulations, and generate income for the community. In Nigeria, a number of federal and state laws and agreements serve as the main governing bodies for outdoor advertising. These include the Federal Road Safety Commission (FRSC); Guidelines and the Highway Code; State and Local Government Laws; the

Nigerian Urban and Regional Planning Act; the Nigerian Advertising Regulatory Council Act (ARCON); the Town and Country Planning Act; and the National Environmental Standards and Regulations Enforcement Agency (NESREA) Act (Kikire, 2023).

In Kogi State, Nigeria, for instance, the responsibility for regulating outdoor advertisements falls on local government councils, which are tasked with ensuring that these advertisements align with urban planning standards, enhance public safety, and contribute to local revenue generation. In Nigeria, outdoor advertising control is primarily guided by several legislative instruments and conventions at both the federal and state levels. In order to prevent environmental degradation and preserve public health, NESREA enforces laws pertaining to environmental protection, including those pertaining to outdoor advertising. Laws of the state and local governments. Outdoor advertising is subject to particular laws and regulations in many states and localities. For instance, Lagos State regulates outdoor advertising through the Lagos State Signage and Advertisement Agency (LASAA) in order to maintain environmental harmony and manage clutter. Similar organizations exist in other states, such as the Kano State Urban Planning and Development Authority (KNUPDA) and the Oyo State Signage and Advertisement Agency (OYSAA). ARCON is in charge of advertising regulation, practice, and oversight, including outdoor advertising. The Town and Country Planning Act takes charge of general rules for land use planning and development control, including the positioning of billboards and advertisements in public areas, are provided by this act. Enforcement of National Environmental Standards and Regulations (NESREA) Act.

In Kogi State, Nigeria, the responsibility for regulating outdoor advertisements as earlier noted falls on local government councils, which are tasked with ensuring that these advertisements align with urban planning standards, enhance public safety, and contribute to local revenue generation. With the rapid pace of urbanisation and commercial activities in Kogi State, the outdoor advertising sector has experienced exponential growth. While this growth reflects economic vibrancy, it also presents challenges such as increased visual clutter, potential traffic hazards, and environmental concerns. Effective regulation is essential to balance the benefits of outdoor advertising with its potential downsides, ensuring a harmonious and safe urban environment.

This study examines the effectiveness of local government councils in Kogi State in managing and regulating outdoor advertisements. It evaluates the frameworks, policies, and enforcement mechanisms in place, identifying gaps in implementation and exploring the challenges faced by these councils. By doing so, the research aims to offer insights and recommendations to improve the governance of outdoor advertising and promote sustainable urban development.

### **Statement of the Problem**

In spite the importance of outdoor advertising as a revenue stream for local governments, the uncontrolled and unregulated proliferation of advertisements in public spaces poses various challenges, including urban disorganization, visual pollution, and potential risks to public safety. Local government councils often face challenges such as insufficient funds, limited manpower,

and inadequate legal frameworks. This study seeks to address these issues by analyzing the regulatory practices currently in place in Kogi State and exploring potential improvements.

Outdoor advertising serves as a significant source of revenue for local governments, contributing to their financial capacity to deliver essential services. However, when the proliferation of advertisements in public spaces goes unchecked, it can lead to a range of negative consequences. These include urban disorganization, where the indiscriminate placement of billboards and signs disrupts the structured layout of cities, creating a chaotic visual environment. Additionally, the clutter of advertisements contribute to visual pollution, diminishing the aesthetic appeal of public spaces and detracting from the urban experience. Furthermore, improperly placed or poorly designed advertisements can pose risks to public safety, such as obstructing visibility for drivers or pedestrians and increasing the likelihood of accidents.

In Kogi State, local government councils are responsible for regulating outdoor advertisements, yet they often encounter significant challenges that hinder effective governance in this area. Among these challenges are insufficient funds, which limit their ability to invest in enforcement mechanisms and monitoring systems; inadequate manpower, which reduces the capacity to oversee and manage advertisement placements; and gaps in the legal frameworks, which can create ambiguities in policy enforcement and compliance. These obstacles compromise the councils' ability to strike a balance between leveraging outdoor advertising as a revenue source and maintaining orderly and safe urban environments. In summary, while the tasks and the institutions are on the increase, the irregularity is equally on the increase, leading to a disproportional relationship.

This study addresses these critical issues by examining the current practices employed by local government councils in Kogi State for regulating outdoor advertisements. It aims to uncover the weaknesses in the existing system and propose actionable strategies to enhance regulatory effectiveness. By doing so, the research contributes to the broader discourse on sustainable urban management and the role of governance in addressing the challenges posed by rapid urbanization and commercialization.

### **Research Objectives**

1. To assess the effectiveness of local government councils in regulating outdoor advertisements in Kogi State.
2. To identify the challenges faced by local government councils in enforcing advertisement regulations.
3. To evaluate the legal framework governing outdoor advertisements in Kogi State.
4. To suggest policy recommendations to enhance the effectiveness of advertisement regulation at the local government level.

### **Research Questions**

1. How effective are local government councils in regulating outdoor advertisements in Kogi State?
2. What challenges do local government councils encounter in enforcing advertisement regulations?
3. What legal frameworks exist for the regulation of outdoor advertisements in Kogi State, and how effective are they?
4. What policy recommendations can improve the regulatory capacity of local government councils?

### **Significance of the Study**

There is an apparent paucity of research in this area of urban life, either due to omission, neglect or willful blindness. The few past studies suffer stereotypic evaluation or are replete with normative assumptions. This research has relied on empirical data depend on descriptive methods that are based on accuracy and provable. In the modern terms, most local government executives are either appointed or selectively elected by the state, in essence, the ability of local governments to assume responsibility relies on the whims of the state. This work appears relevant to the extent it spans over a good period 1993–2023, which gives room for comparison between two forms of government.

This study provides insight into the role of local governments in managing urban spaces, particularly in regulating outdoor advertisements. Understanding the current challenges and suggesting improvements can aid policymakers in creating a more visually organized, economically productive, and safer urban environment. Apart from methodological difference, this research being an independent endeavor, will be useful for policy and for further research in this field especially regarding this time in focus.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Concept of Outdoor Advertising**

Outdoor advertising refers to graphic messages presented in public places to express or to impress a target audience. It includes billboards, posters, banners, electronic displays, and other signage visible to the public. Scholars such as Koeck, & Warnaby, (2014) highlight the critical role outdoor advertising plays in urban economies by promoting businesses, enhancing visibility and engaging audiences. However, excessive and poorly regulated outdoor advertisements can lead to urban challenges such as clutter, aesthetic degradation, and environmental concerns (Bylicki, 2022).

## **Importance of Regulation in Outdoor Advertising**

### **Conceptual Clarification: Advertisement Regulation**

In order to safeguard the public interest and guarantee moral business conduct, regulations pertaining to the content, medium, and placement of advertisements are established and enforced. These rules seek to protect consumer rights, encourage fair competition, and stop harmful, misleading, or deceptive advertising. In order to maintain adherence to legal and ethical standards, government agencies, industry stakeholders, and consumer protection organizations must work together to effectively regulate advertisements (Kotler & Keller, 2016).

Countries have different regulatory systems, but they frequently prohibit deceptive advertising, objectionable material, and environmental concerns. As stated in international and regional advertising codes, for example, advertising practices must follow the values of integrity, transparency, and responsibility (World Federation of Advertisers, 2022). To maintain industry conformity, the Advertising Regulatory Council of Nigeria (ARCON) is in charge of keeping an eye on and enforcing advertising regulations in Nigeria (ARCON, 2023).

Regulating outdoor advertisements is crucial for ensuring that public spaces remain orderly, safe, and aesthetically pleasing. Scholars argue that effective regulation involves setting clear guidelines on the placement, size, content, and structure of advertisements. According to Federal Aid Policy Guide, (1991) a well-regulated advertising system not only protects urban aesthetics but also ensures compliance with safety standards, particularly in areas prone to high traffic. Regulations also serve as a mechanism for generating local government revenue through permits, taxes, and penalties for violations.

Economic development must include consumer protection, especially in underdeveloped nations where consumers are frequently vulnerable to dishonest commercial practices. Consumer protection organizations are essential for upholding consumer rights and ensuring that businesses operate ethically and lawfully. In Nigeria, both the federal and state governments have established consumer protection agencies to safeguard consumer interests and promote fair trade. For example, the Federal Competition and Consumer Protection Commission (FCCPC) plays a pivotal role in enforcing consumer rights and addressing unfair trade practices (FCCPC, 2023).

### **Role of Local Government Councils in Urban Management**

Local government councils are integral to urban governance as they are closest to the people and have jurisdiction over public spaces. As highlighted by (Adewakun, 2022), local governments are responsible for the administration of advertising permits, monitoring compliance, and enforcing penalties for illegal structures. However, their effectiveness often depends on factors such as financial autonomy, manpower availability, and the robustness of legal frameworks.

In Nigeria, the Local Government Act outlines the functions of councils, including revenue collection from outdoor advertisements. However, studies indicate that many local governments

struggle with weak institutional capacity, lack of enforcement tools, and corruption, which undermine their ability to effectively regulate outdoor advertisements. Apart from these weaknesses in Nigeria, there is a shift adopted by the states, which is affecting the local governments' control over advertising, for example, the introduction of the Structures for Signage and Advertisement Agency Law by Lagos State in 2006 which transferred the regulation of outdoor advertising from local governments to state agencies (Adewakun, 2022).

### **Challenges in Regulating Outdoor Advertisements**

Common trends of proliferation in outdoor advertisements driven by urbanization and commercialization, has introduced challenges such as visual pollution, safety risks, and illegal advertising. Another significant obstacle is the lack of comprehensive policy framework to manage the dynamics of modern advertising, such as digital billboards. Additionally, limited funding and resources impedes on the local governments' ability to monitor and enforce regulations effectively.

In Kogi State, these challenges are exacerbated by inadequate coordination between local councils and other stakeholders, including advertisers and urban planners. The absence of standardized guidelines and the prevalence of informal practices further complicate regulation efforts. Awelewa & Daramola, (2016) argued that there are several significant obstacles to efficient regulation of outdoor advertisement, including insufficient funds, lack of enforcement mechanism and the lack of technical understanding among local council officials. Their report suggested improved funding and defined authority to enforce decisions as provided in the Kogi State Environmental Law (2011) where Kogi State Environmental Protection Board (KOSPB, KOSEPA) of Decree no.3 1995, is responsible for the regulation of outdoor advertisement. The KEPB (2011) therefore is responsible for the award of licenses, compliance and enforcement of penalties for infractions of the law governing outdoor advertisement.

Tejumaiye, (2018) validated the claims that agencies are like KOSEPB are limited in ability to effectively regulate outdoor advertisement in Kogi State due largely to insufficient funding, lack of enforcement capacity and poor stakeholder engagement. Tejumaiye, (2018) observed how the appeal of Lokoja was affected by the irregular outdoor advertisement activities, leading to disorder or deteriorating urban outlook. Comparative studies have shown that countries and cities with clear policies and strong enforcement mechanisms tend to have better-regulated advertising environments. For instance, if local governments and municipal councils work closely with urban planners to ensure that advertisements align with city aesthetics and safety standards. Lessons from such case studies emphasize the importance of stakeholder collaboration, robust legal frameworks, and community involvement in achieving effective regulation.

### **Theoretical Framework**

The study draws on urban governance and institutional theory to analyze the role of local government councils in regulating outdoor advertisements. Urban governance theory emphasizes the collaborative management of urban spaces among various stakeholders, while institutional theory highlights the importance of well-structured policies and frameworks in achieving organizational goals (Pierre, 2005; Scott, 2008).

## **Urban Governance Theory**

Urban governance theory focuses on the collaborative and participatory management of urban spaces by involving various stakeholders, including government bodies, private organizations, and civil society. This theory views cities as complex systems where effective governance requires coordination and alignment of interests to ensure equitable and sustainable outcomes (Pierre, 2005).

The Key tenets include Collaboration; Stakeholder Engagement; and Decentralization, meaning that the theory emphasizes cooperation among stakeholders to address urban challenges effectively, recognizes the importance of involving diverse groups, including residents, advertisers, and community organizations, in decision-making processes; and that Urban governance encourages empowering local authorities, like local government councils, to take proactive roles in managing urban spaces.

### **Application to Study**

Urban governance theory provides a framework to analyze how local government councils regulate outdoor advertisements by facilitating collaboration among advertisers, residents, and other government agencies. It examines the extent to which these councils promote transparency, inclusivity, and sustainability in their policies.

### **Institutional Theory**

Institutional theory focuses on the role of structures, norms, and rules in shaping the behavior of organizations. It highlights how formal and informal frameworks influence decision-making, resource allocation, and compliance. Institutional theory underscores the necessity of well-crafted policies for guiding organizational actions. It emphasizes that organizations, including local government councils, must align with societal norms and expectations to gain trust and compliance. This concept describes how organizations adopt similar practices to enhance efficiency and standardization. Institutional theory is used to evaluate whether local government councils have established clear, consistent, and enforceable policies for regulating outdoor advertisements. It examines how these policies shape stakeholder compliance and the overall effectiveness of governance (Scott, 2008).

### **Justification for Using Urban Governance and Institutional Theory**

The combination of urban governance and institutional theory provides a comprehensive framework to analyze the regulation of outdoor advertisements. This pairing is preferred over other theories because. Urban governance focuses on collaboration and stakeholder engagement, while institutional theory delves into the structural and policy dimensions. Together, they address both the procedural and policy-oriented aspects of outdoor advertisement regulation. Local government councils operate within complex urban systems that require collaboration among various actors, a focus of urban governance theory. The regulation of advertisements relies on clear institutional frameworks, making institutional theory particularly relevant for assessing policy effectiveness.



## **Practical Application**

These theories provide actionable insights for improving governance and policy frameworks. Urban governance suggests fostering stakeholder partnerships, while institutional theory highlights strengthening the legal and administrative structures. While Stakeholder Theory emphasizes collaboration, it lacks the structural focus provided by institutional theory. Also, Systems Theory though useful for understanding interconnections in the system, it does not focus on policy frameworks or governance mechanisms. Though Game Theory is very insightful for analyzing strategic interactions, it is less relevant for evaluating the broader regulatory and governance context.

The integration of urban governance and institutional theory is ideal for this study as it enables a detailed examination of both the collaborative dynamics and institutional frameworks governing outdoor advertisements. These theories provide the tools for understanding the strengths and weaknesses of local government councils' roles, ensuring actionable recommendations for improving regulation in Kogi State.

The literature reveals that outdoor advertising is a double-edged sword: while it boosts economic activities, its unregulated growth can lead to urban challenges. Local government councils play a central role in balancing these interests, but their effectiveness is often hampered by systemic challenges. This review underscores the need for robust regulatory frameworks, capacity building, and stakeholder collaboration to address these issues in Kogi State. The study aims to build on these insights to evaluate the regulatory practices of local government councils and propose strategies for improvement.

## **METHODOLOGY OF RESEARCH**

### **Research Design**

This research adopts a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative surveys with qualitative interviews to assess the current state of regulation of outdoor advertising in Kogi State. The study also includes a review of relevant policies, regulations frameworks and existing literature on outdoor advertisement regulation.

### **Data Collection Methods**

**Surveys:** Structured questionnaires were distributed to local government officials, business owners, and residents within selected urban areas in Kogi State. **Interviews:** Semi-structured interviews were conducted with key stakeholders, including local government officials and representatives from advertising agencies. **Policy Analysis:** A review of local, state, and national policies on outdoor advertisement regulation was conducted to understand the regulatory framework.

### **Sample Size and Technique**

A purposive sampling method was used to select three local government areas (LGAs) in Kogi State, representing urban, semi-urban, and rural settings. This approach ensured a diverse

range of perspectives on outdoor advertisement regulation and geographical reflection. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics, while qualitative data from interviews and policy documents were analyzed thematically to identify recurring themes and insights. The sample size for the data depends on several factors, such as the population size, desired confidence level, margin of error, and the nature of the study. Since no specific population size or details have been provided for your study, the sample size can be determined using general guidelines or formulas.

### Determining Sample Size for Structured Questionnaire

The formula for a proportionate sample can be used to determine the sample size if the target population size ( $N$ ) is known:

$$n = \frac{Z^2 \cdot p \cdot (1-p)}{e^2}$$

Where:  $n$ : The necessary sample size

$Z$ -score that corresponds to the desired level of confidence (e.g., 1.96 for 95% confidence)

$p$ : The estimated prevalence of the characteristic of interest in the population (use 0.5 if unknown)

The margin of error, or 0.05 for 5%, is  $e$ .

The adjusted sample size in the event that the population size ( $N$ ) is finite is:

The formula  $n_{\text{corr}}$  is equal to  $\frac{n}{1 + \frac{n-1}{N}}$ .

Calculation Example

Suppose:

The degree of confidence is 95% ( $Z = 1.96$ ).

The error margin is 5% ( $e = 0.05$ ).

50% (0.5) is the proportion ( $p$ ).

The size of the population ( $N$ ) = 10,000

Step 1: Determine the starting sample size.

$$n = \frac{(1.96)^2 \cdot 0.5 \cdot (1-0.5)}{(0.05)^2} = 384$$

Step 2: Make population adjustments.

$$\text{The formula for } n_{\text{corr}} \text{ is } \frac{384}{1 + \frac{384-1}{10000}} = 370.$$

Structured interviews

The sample size, which is typically smaller for qualitative data, is determined by the concept of data saturation, or the point at which no new themes or insights emerge.

Interviews: Last Word on Sample Size.

Formal Questionnaire: For 370 respondents, the organized questionnaire worked well.

Ten to twenty participants from important stakeholder groups, such as residents, advertisers, and council members, participated in semi-structured interviews.

Policy Records: 5–10 important documents pertaining to Kogi State's laws governing outdoor advertising. Strong data for both quantitative and qualitative analysis is ensured by this combination.

## **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

It is obvious that while some local government headquarters have urban structures, others are suburban, leading to inequalities associated with the migration structures in Nigeria. While some local governments are densely populated, others are sparse. One of the basic defining ingredients of urban and sub-urban settlements are the display of regulated aesthetics, including the outdoor advertisements.

While the challenges of irregular outdoor advertisement activities are a common narrative, not all urban areas can be deemed unregulated. While the aesthetic display is a source of fulfillment, the phenomenon has resulted in loss of revenue to the local and the state governments too. On the effectiveness of Local Government Councils in Regulating Outdoor Advertisements, the survey revealed that while some local governments have taken steps to regulate outdoor advertisements, there are significant gaps in enforcement. Many councils lack the resources and technical expertise to oversee and manage advertisements effectively.

### **Presentation of Findings**

Combine thematic summaries and quotes for qualitative data with statistical tables and graphs for quantitative results. A thorough evaluation of the function of local government councils in controlling outdoor advertising in Kogi State will be possible through the use of a mixed-methods approach. Significant regulatory challenges are revealed by the research findings from the local government councils' evaluation of Kogi State's outdoor advertising regulations. The ability of local government councils to effectively regulate outdoor advertisements is hampered by antiquated legislation, weak enforcement strategies, and a lack of funding. Furthermore, ineffective coordination between federal, state, and local authorities results in uneven enforcement of laws, opening gaps that impede the establishment of a unified framework for the state's management of outdoor advertisements.

### **Challenges Faced by Local Government Councils**

1. **Limited Funding:** Insufficient funds hinder local governments' ability to carry out necessary enforcement activities.
2. **Inadequate Legal Framework:** Existing policies lack clarity, making it challenging for councils to enforce regulations consistently.
3. **Manpower and Technical Expertise:** Local governments often lack trained personnel and technical resources, such as software for advertisement monitoring.
4. **Corruption and Political Influence:** Political interference and corruption also undermine the enforcement of advertisement regulations.

### **Evaluation of the Legal Framework**

The study finds that while certain laws provide a foundation for outdoor advertisement regulation, they are often outdated and poorly enforced (Marketing Edge, 2022). There is also a lack of

coordination between local, state, and federal authorities, resulting in inconsistent application of regulations (Atonko, 2024).

## Conclusion

This study reveals that local government councils in Kogi State face numerous challenges in regulating outdoor advertisements effectively. Limited funding, inadequate legal frameworks, insufficient manpower, and political interference impede their capacity to manage advertisements in public spaces. Strengthening the regulatory framework, enhancing resource allocation, and improving enforcement mechanisms are essential for better management of outdoor advertisements.

## Recommendations

1. Review and Update Legislation: Local and state governments should review and update the legal framework governing outdoor advertising to provide clearer guidelines and remove ambiguities.
2. Capacity Building for Local Government Personnel: Regular training programs and technical resources should be provided to local government staff to improve their capability in monitoring and regulating advertisements.
3. Increased Funding and Resource Allocation: The state government should allocate additional resources to support local governments in enforcing advertisement regulations.
4. Public Awareness Campaigns: Educating businesses and the public on the importance of regulated advertisements can help foster compliance.
5. Collaboration with Advertising Agencies: Local governments should collaborate with reputable advertising agencies to establish standards and best practices for outdoor advertisements.

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