

IMPACT OF AESTHETIC APPEARANCE TO FACILITATE CORPORATE BUSINESS OBJECTIVES IN ORGANISATIONS

D.A.K. Chathuranga, Nayanthara De Silva and K.W.D.K.C. Dahanayake*

Department of Building Economics, University of Moratuwa, Sri Lanka

Malik Ranasinghe

Department of Civil Engineering, University of Moratuwa, Sri Lanka

ABSTRACT

Aesthetic appearance is a judgment of value based on the appearance of an object. Shapes, proportions, rhythms, scale, degree of complexity, colours, and illumination are the subject matter of formal aesthetics. Aesthetics appearance is an important field in psychology as aesthetics influences the human mind and can lead to psychological reactions, both positive and negative. Creating an aesthetically distinctive identity of development will become an integrated part of the community because user's state of mind and feeling affected by the emotional elements in design. However, this area has not been addressed in detail. Thus, this research focused to identify and analyse parameters of aesthetic appearance of buildings and their impact towards corporate business objectives of commercial organisations.

The research used case study approach and two commercial buildings were selected as cases. Data were collected using semi structured interviews. Data analysis was done using content analysis. Five parameters were established to analyse the aesthetic appearance. Findings revealed that all forms and elements of aesthetic appearance are full of potentially symbolic meanings and have considerable impact on corporate business objectives. Though, there are considerable aesthetic applications as mentioned above, still there are substantial deficiencies in current practices of adaptation of aesthetical appearance for building design in Sri Lankan context.

Keywords: *Aesthetic Appearance; Business Objectives; Facilities Management.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Creating an aesthetically distinctive corporate identity is an effective strategy for attracting customers (Dell'era and Verganti, 2009). Corporate identity is considered to be an integral part of the corporate brand (Kirby and Kent, 2010). Furthermore, Kirby and Kent (2010) mentioned that effective communication of a brand's identity is critical to achieve intended differentiation. Corporate identity can be transformed in to a powerful force to achieve corporate business objectives (Simpson and Cacioppe, 2001). In this regards, pleasurable space design, proper signage system, coherent theme colours and disability access facilities contributed to facilitate success of business (Sadamura and Zhang, 2009).

Aesthetic appearance of a building is the first opportunity to make a positive impression on potential community and stakeholders. A common concept among many people is that first impressions are very influential (Kirby and Kent, 2010). The exterior appearance of a building, a block of businesses or cluster, silently announces what customers can expect inside (Bastow-Shoop *et al.*, 1991). Well-designed building orientation, signage and attractive facade materials are crucial to attract people (Caspari *et al.*, 2006). Whether it be meeting new people, or seeing a building for the first time, the initial impressions can be the deciding factor for someone liking it or not (Chan, 2010). For buildings, the appearance can immediately determine if its architectural design was a success or a failure. If a building functions optimally but displeases observers, it is likely to be seen, at least by the public, as a failure (Drainage Services Department, 2006). If the appearance of buildings appeals to the general public, however does not operate optimally, many will still considered it successful (Abu-Obeid *et. al.*,

*Corresponding Author: E-mail - kdahanayake@yahoo.com

2008). Therefore, the appearance of a building is a vital element to consider in design by end user point of view.

Aesthetic appearance possesses the ability to demand attention, make a statement, and make time stand and also can captivate people from all walks of life (Chan, 2010). In turn, aesthetic appearance can give people a sense of familiarity through a connection to time and place. It is revealed that aesthetic appearance helped person to identify with the spirit of the place, and offered him a thorough reminder on their mind. Though it is difficult to objectively assess aesthetic value; it often becomes an important determining factor in overall value of a business (Smith, 2012). However, it has given a little consideration on discussing on impact of aesthetic appearance to facilitate corporate business objectives. Therefore, this research was conducted to fill the research gap by analysing impact of aesthetic appearance to facilitate corporate business objectives by focusing commercial organisations in Sri Lanka.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Inspiring and stimulating workplace can be achieved through providing an environment with a combination of the familiar and unfamiliar; natural and hi-tech elements, tactile surfaces, mood-enhancing lighting and sound, standard and unusual furnishings (Dell'era and Verganti, 2009). Generally the shapes, proportions, rhythms, scale, degree of complexity, colour, and illumination are the subject matter of formal aesthetics (Abu-Obeid *et al.*, 2008). Corporate name, logo, symbol, typography and colour are the most attractive aspects in aesthetic appearance which helps to build awareness and recognition of the organisation (Kirby and Kent, 2010). Following paragraphs provide explanation on different factors of aesthetic appearance of colour, facade design, logo, layout design, visuals and artifacts and landscaping.

2.1. COLOUR

It is widely recognised that colors have a strong impact on emotions and feelings of human (Mahnke, 1996). Colour as an aspect of emotional language. Research on colour and emotion began as early as the late 1800s and highlighted the emotional connection to colour could be one means to understand individuals' preferences. Mahnke (1996) highlighted that different kinds of emotions such as anger, joy, sad and happiness can be originate based on colours. Furthermore, colours impact on mood and the productivity of occupants in a working environment (Kwallek, 1997). Mahnke (1996) promotes color in-workspace as a way of influencing employees' emotions. Kwallek (1997) emphasises individuating color selection to generate the desired emotional experience. Thus, many studies have acknowledged the power of color, as a design agent, to elicit individual emotions.

Askari and Dola (2009) found that use of appropriate colours for different types of buildings is critical to obtain unique image and identity for a building and to attract customers emotionally. Utilisation of familiarised colours to buildings can obtain potential attraction of people (Sadamura and Zhang, 2009). Usage of inconsistent colours such as pink, yellow and blue tarnished the historical images of buildings while grey and white colours are more suitable (Askari and Dola, 2009). A survey conducted by and Kent (2007) revealed that only 11% of the 1000 office workers were enjoyed working in cream, beige, or brown office environments, while 88% claimed more vibrant colors would improve morale, efficiency, and performance. Moreover survey recognised that 20% would prefer light blue and 13% would select light green while 16% prefer yellow colour in their working environment. As a result, over 60% of British businesses could improve staff morale and motivation by adding color to their work environment (Stone and Kent, 2007). Sadamura and Zhang (2009) revealed that use of "Fukugin Blue" colour which was very familiar to Japanese people for refurbished new banking establishment was achieved desired customer attraction. Therefore, use of coherent and familiarised colours could help to attract customers easily (Drainage Services Department, 2006).

2.2. FACADE DESIGN

Facade is the face of building which is the most important aspect in a design of a building (Huxtable, 2004). Building facade represents the visual richness and the quality of the building (Askari and Dola, 2009). It provides the connection between inner and outer space of the building (Hayashi, 2004). Facade has become the vital aspect of evaluation of buildings by visitors (Huxtable, 2004). The quality of a building front is a major determinant for a customer, particularly a new customer, and should not be underestimated (Bastow-Shoop *et al.*, 1991). Good exterior aesthetic presentation attracts attention, creates interest and invites the customer into the business. Building facade imposes considerable impact on the building image hence public's mental presentation of buildings is mostly based on facades (Imamoglu, 2000). The exterior presentation can offer a conservative, progressive, or discount image to the customer (Bastow-Shoop *et al.*, 1991).

Brick, stone, precast concrete, glass and metal is used as common facade designs materials. However in contemporary trends, people use natural materials such as stone, wood or metal to make them the dominant or complementary finish of the facades (Kirby and Kent, 2010). According to Coeterier (2002) stone is a durable traditional building material finishes which will provide facade a dignified and elegant look. According to Brown and Gifford (2001) there was growing interest for use of highly glazed facades in commercial buildings and open type glazed facade system provides unique aesthetic value.

Brown and Gifford (2001) stated six cognitive factors of clarity, complexity, friendliness, originality, ruggedness, and meaningfulness as the predictors of a building facade evaluation. The criteria for the attractiveness of a building facade are introduced as colour, material and proportion (Coeterier, 2002). The images of building facades are mostly represented through their visual elements such as style, volume, material, shape, forms and surfaces (Huxtable, 2004). Askari and Dola (2009) revealed that style, shape, decoration and material of building frontage as the most important factors in evaluation of building facades while dimension of building frontage and texture of building frontage as less importance visual elements. Therefore, it is vital to have an attractive and hospitable facade to the building.

2.3. LOGO

Logo is a symbol or emblem used by enterprises, institutions and organisations to promote public recognition (Saleem, 2012). Logos are either purely graphic or are composed of the name of the organisation. In simpler terms, a logo can be defined as the face or brand of a business (Saleem, 2012). Barber (2013) stated that a business is not worth without having unique logo. Logo should be consistent with organisation type, not based on individual preference. Symbols colour and design of logo should consistent with corporate themes and objectives. Priority should be given to consumers or stakeholders of the organisation (Heilbrun, 2002). Thus, designing a logo need to consider audience's perspective along with organisational taste.

Logo has power to stimulate reminder on community about product or business and provides a professional and genuine feel to business (Barber, 2013). Furthermore, already established brand identity helps in expansion of business to newer domains as well (Kirby and Kent, 2010). As mentioned earlier, first impression which a business creates among its customers is the best impression (Caspari *et al.*, 2006). People remember more of what they see than what they hear or read. Therefore, logo has an ability of generating reminder and recollection in the minds of the customers (Saleem, 2012). Therefore, logo needs to be creative and attractive as dull and boring logo will not provide a welcoming feeling to its customers (Saleem, 2012). Complex and complicated logo designs leads to generate frustrate attitudes on people mind (Barber, 2013). Considering these concerns, logo can be used as a good device to represent a business and helps business to be memorable among customers.

2.4. LAYOUT DESIGN

An effective way of attracting customers to a business organisation is by having good layout in the built environment, both exterior and interior (Bastow-Shoop *et al.*, 1991). Layout is the sizing, spacing, and placement of contents in design (Arfa Technologies, 2013). The basic objective of layout is to ensure a smooth flow of business activities, material and information through a system. Attributes of an effective

layout includes balance, emphasis, proportion, rhythm, colour, lighting and harmony (Kirby and Kent, 2010). Ease of future expansion or change, flow of movement, materials handling, output needs, space utilisation, shipping and receiving, ease of communication and support, impact on employee morale and job satisfaction, promotional value and safety are the factors need to be determine in layout and design of built environments.

Well-designed layout designs are essential for a consistent theme and to help the customer find advertised items (Kirby and Kent, 2010). Effective layout is crucial in helping users find quickly what they are looking for, as well as making the appearance visually appealing. Effective layout can make the difference between designs that users immediately understand and those that leave users feeling puzzled and overwhelmed. Indoor displays should attract attention, create interest and invite people into the business to purchase goods. According to Bastow-Shoop *et al.* (1991), there is less than eleven seconds to accomplish this, as that is the average amount of time an individual will spend looking at a window display. Furthermore, Kirby and Kent (2010) found that a customer will be attracted to a display within three to eight seconds; that is the time a customer spends to determine interest in a product. However, according to Saleem (2012), it should be careful not to crowd too much merchandise into a window, as customers find it difficult to determine the message and what items are being promoted. Therefore, properly lighted window displays can help sell specific products or ideas that promote the brand image (Kirby and Kent, 2010).

Some effective displays are created by suppliers or brand-name manufacturers, while others are developed from scratch. Layout and design is an important component of a business's overall operations, both in terms of maximising the effectiveness of the production process and meeting the needs of employees and therefore, it is critical to have a properly designed built environment.

2.5. VISUALS AND ARTIFACTS

Simple, brief, well designed, well lettered and easy to read signs, visuals and artifacts will convey a feeling of welcome (Bastow-Shoop *et al.*, 1991). They should be unique, noticeable and readable. Furthermore, signs are ideally supposed to convey information as guidance to the user in a simple and clear way, such as directing the user within the surrounding space, or how to use the equipment or services on offer (Sadamura and Zhang, 2009). Elegant and expensive sign materials may suggest luxury goods and services. Signs may also be used to target a specific market segment such as youth, women, senior citizens or singles (Bastow-Shoop *et al.*, 1991).

A marquee can be used to announce a change in seasons, a special event or a promotion (Kirby and Kent, 2010). Further, the top of the permanent canopy provides an opportunity to showcase seasonal displays or special promotional banners which can be hung from flagpoles, projected from the building or hung flat against the exterior (Saleem, 2012). The design concept used on the banners will be more effective if an attempt is made to carry the theme colours and graphics. Signs with unlit or missing light bulbs, flaking or faded paint, or cracked and peeling backgrounds can damage the overall built environment image (Bastow-Shoop *et al.*, 1991). A shabby or dilapidated sign implies lack of concern with the business image, and a sloppy, poorly managed business. Signs should be well maintained, and painted every three years or sooner if they weather or fade. Therefore, properly designed visuals and artifacts will promote the business which attracting customers.

2.6. LANDSCAPING

The landscape can provide viewers with satisfactions such as orientation, movement, stimulus, delight, and interest (Aburto *et al.*, 2002). Plants (especially flowering bedding plants) enhance the overall look of the built environment, and also add to its positive reputation in terms of beautifying the community (Aburto *et al.*, 2002). Attractive natural landscapes in buildings will increase the employee production by reducing stresses and toxic gases. Living plants bring forth the freshness of outdoors, boosting morale and productivity of employees and visitors alike in built environments (Rasuli, 2013). Further, it was revealed that impact of green vegetation and landscaping features towards taking people's preference attitudes and goodwill to the building (Drainage Services Department, 2006). Thus, green roofs are considered as one of sustainable landscaping options with a profound visual impact (Jungels *et al.*, 2013).

The essence of good landscaping is simplicity; simple landscape designs that are easy to maintain (Aburto *et al.*, 2002). For example, uninterrupted expanses of grass are easier to maintain than areas cut up by several small beds of flowers or shrubs (Bastow-Shoop *et al.*, 1991). Planters, flower boxes and plants used in front of a building add to the general appearance, regardless of what type of merchandise is being sold. A cluttered entryway causes shoppers to indefinitely postpone entering a built environment, while an attractive, well designed entrance is inviting to the customer. Suitable selection and execution of landscaping design aids to eliminate monotonous appearance of a building and able to grant pleasant appearance which typically perceive by people (Drainage Services Department, 2006). Appropriate sizes of trees should be selected to soften the monolithic effects of the buildings, fences, and wall and associated structures. Furthermore, climbers, flower racks and other vertical greening can be provided to beautify the external walls of building and to keep it cool.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research was intended to analyse the impact of aesthetic appearance to facilitate corporate business objectives. Researcher carried out a background study on a broader perspective to familiarise with the subject area referring journal articles, books, reports and other publications. Then researcher gradually extended the background study and a comprehensive literature review was developed to identify parameters of aesthetic appearance while holding the focus on research problem. Since the study is of exploratory nature and requires an in-depth understanding qualitative research approach has been identified as more suitable. Feagin *et al.* (1991 cited in Tellis, 1997) identified that case study is an ideal methodology when a holistic, in-depth qualitative investigation is needed. Thus, this study adopted case study research approach to identify impact of aesthetic appearance on assisting corporate business objectives.

Identification of unit of analysis or the case is of foremost importance to any research design and it is linked with the way of research problem is created (Yin, 1994). The unit of analysis in this research was a commercial building of a multi chain organisation based in Sri Lanka which designed based on same aesthetical concept in order to assist core business by generating own culture of establishment based on brand. According to Yin (1994), number of cases in case study could vary from one to eight as per the nature of the research. Two numbers of cases were selected for this study from two difference fields of businesses. One case was from banking sector which is a branch of a local bank of a multi chain organisation. Other case was from automobile sector which is a branch of foreign multi chain organisation. Both commercial buildings were designed based on the same aesthetical concepts of their brand.

Semi structured interviews was selected as the most reachable and reasonable data collection technique. Noor (2008) stated that, semi-structured rather than structured interview enable sufficient flexibility to approach different respondents differently while still covering the same areas of data collection. Semi structured interviews were conducted among corporate directors, senior managers and maintenance engineers of each organisation. Collected qualitative data was analysed using content analysis technique to gain outcomes of the research.

4. RESEARCH FINDINGS

Case Study Description

Two cases (Case A and Case B) were selected for data collection; and details of these cases are given in Table 1.

Table 1: Case Description

	Case A	Case B
Organisational Type	Automobile company	Bank
Location	Colombo	Colombo
Description	Automobile manufacturing and dealing company, over 200 subsidiaries around the world	Reputed banking establishment in Sri Lanka, 210 subsidiaries
Type of Customers/ Occupants	Local and International customers	Tenant employees and clients
Awards	Prestigious automobile brand [2006]	Best banker [2000/2013]
Business Origin	International	Local

4.1. CASE A

- ***Exterior and Interior Colour of the Building***

Company theme colours have been selected for exterior and interior of the building as it can have a strong impact on emotions and feelings of both customers and employees. Selection of theme colour of company was derived on the emotional impact of people. It has used grey colour as background while using orange colour for name plate of the brand. Orange is a warm and inviting colour, it is both physically and mentally stimulating and it gets people think and encourage socialisation. It is a colour that is dignified, conservative, and carries authority. Gray is the colour of intellect, knowledge, and wisdom. Grey and orange colours have been used as theme colours of business to emphasis the brilliancy of brand and the uniqueness of business culture. Orange and grey colours which have been used provide a unique and identical image of the business and attract customers. It is believed that the colour combination used enhance productivity of occupants as it energises them. Moreover, theme colours of a business can emphasis the business concepts and values. It has identified that colour has ability to create significant impact on corporate business objectives in terms of creating a unique image and brand identity of the company.

- ***Building Shape***

Case A is a rectangular shape building cylindrical shape in one end similar to the mother company in a foreign country. Mainly building shape has been designed enabling more space for business functionality. As car showroom being the most important aspect in the building, that shape optimises the space at car showroom area. More space was available at front showroom to maximise the display capacity of vehicles. Moreover, building shape was designed in a way that all the vehicles in the showroom could viewed by the outsiders through gased facade of the showroom. Unlike other commercial buildings considerable attention has been given to building shape as more space is required to move vehicles. In addition, operational areas were designed enabling employees having freedom and physical convenience in spacey working environment rather than working in confined spaces. Thus, building shape enhances the business functionality, employee productivity and customer attraction.

- ***Facade Design***

Case A has considered facade design as critical factor as it is the face of the building and it has the ability to signify the quality and visual richness of the business. It has a unique exterior facade design as in all other subsidiaries as similar to the view of its Mother Company. It is believed that representing the mother company will ensure the confidence among customers. Moreover, it can easily attract foreign customers who were already familiarised with the company brand. Grey colour has used for the curtain walls of exterior facades of building as theme colours of business to express the brilliancy of brand. Fully glazed façade of the showroom invites customers by demonstrating the vehicles available with them. In addition fully glazed façade provides unique aesthetic value to the building. Entrance has designed in a way to give welcome image to customers by designing double height roof entrance at the

front side of building. It provides a hospitable feeling while showing the dignity of the business. Facade design in Case A was based on advertising purpose and customer attraction. Facade design affects the space requirements of business functions. Facade design is a public presentation of a business which could attract customers.

- ***Logo***

Logo acts as an element which contribute to establish own organisational culture. Logo of Case A was based on the coat of arms of Free People's State of Württemberg of former Weimar Germany. Logo was composed using a graphic and providing the company name on the top of the logo. Colours of the logo were based on the theme colours of the company. Location of the logo has decided according to the corporate guideline and concentration has given to provide clear vision. Logo was placed on a tower post which provides a clear view to a person away from about 200 feet, which is the distance required to stop a travelling car of 40 miles per hour. According to corporate guideline logo must attract attention in less than 10 seconds. Furthermore, company desire that logo will communicate quality of brand while upholding brand culture. As it is a quite exceptional logo has an ability of generating reminder and recollection in the minds of the customers. Logo contributes to generate the brand identity of company in worldwide. Thus, logo is considered as most critical parameter which impact on corporate business objectives.

- ***Layout Design***

The purpose of layout design is to develop desire for the merchandise, display what is available, and persuade customers. The percentage of purchase decisions may vary by design of commercial built environment. Case A consists of well-established corporate guidelines for interior layout design. More consideration has given for the showroom area in order to provide attractive atmosphere and convenient layout design for customers. Interior layout was designed considering the aspects of balance, proportion, rhythm and colour. Special consideration was given to provide adequate space for movement of vehicles. Attractive furniture arrangement has been placed in the showroom area in order to provide pleasant and peaceful feelings for customers.

Interior layout design is important to provide good customer service while enhancing the productivity of employees. However, less consideration has been given to layout design in the office areas, as their key concern is on showroom area. Office areas should be designed comfortably considering on employee ergonomic issues. Proper interior space management assists to enhance effectiveness and efficiency of employees by providing a comfortable working environment.

- ***Visuals and Artifacts***

Visuals have used on customer area to maintain brand identity on customer mind. Theme and image presented on the exterior have been carried throughout the interior of the building to provide consistency for the customer. The purpose of interior display is to develop desire for the merchandise. Visuals have been based on newly designed high quality vehicles and those are frequently changed addressing new products. In automobile design sections some visuals and artifacts have been used to provide stimulation for innovative thinking of employees. Those visuals act as media to communicate new products to the customer. Especially designed visuals and artifacts have a possibility of improving productivity. Therefore visuals and artifacts have high impact on customer attraction and productivity of employees.

It is important to pay more attention on placement and location of visuals and artifacts. It was identified that some placements have disturbed the visual richness of exterior facade which some have disturbed the attention of employees. Therefore, it is recommended to distinguish suitable areas to display visuals and artifacts. Attractive visuals and artifacts with proper placements will offer a feeling of welcome for customers.

- ***Landscaping Designs***

Less concentration has given to landscaping designs of the building. However, it would create a pleasant and attractive view if landscaping have used. Landscaping provides economic, environmental and life style benefits. It would help to create a fresh and delight feeling among customers and occupants. Landscaping designs can enhance the viewer satisfaction, delight and interest and provide a pleasant visual image.

4.2. CASE B

- ***Exterior and Interior Colour of Building***

Case B was designed with an extremely attractive colour scheme that perfectly incorporated with company principles, making it appear to be very welcoming and appealing to its consumers. Grey and orange colours have been used prominently as they are the theme colours of business. Orange is a warm and inviting colour, it is both physically and mentally stimulating and it gets people think and encourage socialisation. It is a colour that is dignified, conservative, and carries authority. Gray is the colour of intellect, knowledge, and wisdom. Theme colours have derived based on the concept called Bank for Nation's one of their religions. Banks are functioning on buildings which are owned by them as well as lease hold buildings. The exterior of buildings use combination of orange and grey colours in both types of buildings. In lease hold buildings' interior walls are painted in white colour while combination of orange and grey is used for interior walls of own buildings. It is believed that use of theme colours in the building helped to represent uniqueness of the bank and easy identification among other buildings. Colour combinations which have been used avoid adverse visual effects and enhance the productivity of the employees. In addition these colours invite customers inside and make them more active and energetic. Therefore, colour can affect the productivity of employees. Exterior and interior colours of the building have used effectively to enhance business functionality.

- ***Building Shape***

Buildings which are owned by them are designed to have a unique shape among all branches. However, for lease hold buildings bank identity is developed through own modifications. Case B was designed and constructed by one of Colombo's oldest and most recognised architectural companies. Building shape was designed considering business functionality, energy efficiency and its visual impact on its surroundings. Building has used a rectangular shape allowing more space for business functions while optimising use of day lighting. Rectangular shape has enabled more space in customer lobby area. Thus, it minimises congestions and facilitates free movements to its customers. Another advantage gained by the rectangular plan was it got easily furnished by rectangular furniture. In addition, it provides easy parking facilities to customers at banking premises. Rectangular building shape facilitated Case B to optimise its business functions.

- ***Facade Design***

At the first glance anybody will notice facade of the building, it acts as communication media between bank and people. Building has opened up in the front to ensure appeal and attraction to all its consumers right from the start. The glass front opens the interior of the bank to the outside in an eye catching way, enabling customers to see everything that is going on within the bank. This is to create a sense of transparency at a very basic level. Glassed front view consists of one-way stickers which uses for advertising purpose. Cladding wall system has been used with combination of orange and grey colours for exterior facade in order to provide identity of the bank. The unique facade of the building, decked with the bank's signature orange and highlighted with grey panelling, takes a step away from the more traditional branches which were located across the island. Facade design of the Case B helps to attract customers.

- ***Logo***

Logo of the bank is a filled pot having name in all three languages of Sinhala, English and Tamil. It represent symbol of prosperous. It says bank will provide greater banking service to nation and desire to grant prosperity to the employee as well as customers of the company. Logo of bank is the most

critical factor which stimulates brand identity on people about bank. Furthermore, logo has been able to develop own culture to the bank and it has derived focusing the people in Sri Lanka. Location has decided to provide clear and comfortable vision to logo by people. Logo is placed at the middle of front view of the building to ensure the clear vision. A clear vision has been provided to the logo to represent the business to customers. In addition it will help to promote the public recognition. It helps to attract customers for new domains of business expansions. Logo is key factors of aesthetic appearance which generate brand identity and promotes public image.

- ***Layout Design***

It was a complex task to design interior layout of the building as it was required to meet various local and international consideration. To obtain the desired layouts, the initial layout has been moderated few times. In interior layout special consideration was given to the lobby area to provide convenient banking transactions. In the lobby area adequate space was to avoid discomfort of customers even in peak hours. Interior layouts have been designed to reduce the movement distance of customer as much as possible in order to provide quick and quality service to them. Separate cubicles have been provided for prawn and credit transactions in order to provide adequate privacy for customers. In those sections one way stickers are pasted on glass in which outside people will see advertising or promotional display while people who inside can see outside. The bank was keen on making sure that several of their key organisation philosophies were highlighted through this building. Thus, it has used attractive interior arrangement in order to provide pleasant feeling for customer. In addition, interior space have been arranged to provide a comfortable and productive working environment for employees who are dealing with prolonged repetitive work. Layout of the building designed in a customer oriented manner as they believe the differentiation in the banking industry is not really in the products they offer but in the service. Interior layout assists customer convenience and employee productivity while attracting new customers.

- ***Visuals and Artifacts***

Case B has used visuals and artifacts to provide messages on new promotions of the bank to customers. Banners and stickers have been used in customer area to maintain brand identity on customer mind. It was ensured that those are simple, brief and customers can easily read within few seconds. All those were hanged on eye catching places and used all three languages of Sinhala, Tamil and English. Usually one set of visuals and artifacts were only focused on children, youth, women or senior citizen. In addition, framed pictures have been placed in customer lobby area to provide a homely image and visual satisfaction. Therefore, visuals and artifacts can be effectively used to attract customers which conveying commercial notices.

Visuals and artifacts can stimulate unique brand identity on customers. However, as identified some of the banners and stickers were not represents the unique identity of the bank. Therefore, it is important to design all the visuals and artifacts in a consistent format, highlighting theme colours and logo. It should be ensured that all these visuals and artifacts have elegant and orderly designed to uphold the good will of the organisation.

- ***Landscaping Designs***

It was believed that landscaping could provide enthusiastic and pleasurable feelings for its viewers. Landscaping has been used at car park area and some flower plots have been kept inside the building. Interlocking pavement blocks have been used for the entire car park area which offers durability, life-cycle and aesthetics. However, it was identified that less consideration have been given to landscaping. Properly designed landscapes including more natural plants will provide pleasing atmosphere for its customers as well as employees. In addition, landscaping can be used as a tactic to enhance the beauty and attractiveness of the bank.

5. DISCUSSION

Aesthetic appearance can be considered as everything the customer sees, both exterior and interior which can create a positive or negative image of a business. It was identified that interior and exterior colour of the building contribute to create unique image and brand identity among customers. In addition to that colour can affect the productivity of employees. Moreover, theme colours of a business can emphasis the business concepts and values. This is more alike with literature findings where researches done by Askari and Dola (2009), Mahnke (1996) and Kwallek (1997) revealed that colours in building is critical to obtain unique image, brand identity and it affects the productivity of employees.

Findings showed that the properly designed building shape enabled ease functionality of business by providing adequate space. Moreover, it facilitates to create a welcoming image to the customers and visitors. Façade design of the building is the public presentation of the business. It shows the visual richness of the building. Similar findings are indicated in the literature. For an example, Bastow-Shoop *et al.* (1991) conveyed that the quality of a building front is a major determinant for a customer, particularly a new customer, and should not be underestimated.

Logo of the business helps to create and establish own culture among its subsidiaries. It was mentioned by the experts that logo helped to attract customers for new domains of business expansions. For instance, Barber (2013) clearly indicated that logo has power to stimulate reminder on community about product or business and provides a professional and genuine feel to business.

Layout design of the building enhances the physical convenience for its customers and employees. Properly designed layout designs are created an attractive, pleasant and peaceful environment inside a building. Findings of the researches done by Bastow-Shoop *et al.* (1991) and Kirby and Kent (2010) discovered similar findings. In contrast, Kirby and Kent (2010) identified balance, emphasis, proportion, rhythm, colour, lighting and harmony as the attributes of an effective layout. However, these attributes have not been properly addressed.

Visuals and artifacts act as a communication media for the customers. Finding revealed that attractive visuals and artifacts offered a feeling of welcome for customers. Visuals and artifacts can be effectively used to maintain brand identity among customers. Especially designed visuals and artifacts have a possibility of improving productivity. Research findings of Sadamura and Zhang (2009) and Bastow-Shoop *et al.* (1991) show that visuals and artifacts convey information and a feeling of welcome. Further, banners will be more effective if an attempt is made to carry the theme colours and graphics. However, this was given less consideration and neglected in the local practices.

Arburto *et al.* (2002), Rasuli (2013) and Jungels *et al.* (2013) revealed that landscaping designs enhances the viewer satisfaction, delight and interest and provide a pleasant visual image. Landscaping can provide economical, environmental and life style benefits to the business. However, this was given very little consideration and overlooked the benefits that could be gained in the local practices.

Results of the research showed that aesthetic appearance can create a significant impact on corporate business objectives. Aesthetic appearance is the first opportunity to make a positive impression on potential community and stakeholders. Well-established corporate guidelines for aesthetic appearance can obtain high quality aesthetically pleasant design in particular establishment. According to the results of analysis it has found that aesthetic appearance can be effectively used in order to assist corporate business objectives.

6. CONCLUSIONS

The aim of this study was to identify the impact of aesthetic appearance to facilitate corporate business objectives of organisations in Sri Lanka. Corporate Business Objectives address both economical and non-economical aspects of an organisation. However, maximisation of profit, maximisation of sales, attraction of customers, growth of organisation, enhancing quality of service and enhancing effectiveness and efficiency of employees has been identified as the key business objectives. Two cases were selected for the study and in depth investigation was carried out in order to determine the extent which aesthetic appearance has been influenced on corporate objectives in Sri Lankan context. Building

selection was based on buildings, which were branches of a mother company with same aesthetic design as mother building.

A descriptive literature review was undertaken to determine the various parameters of aesthetic appearance. Based on the literature review interior and exterior colour of the building, building shape, facade design, logo, layout design, visuals and artifacts and landscape design has been identified as the most important parameters of aesthetic appearance of a commercial building. A descriptive analysis was carried out among both cases to analyse the identified parameters of aesthetic appearance.

The results of this research shows that colour of the building, building shape, facade design, logo, design layout, visuals and artifacts and landscape design has a significant impact on corporate business objectives such as on maximisation of sales, attraction of customers, enhancing quality of service and enhancing effectiveness and efficiency of employees. Aesthetic appearance is the first opportunity to make a positive impression on potential community and stakeholders. Well-established corporate guidelines for aesthetic appearance can obtain high quality aesthetically pleasant design in particular establishment. According to the results of analysis it has found that aesthetic appearance can be effectively used in order to assist corporate business objectives.

Findings revealed that in designing the layout of the building, poor consideration have been given to employees as their main focus is on customers. However, it is important to provide comfortable and convenient environment for employees to enhance their productivity. In addition, quality and the uniqueness of visuals and artifacts can be further improved to attract more customers. Guidelines should be developed to ensure proper designs and placements for visuals and artifacts. Landscaping can be used more effectively to provide a pleasant and attractive visual environment. Furthermore, landscaping will provide economic, environmental and life style benefits. Therefore, it is recommended to provide more consideration on aspects of aesthetic appearance throughout building life cycle.

7. REFERENCES

- Abu-Obeid, N., Hassan, R.F. and Ali, H.H., 2008. Quantifying the aesthetics of non-conventional structures: A comparison between architects, engineers and non-experts. *Structural Survey*, 26(2), 91-107.
- Aburto, D., Lee, J., Murray, L. and Pioro, C. (2002). *Evaluating the intensification Bloor Street* [online]. Available from: <http://www.environment.utoronto.ca/Upload/UndergraduateResearchReports/Aesthetics01-02.pdf> [Accessed 11 December 2012].
- Arfa Technologies, (2013). *Why layout is important in design?* [online]. Available from: <http://arfatechnologies.com/graphic-design-blogs/why-layout-is-important-in-design/> [Accessed 15 February 2013]
- Askari, A.H. and Dola, K.B., 2009. Influence of building facade visual elements on its historical image: Case of Kuala Lumpur city, Malaysia. *Journal of Design and Built Environment*, 5, 49-59.
- Barber, I.K., 2013. *The Value of a Business Logo* [online]. Available from: <http://www.sba-bc.ca/community/blog/value-business-logo> [Accessed 24 April 2013].
- Bastow-Shoop, H., Dale, Z. and Gregory, P., 1991. *Visual merchandising: a guide for small retailers*. Arnes, IA: Iowa State University.
- Brown, G. and Gifford, R., 2001. Architects predict lay evaluations of large contemporary buildings: Whose conceptual properties?. *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, 21(1), 93-99.
- Caspari, S., Eriksson, K. and Naden, D., 2006. The importance of aesthetic surroundings: a study interviewing experts within different aesthetic fields. *International Journal of Care Sciences*, 25, 134-142.
- Chan, L., 2010. *Selection of hotels: Is the sustainability of a building more important than its aesthetic appearance* [online]. (Master's thesis, University Honours College). Available from: http://ir.library.oregonstate.edu/xmlui/bitstream/handle/1957/17628/CHAN_THESIS_FINAL%20COPY_SPRING%202010.pdf?sequence=1
- Coeterier, J. F., 2002. Lay people's evaluation of historic sites. *Journal of Landscape and Urban Planning*, 59(2), 111-123.
- Dell'era, C. and Verganti, R., 2009. The impact of international designers on firm innovation capability and consumer interest. *International Journal of Operations and Production Management*, 29(9), 870-893.

- Drainage Services Department of Hong Kong, 2006. *Guidelines on Aesthetic Design of Pumping Station Buildings* [online]. Hong Kong: Drainage Services Department. Available from: http://www.dsd.gov.hk/EN/Files/publications_publicity/other_publications/guidelines_outsiders/Guidelines_on_Aesthetic_Design_of_Pumping_Station_Buildings.pdf [Accessed 21 December 2012]
- Hayashi, T., 2004. *Lasnamäe Track and Field Centre: Façade, MAJA, Estonian Architectural Review* [online]. Available from: <http://www.solness.ee/majaeng/index.php?gid=60andid=323> [Accessed 07 September 2012]
- Heilbrun, K., 2002. Foreward. *Criminal Justice and Behavior*, 29, 495-496.
- Huxtable, A. L., 2004. *Building Façade* [online]. Available from http://www.class.uidaho.edu/edu/community_research/facade_remodeling.htm [Accessed 15 February 2012].
- Imamoglu, C. 2000. Complexity, preference and familiarity: Architecture and non-architecture Turkish students' assessments of traditional and modern house facades. *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, 20(1), 05–16.
- Jungels, J., Rakow, D. A., Allred, S.B. and Skelly, S.M., 2013. Attitudes and aesthetic reactions toward green roofs in the North-Eastern United States. *Landscape and Urban Planning*, 117, 13-21.
- Kirby, A. E. and Kent, A.M., 2010. Architecture as brand: Store design and brand identity. *Journal of Product and Brand Management*, 19(6), 432-439.
- Kwallek, N., Woodson, H., Lewis, C. and Sales, C., 1997. Impact of three interior colour schemes on worker mood and performance relative to individual environmental sensitivity. *Color Research and Application*, 22, 121-132.
- Mahnke F., 1996. *Color, Environment, Human Response*. New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold.
- Noor, K.B.M, 2008. Case study: A strategic research methodology. *American Journal of Applied Sciences*, 5(11), 1602-1604.
- Rasuli, N., 2013. *Interior landscape in office buildings* [online]. Available from: <http://www.slideshare.net/rasulinajeebullah/dissertation-najeeb-rasuli> [Accessed 15 February 2013].
- Sadamura, T. and Zhang, Y., 2009. *A study of bank design considering emotional elements. Case study: Fukuoka bank in Japan* [online]. Available from: http://www.iasdr2009.org/ap/Papers/Special%20Session/Pleasurable%20Design%20Looking%20Beyond%20Ease%20of%20Use/A%20Study%20of%20Bank%20Design%20Considering%20Emotional%20Elements%20-%20Case%20Study_Fukuoka%20Bank%20in%20Japan.pdf [Accessed 21 December 2012]
- Saleem, N., 2012. *The importance of a logo* [online]. Available from: <http://www.instantshift.com/2012/11/16/the-importance-of-a-logo/> [Accessed 14 November 2012]
- Simpson, S. and Cacioppe, R., 2001. Unwritten ground rules: Transforming organisation culture to achieve key business objectives and outstanding customer service. *Leadership and organisational development journal*, 22 (8), 394-401.
- Smith, S., 2012. *What Is Aesthetic Value?* [online]. Wise GEEK web site. Available from: <http://www.wisegeek.com/what-is-aesthetic-value.htm> [Accessed on 11 December 2012].
- Stone, D. and Kent, T., 2007. The body shop and the role of design in retail branding. *International Journal of Retail and Distribution Management*, 35(7), 531-543.
- Tellis, W., 1997. *Application of a case study methodology: the Qualitative Report* [online]. 3(3). Available from: <http://www.nova.edu/ssss/QR/QR3-3/tellis2.html> [Accessed 14 November 2012].
- Yin, R. K., 1994. *Case study research: Design and methods*. 2nd ed. New York: Sage Publications.