

Visual Aesthetics And Aural Techniques Used In Television Political Campaign ADS During Ghana's 2016 Presidential Elections

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Abstract: The study examined the use of visual aesthetic and aural techniques as used in television (TV) political campaign advertisements (Ads) during Ghana's 2016 presidential elections. The study employed the framing theory to highlight the communication channel to the electorates. A content analysis of the TV ads revealed the use of camera and its movements, close-up shots, bird-eye shots, special effects, picture distortion, sound, vocal delivery, pacing, colour, voice delivery, incongruency, music and graphics as the components that were used in the television ads studied. All the ads tried to attain either a positive or a negative effect on the viewers or electorates giving viewers the opportunity to evaluate and make voting decisions. The study recommends that, in future, ad creators for political parties would include the participation of prospective voters at the ad production stages to enable them share their views on the application of visual and aural techniques in the ads.

Keywords: Visual aesthetic, advertisement, Ghana, election 2016, political campaign

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I. INTRODUCTION

The media is one of the most important institutions in every society. The media is an important institution, if not the most important, through which people get information and opinions about issues (Azanu, 2012). People get most of their information from news in the media, and the of election periods are no exception, especially so, when the media is key in disseminating political messages to the electorates (Oyero, 2011). Stromback and Dimitrova (2006) stated that modern political communication processes are extremely mediated, making the media an important source of political information for citizens. This form of communication is very important to candidates and electorates. Advertisements in the media become paramount in political communication during elections. Just like any form of advertising, political party advertising is structured and composed of non-personal communication of information usually paid for and is persuasive in nature. The overall aim is to communicate messages, and market ideas and political personalities, with the objective of wrestling or maintaining power. In view of this, political advertising is considered one of the most important means of electoral political communication (Advertising Educational Foundation, 2005; Kaid, 2004).

Political ads are purposely done and produced to persuade voters to choose a particular candidate and political party over the other. Oye (2009) stated that political ads can express a candidate's stand on an issue and also give information on the character of a candidate or on his or her political experience. Political party advertising is a form of commercial advertisement that politicians use to make voters aware of their record, their stand on issues and ultimately sell their political vision. During this elections, candidates advertise in the media such as television, radio, newspaper and the internet to convince voters (Arens & Bovee, 1994; Oye, 2009). The medium used by candidates and their parties are selected strategically to enable them communicate effectively to their target audience, the electorates.

Political advertising is now the major means by which political party candidates vying for presidency communicate the messages to voters, and the medium through which candidates and their parties use to reach out to voters are paid for. Media advertisement, especially television, is very expensive. The amount of money spent on television advertising in presidential campaigns in the United States (US) for instance has increased

dramatically with each election. In recent times, it costs hundreds of millions of dollars to launch a successful campaign and with each subsequent election the costs rise substantially (Diamond & Bates, 1988; Poston, 2013). In Ghana, politicians and their political parties have for several decades used political advertisement in their campaigns in selling personalities and messages during elections. According to Ansu-Kyeremeh and Karikari (1998), under colonialism, the newspaper, was introduced and used more as a political tool to link the centre to the periphery than as a tool for the dissemination of information. Politicians and their parties now use several media such as the electronic, print media and the other media (billboards, flyers, Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp and Instagram) to advertise themselves to enable them appeal to voters.

Obviously, the practice of political advertising in the U.S. started with the use of posters, handbills and printed materials but it was not until the development of electronic media that political advertising became central to political campaigns (Kaid, 2006). Television, radio and internet (social media handles) forms the electronic media. Television is the most effective means of advertising due to its ability to combine visuals, sound and motion. Television advertising offers the benefit of reaching large numbers in a single exposure (Arens, 2006; Rawal, 2013). The situation is not different in Ghana. For instance, Larrey (2016) stated that in spite of the vibrant media landscape in Ghana which has enabled transmission of political information through newspapers, radio and poster campaigns, television ads are still a dominant feature in elections since 1992 and it is expensive. It is very important to note that in communicating through the television, visual and aural forms play significant roles. In view of the above discussions, many scholars all over the world have given exposure to political advertisement with varied opinions (Amegatcher, 2015; Nkana, 2015; Alqaseer, 2013; Poston, 2013; Oye, 2009; Komey, 2002; Boateng, 1993) Most of their studies in political advertisement revealed that politicians in the Western, European and Asia make extensive use of political advertisement during elections in their countries. According to Johnston (2006), numerous studies have looked at the style and use of political advertising in various countries to understand the influence of an “American” style of campaigning or a “modernization” of campaign techniques. Johnson and Kaid (2002) were also of the view that scholars have been studying and analyzing political ads to determine whether these ads are based on issues or are dominated by image information. Several studies of political advertising and political communication in general have also been conducted in United States of America, Europe, Kuwait, Canada, Israel and East-Asian countries. Poston (2013) looked at how visual and aural techniques were used to convey meaning in political advertising in the 2012 Presidential Elections in the United States of America. Nkana in 2015 also studied the pictorial impact of television political advertising on voters in a multi-cultural environment in Nigeria. Some other works are; Kaid and Dimitrova (2005), “The television advertising battleground in the 2004 presidential election”, Kaid (2006) “Political advertising in the United States”, Hansen and Benoit (2002) “Presidential television advertising and public policy priorities, Alqaseer (2013) “Political Advertising in Kuwait - A Functional Discourse Analysis”, Norris (2014) “Political Communications”, among others. However, the situation is slightly different in Ghana when it comes to presidential elections. Most of the studies done in Ghana in the field of political communication have focused on coverage of politics in newspapers. e.g. Boateng (1993) studied the impact of political campaign coverage by Ghanaian newspapers, Komey (2002) looked at the influence of political advertising on the choices of the electorates in voting,. Oye (2009) studied whether political ads in the 2008 elections were based on issues or image and also whether the parties resorted to negative or positive ads, Amegatcher (2015) also examined television political advertising before the 2012 presidential elections in Ghana.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Visual Aesthetics and Aural Components in TV Advertising

Aesthetics is defined as “the aspect of communication presentation that creates feelings in viewers (Nkana, 2015). Aesthetics is the expected outcome when visual and aural elements are used together to make a video advertisement or commercial beautiful and appealing. In political campaigns, the aesthetic expectancy of a political ad is to appeal to the conscience of electorates and persuade them to make an informed decision on the day of voting.

Brader (2006) after examining thousands of political ads maintains that visuals are paramount to the success of ads. He mentioned that pictures in ads can help the viewer to imagine him or herself being in the situation pictured. Again, Kaid & Johnston (2001) affirm that production techniques are an important part of the creation of commercials.

2.2 Contextualising meaning using visual and aural elements in communication

Nkana (2015), worked on the “pictorial impact of television political advertising on voters in a multi-cultural environment”. In the study, Nkana examined the opinion of politically conscious viewers on the pictorial power of television political advertising campaigns of the 2011 elections in Nigeria. The researcher sought to find out if pictures in television adverts could communicate and add information to political messages,

causing viewers to react according to the source's intention. The researcher employed survey research method for the study and used questionnaire as the main instrument to collect the data. Nkana administered 250 questionnaires by viewers who are politically conscious and who also voted in the Uyo Metropolis in Nigeria. The researcher found that pictures in television political advertising campaign of the 2011 elections did not have any momentous impact on politically conscious viewers. Furthermore, viewers were not deterred from one political party to another because of the pictures in the campaign adverts. They adopted the "continuance" action. The study also revealed that pictures add dimensions to political campaign messages, apart from being communicative.

According to Nkana (2015), "a picture is said to be worth a thousand words, its communicative value should be more than what any sound could carry, even if combined", but Poston (2013) is of the view that aural and visual dimensions employed in TV ads are crucial pieces of the meaning construction process. Poston further stated that when these dimensions are combined professionally by a talented director, the meaning of an advert is greatly amplified. The study discussed above employed survey research method with the questionnaire as the main instrument. This study would employ qualitative research method and use content analysis to interpret how visual aesthetics was achieved and how aural techniques were applied by the advertisers in the television political adverts. Poston (2013) looked at presidential television advertising in the 2012 U.S. election. The researcher analysed how visual elements and audio are used to construct meanings in television political ads. According to the researcher, meaning is suggested through the visual and aural means of expression available to advertising creators. The framing, priming, and schema theories were used to analyze the ads. With qualitative research approach, the researcher gathered all of the presidential television ads sponsored by the Republican candidate Mitt Romney and Democrat candidate Barack Obama. The study focused on the visual and sound techniques employed by ad creators to introduce a candidate to the viewers. The findings revealed that repeated aural and visual patterns in were used in all the ads. It then studied how meaning was conveyed when the aural and visual techniques were combined.

All the studies discussed above mostly looked at the issues captured in the advert, and some also used the quantitative research approach to conduct the research. The focus of several studies conducted in Ghana as also discussed above have not paid attention to analysing the aesthetics of political advertising despite the number of elections held every four years since Ghana gained independence in 1956. This research therefore seeks to investigate the visual aesthetics and aural techniques used in the political ads. It also aims to examine how political TV advertising build meaning using visual aesthetics and aural techniques to communicate their messages to voters by analysing the ads to document how they were used in conveying the messages of the selected political parties to the electorates.

III. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.1 The Framing Theory

Ervin Goffman is widely regarded as the founder of the framing theory due to his pioneering work on frame analysis in 1974 (Botan & Hazleton, 2006). According to Cissel (2012), Goffman was the first to give attention to framing as a form of communication. The theory was first put forth by Goffman in 1974, under the title Framing Analysis. Cissel (2012) indicates that media framing is the way in which information is presented to its audience. According to Entman (1993), "framing involves the selection of 'some aspects of a perceived reality' that makes those aspects more salient to a media consumer." From Entman's assertion one can define framing as selecting and emphasizing certain aspects of experience or ideas over others. The above definitions show that the media chooses to highlight a part of an issue that they regard salient for media consumers. According to Chong and Druckman (2007), framing refers to the process by which citizens develop a particular conceptualization of an issue or reorient their thinking about an issue. In this case, when the salient portion of an advert is chosen, that portion helps the viewer of the ad to create an impression of that salient portion of the advert.

Frames highlights certain aspects of an event or policy, guide audience member's thoughts about the event or issue in predictable ways, to predictable conclusions. Framing functions to define problems, diagnose causes, make moral judgments, and suggest remedies (Entman, 1993; Gross, 2006). Framing is important in media content studies because, Chong and Druckman (2007), posit that through framing, the media is capable of blowing large numbers of people from one side of an issue to the very opposite of the issue. In James Poston's research work on political advertisement in the 2012 US Presidential Elections, he used the framing theory to explain most of the findings. Framing can be thought of as a cognitive shortcut to alleviate the voter of the heavy burden of having to do a complete analysis of each and every candidate. Frames supply a common vocabulary that enable elites and citizens to take part in the same conversation (Kinder & Nelson, 2005; Poston, 2013). Media frames therefore serve as a means of expressing an idea.

IV. METHODOLOGY

A qualitative approach was adopted for this study. It aids in understanding how textual elements in advertisements are combined to help construct an overall message for the political parties and to communicate specific messages to the electorate (Frey, Botan & Kreps, 1999). Content analysis is a widely used in qualitative research technique (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). Content analysis has been employed extensively in analyzing printed texts and communication media to be precise. In analysing contents, the researcher gets the opportunity to look at every aspect of the data being studied in to details, and this helps to reveal hidden but important ideas to the researcher for proper understanding. The above provided a space to extensively analyse the data. The study described the communication contents (visual and aural components) in the television political campaign ads to aid text flexibility when analysing. Purposive sampling method was employed to select the political parties and the advertisements for the study. The researchers chose the two (2) dominant and leading political parties in Ghana for the research, that is the New Patriotic Party (NPP) and the National Democratic Congress (NDC). That is also because, since 1992, government has changed between these two (2) powerful parties. The videos for this study were downloaded from YouTube since ads were made available to the public on the site and also because there is no database for accessing television advertisements in Ghana. Several number of campaign ads were available on the website, and out of that number, twelve (12) were downloaded. However, six (6) of the campaign ads were selected for this study because they had the specific characteristics and components that were useful for the study. Three (3) campaign ads of NDC and three ads of the NPP aired during the 2016 Presidential Elections period formed the six (6) ads selected for the study.

The study used textual analysis as the data analysis strategy. A text refers to something that people make meaning from (McKee, 2003). Texts are found in either printed documents or videos. Based on the inference of McKee (2003), the television political campaign ads used for this study were considered as a text because it has visuals and recorded audiovisual materials. The study used this approach to identify all the visual aesthetic components and aural techniques employed in the ads.

V. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The visual aesthetics used and aural techniques identified in the ads analyzed were Camera Movement and effects, Special Effects (Colour, Distortion, Voice Over & Sound), Editing (Pacing) Graphics (*Text*), Pictures and Music.

5.1 Camera

Camera captures important scenes that are used in videography. They are employed in political advertising to frame candidates or political parties literally or symbolically. The camera was used in the similar manner, in that, it was used to provide a margin of information, specifically selecting a particular point of view to frame a candidate in a positive or negative manner. The camera only achieves its purpose of framing when handled in different angles, multiple perspectives and also based on distance. Close-Up shots, Long and Medium shots and Bird-Eye camera techniques and its movements were in full display in the videos studied.

A close-up shot is often used to have a direct interaction with a viewer. The ad creators used the close-up shot technique of videos of Mr. Mahama giving a speech at two (2) different stages to give viewers the impression of the whole subject or idea of the ad. This shot helps to give the viewer a varied range of verbal and non-verbal cues that appeal to the unexpected emotional response of the viewer. The closeness of the shot comes with either a negative or positive response from viewer. Ad creators used close-up shot to get viewers' attention on the subject in some of the ads. These camera techniques appear warm and draws the viewer's attention in a direct and personal manner.

The ad creators combined both long and medium shot camera technique of the incumbent President an ECOWAS Summit and a One-on-One interview with a TV Host. The bird-eye camera technique was used by the ad creators to enable the viewer have a broader view of places being displayed. This helps to depict the dramatic effect and shows the different spatial perspective of the projects being done by the NDC lead-government to enable viewers appreciate the work done so far.

These findings were in line with the framing theory that says that framing is about making certain information in a text salient to achieve certain purposes (Entman, 1993).

5.2 Special Effects

An analysis of the ads revealed the use of visual and aural changes to indirectly put the mind of the view in a state of confusion due to the deviation from the norm of the ad. When the actuality of the picture is altered, it contradicts accustomed views of normalcy. This visual and aural tactic is achieved through the means of special effects. Poston (2013) posits that sound and image distortions are employed in a way to project meaning in a decidedly negative way. This ad used distortions in anticipation of creating a negative impression

in the minds of viewers to get them choose the NPP party over the NDC. This negative impression was communicated based on the negative alteration of images in the ad.

Mahama's lowered voice is combined with a blur picture of him in black and white. The video is blurred which makes the ad memorably negative. It is difficult to focus on a blurred image for a long period thereby forcing the viewer to only concentrate on the audio aspect of the said video. Blurry images often create a feeling of anxiety. The ad creator uses blurred visuals to intensify the feeling of the unknown in the minds of viewers.

5.3 Colour

Colour played its role in the ads to illicit a negative and positive reactions. Mahama is always cast in black and white in both appearances. Poston (2013) states that in the case of black and white pictures, the viewer may feel a heightened sense of fear and danger. The use of black and white for Mahama has a priming effect on voters in that he is negatively evaluated on the basis of colour alteration of the video from coloured to black and white or grayscale. The aforementioned statement is reinforced by Brader (2006) assertion that bright colours versus the absence of colour convey character qualities. Bruns (2013) posits that black and white imagery gives a feeling of elegance to a photo or video. But a blurred black and white video or photo connotes negativity. In the case of Mahama, he is being portrayed as a seductive villain who is not what he says he is.

Brader's comments on the use of bright colours to convey character qualities were also employed in this ad. The gentleman who represented the NPP was shot in full colour to communicate currency to the viewer since the other scene of Mahama was deliberately rendered in blur black and white to suggest a negative effect to viewers.

At a point in some other videos, bright and harmonious colours were strategically used by the ad creators to give viewers the right energy to concentrate on the very message being communicated by the NDC. This was evident in the way the camera captured the serene colourful environment of the educational "E" blocks and the newly constructed Ridge Hospital by Mr. Mahama.

Poston (2013) says that colour signals to the viewer an emotional response the viewer may be unaware of. The response of the viewers may be positive or negative depending on the colours displayed and the purpose it served at that point in time. All the texts that are used from the beginning of the ad to the 50 seconds mark was rendered in shaky black and red colour, but on the 54-second mark, the texts used are made bold in the traditional colours of the NPP for emphasis and clarity.

A pale background was employed by the ad creators in one of the videos to enable viewers concentrate on the green hash tag and also John Mahama's picture. The NDC party colours which are black, red white and green were clearly displayed to lay emphasis on the traditional colours of the party.

5.4 Sound

Sound is also a component in videoing which when left out, the video becomes insignificant. The ad creators strategically lowered the volume of the sound of Mahama's speech and made that of the NPP representative's a little louder to attract the maximum attention of the viewers. This effect has a priming effect on viewers in that Mr. Mahama is negatively evaluated.

5.5 Vocal Delivery

Human voice is a musical instrument that employs all the elements of sound such as rhythm, melody, tempo, pitch and rate (Poston, 2013). Voice-overs play an important role in TV ads. Ad creators used that to project the most salient part of the message being sent across to attract the attention of the viewer and listener. The ad creators tactfully used a bold voice for the voice-over, which said "vote for change" to probably get the attention of viewers since the voice is pleasing to the eyes.

On the 45 second mark a bold male voice is used to introduce Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo as the man to end the NDC party's eight years of deception. The issue of eight years of deception is brought forth by the ad creators to give the viewers a reason to judge the NDC party based on the voice delivery. This is in consonance with Poston's (2013) statement that a specific issue or image is brought to the forefront and becomes the standard by which a viewer judges a candidate, in this case, the NDC political party.

5.6 Pacing

The still photos are introduced and held for more than 5 seconds to give the viewer a chance to get the information being sent accordingly. This intensifies the viewers' emotions as it urges them to contemplate very well on each photo. The slow pacing of the photos showing successful projects done by John Mahama as against the old state of the country before he was elected as President gives ample emotional space to contemplate a

stronger and progressive Ghana. When viewed more holistically, pacing helps the viewer to connect each photo and elevate them all with importance.

In this ad, the creators utilised this technique to actually communicate to viewers the faults of the incumbent president John Mahama by showing 14 seconds of humiliation the president had to go through while giving a speech at an ECOWAS summit.

5.7 Picture Distortion

The videos that are displayed in this ad are colour videos, but the ad creators distorted it to give it a poor outcome by rendering it in a poor gray scale colour to make it lose its effectiveness in the eyes of the viewer. On the 25 seconds mark, the next video scene was also blurred to give the character poor quality. According to Poston (2013), ads use image distortions as a way to project meaning in a decidedly negative way. In this ad, the ad creators intended to give the negative impression about the message being sent across.

5.8 Graphics (Text)

Among all the ads, this one used bold fonts to indicate the infrastructural projects done by President Mahama's regime as compared to most of the political ads analysed. A picture of President John Mahama is placed on the right side of the screen with a background of a well-resourced Library setting indicating his contribution to education in the Volta Region of Ghana.

Also an inscription reading "The Nkwanta Community day SHS is one of the 200 constructed" is employed by the ad creators to frame Mr. Mahama as a leader who holds the education of the people in the Volta Region in high esteem.

From the 20 second mark, ad creators used a hash tag with the inscription "JM TOASO" meaning John Mahama should continue with his good work to remind viewers of the need to vote and maintain the incumbent president in office.

5.9 Pictures

Nkana (2015) posits that pictures are devoted evidence of reality. They tell, or are supposed to tell stories more than words. In this ad, creators deliberately used a montage (the "before" and "now" pictures) which could really tell a lot of stories for viewers to make a decision themselves. A montage focuses on a particular themes, persons, or idea using images, colours, sounds and lighting which are connected to each other through editing technology (Dancyger, 1997). Graber (2001) states that pictures are valuable in shaping attitudes about people because they can be used to convey a sense of credibility, gain the attention of audience members, and evoke feelings. As viewers see the pictures used in this ad, the effects has a priming dimension on what to think about it, and that allows them to judge or make an informed decision on the candidate (Mr. Mahama) in the ad.

5.10 Music

The ad started with a background song by Miley Cyrus titled "Wrecking Ball". The song connotes how the hope she had in her partner was wrecked carelessly after trusting him. Brader (2006) indicates that music in TV ads serves as an essential device for conveying meaning. The ad creators used that idea to represent how the NDC promised to deliver on certain things but upon assumption of office lost touch with the people because they are unable to fulfill the promises they made to Ghanaians in 2012. Instead, after winning the public's trust, they used the power to 'wreck' the nation as implied in the title of the song 'wrecking ball'. The symbol of NPP flying up high across Ghana signifies a renewed hope and portrays a wind of change that all must embrace.

At the 16-second mark in this ad, a popular song by Korede Bello, a Nigerian Artist is played at the background. The Artist's music had a strong association with the youth during the election period. The ad uses simple musical phrasing to relate to the period of the elections, and the actions of John Mahama pointing his index finger up in the skies and the artist mentions in the song "if you win elections, God wins". Hansen (1989) affirms that the use of music in TV ads is the primary means by which an emotional connection is made with the listener and viewer.

5.11 Editing

Pictures of John Mahama's appears from the 16 second mark to the 20 second mark to inform viewers of the candidate who is responsible for the educational development the ad is referring to. In this ad, the creators having mind of framing the incumbent president as incompetent, clueless and an embarrassing character who does not fit to be voted for. This was done by strategically cutting Mr. Mahama's speech to emphasise on the faults made by him while talking at the summit. Kaid and Davidson (1986) posit that it is possible to focus the attention of the viewer in ways that reinforces a candidate's image and to create excitement around the candidate through editing, but in this ad, viewers rather sees faults and mistakes of the NDC candidate in an embarrassing

state in the NPP ad, and this communicates a negative impression on the minds of viewers rather than Kaid and Davidson's assertion. Based on the reviewed literature for this study and the theories that underpinned this study, some themes were derived from the videos studied and well are discussed in this section.

5.12 Manipulation

The first scene of the NPP ad 1 was strategically rendered in a blurry grayscale picture by the ad creators. The grayscale nature of the video gives viewers the impression that it is old and needs less attention, and the blurry aspect of it makes it uncomfortable for viewers' consumption. Indeed, the content of the grayscale (black and white) video was a statement made by the then presidential aspirant, Mr. Mahama in the year 2008. This supports West (2005) claim that grayscale or black and white colours often give negative connotations. He described political achievements based on the comparison of records "*as a recipe for mediocrity*". This statement was refuted by another black and white video recorded after he had won the election, this time in 2016. This manipulation of scenes in the ad was done to, first of all, refute all claims of the incumbent government that political race is not dependent on the comparison of records. Secondly, it was manipulated to cause an indictment on the personality of the incumbent leader. Poston (2013) asserts that in the case of black and white and grayscale videos, the viewer may feel a heightened sense of displeasure. Zettl (1999) asserts that the use of black-and-white in ads (still picture or video) makes the viewer feel what is going on in the ad rather than to cognitively observe it. In the case of this ad, the use of the black and white (grayscale) colour for In another vein, viewers would not have paid attention to Mr. Mahama's speeches because it is rendered in grayscale, and that makes it lose its effectiveness unlike the full coloured scene of the NPP intermediary which actually gets viewers to cognitively observe and listen to what he is saying. Ad creators also used the idea of framing to highlight what the intermediary was saying by pitching high the volume as against Mr. Mahama's speeches which had the volume pitched lower than the intermediaries.

Some scenes in the ads were all depicted in grayscale with a nice and powerful voice over of a narrator indicating the flaws in Mr. Mahama's personality. A critical analysis of those ads indicates the use of grayscale (black and white) in the scenes involving President John Mahama, a thematically sad music in the background coupled with the imperative voice over of the narrator all emphasizes how incompetent, clueless and embarrassing, the president of Ghana has been. Also in editing the video, boldly capitalized red coloured alphabets, which were mostly underlined, were used to show any negativity the personality the video is indicting has caused. Greene, Bell and Boyer (1983), argued that warm types of colours such as yellow, red and orange have been found to have a greater effect on attention compared to the cool type of colours like brown and gray. Red colour is being attached with stronger emotion or feeling compared to the other type of colours (Dzulkifli & Mustafar, 2013). These support the reason the ad creators used the red colour to lay emphasis on the key words to enable them get the attention of viewers, and subsequently help them to realise that Mr. Mahama should not be their choice. This manipulative style of laying emphasis on "incompetent", "clueless" and "embarrassing" is also a way of framing the incumbent president as such. In the final strokes of the ad, the video becomes colourful again with the popular tune of the NPP to showcase the flag bearer of the party. This manipulation of colours, cast, music and text editing was to indict the flag bearer of the NDC and hoist the flag bearer of the NPP as a better candidate. Manipulation of sound was also used by the NPP in their ad 1 to emphasise their message over that of the NDC. Price (2011) says that the main functions of sound are to supply or add information, to establish mood and add aesthetic energy, and to supplement the rhythmic structure.

The use of the colours, cast, sound alteration and repetition all help the NPP to manipulate the previous speeches to create a negative effect for the NDC and eventually get to manipulate their minds on the incompetence of the NDC.

5.13 Consistency

Consistency was very key in the creation of both the NDC and NPP ads. In promoting education in two of the NDC ads (ad 1 and 3), the ad creators used still and motion pictures, and videos of students and teachers to help convey the very message in the ads. Similarly, two of the ads (ad 1 and 3) of the NPP targeted the personality of Mr. Mahama. In those two ads of the NPP, coloured videos were converted to black and white and grayscale to portray a negative effect to viewers about the deceit and incompetence of Mr. Mahama and his government. In all the three NDC ads that were selected for the study, two of them talked about education and water. This consistency gives viewers a positive impression that Mr. Mahama and his government prioritize and value education, and this was evident in the ads. Consistency was also seen in the use of background music for the ads. The ads creators used the same background music for all the selected NDC ads. Again, the consistent use of the signature endings of all the three videos of the NDC has a great impact on viewers. This consistency gives viewers a feeling of dependency on the NDC party. It also tells viewers that the party is focused on one initiative at a time, in the sense that the ads had same endings, same picture, same "JMT0aso" hashtag, same

printed ballot paper design and background song. Same can be said about the NPP. The slightest difference with the NPP is that of ad 1 and 3, only two of the ending signatures of their three ads had same endings, same picture, same printed ballot paper design and background song. All the ending signatures of both NDC and NPP ads lasted for the same period of time which was done in 5 seconds. The theme of consistency was also glaring with the active usage of camera and its movements in almost all the ads. This technique also played its role in conveying the message to viewers successfully.

5.14 Religion

Both the NDC and NPP ads analysed adopted the use of religious themes. In all the NDC ads, a peculiar characteristic of how the ads end is a scene which uses still pictures to portray the incumbent president, Mr. John Mahama, standing and wearing a smiley face, pointing his index finger straight up into the skies and eventually looking up the sky. In the background is a popular hit song, "God win" by a Nigerian singer, Korede Bello. The song is edited to a point where the lyric sounds "*if you win elections, God win*". The editing of the video was to portray the incumbent president as one whose achievement is solely dependent on God. Even if he wins the election it is the Supreme Being God, who has won it for him. Religion indoctrinates with the idea that any person you share the same belief with is considered part of your family. Hence the NDC ads portraying the incumbent as one who depends on God was to appeal to the conscience of all religiously inclined Ghanaians that he is a 'family member' hence, they should support him.

In the NPP video 2, a thrilling theatrical display of animations was religiously themed to suggest their candidate, Nana Akufo-Addo as a saviour of Ghana. The thematic display was to reflect the religious prophecy of Christians who believe that their saviour who was taken up in the heavens will come back again to deliver them from their misery into eternal joy. The second coming, they believe, will be the same as he was taken up in the heavens and all eyes will see. In the NPP video 2, the whirling clouds that moved across Ghana, as a sign to indicate the second coming of "*the saviour*" is near. Eventually this thrilling announcement of an incoming saviour is culminated with the NPP's flag bearer appearing in the heavens as the Christian prophecy suggests. Finally, the revelation of the flag bearer is met with excitement and endorsement of his candidacy. This was exhibited by the cast putting up their thumbs (their power to vote) as a sign of devotion and dedication to the messiah out-doored.

In the NPP ad 3, the theme of religion was again used to remind viewers that the fight for victory for the NPP is in the hands of the Lord. This was clearly displayed in a text form which reads "*The battle continues to be the Lord's. Let's keep our faith and believe that He will see us through this. The NPP will restore the trust this great nation has lost*". This is also a sign of reverence and reliance on the Almighty God for help. The ad creators managed to frame the presidential candidates of NPP and NDC as leaders who hold religion in high esteem.

5.15 Appeal

The theme of appeal appeared in all the ads. Music, colour, camera and graphics were all used to appeal to the conscience of viewers while conveying the message.

Music played its role in appealing to the conscience of viewers as well. Diamond and Bates (1988) argue that music has the ability to produce feelings of commonality and familiarity. In the period of the 2016 presidential elections, the background music used by the NDC in all their ads was a popular Nigerian song titled "God win" composed by a Nigerian Artist called Korede Bello. The ad creators used that to enable the party get the attention of the youth to align themselves with the ads and possibly support the NDC party. According to Poston (2013), younger voters may be more inclined to identify with the ad in its familiar invocation of rock themes. Jillson (2014) also posits that popular music also appeals to the majority of listeners. The bird eye camera technique is another strategy that was used in the videos to give viewers a wider and broader spectrum of the particular images that are to be shown. In the NDC ad 1, this technique was used to give viewers an impression of the magnificent nature of the "E Block" buildings that were constructed by the NDC government. This makes it a sight to behold. The same camera technique was employed in getting the viewers attracted to the newly constructed Ridge Hospital and other images shown in the ad. The main aim of using these techniques in ads is to appeal to the senses of the audience. Once they are attracted to the ad, then they would start paying attention to the message that the ad is conveying.

The close-up shot also aids in giving the presidential candidate a very smart look. This helps in conveying the message of how young and energetic Mr Mahama is to convince electorates that he is youthful and very capable of understanding and meeting their needs. This technique of the camera movement and the colour combination were used to appeal to the psychological needs of the viewers.

In conveying a message in an ad, the use of bright colours is key because, it helps attract attention of viewers. Bright colour backgrounds were used in some of the ads to achieve contrast and also help in sending the message to viewers. In the NPP ad 2, the ad creators used the three cloud-like streams of red, white and blue

to achieve an appealing effect to enable them get the attention of viewers. The NPP ad creators took advantage of the use of full-colour videos in their ads to positively appeal to the conscience of the viewers. The use of full colour in the ads also played its role in conveying a non-verbal communication to the audience. It was also realized that most of the videos and images were very sharp and this gives the ad a very appealing outcome. This sharpness or clarity of the images and videos was due to the artistic and strategic ideas of the ad creators in choosing a good camera for shooting the ads.

In sending a message in an ad, one has to be mindful of the arrangement of the graphic elements as well as the other components. In analyzing the videos, it was realized that the graphic elements were properly placed in all the ads. The logo, text, vectors and pictures were well placed to give it an appealing look.

The voice delivery was also one of the elements that helped the ads become appealing, attractive and persuasive. The nice and pleasant voice over at the tail end of all the NPP ads appeal to the viewer's sense of hearing. Voice overs played key roles in catching people's attention to the ad and through the use of very strong, commanding and clear voices. The voice artists always imbue the script with emotion.

VI. CONCLUSIONS

The findings of the study indicates that both political parties, the NPP and NDC, employed visual aesthetic components and aural techniques for their campaign ads which mainly focused on social matters like education, water, state of the economy, infrastructure and healthcare. The study was underlined by the framing theory which talk about making an aspect of a perceived reality more salient than others and by so doing enabling listeners or viewers make evaluations and decisions for themselves.

The study further showed that all the NPP ads relied more on attacking their opponents, that is the NDC and the incumbent president Mr. Mahama, while all the NDC ads relied on informing viewers or electorates on the strides made in education, provision of water and healthcare.

The framing theory was used to explain how the NDC ad creators formed an impression of Mr. Mahama as a competent and focused leader who has the development of Ghana at heart. The theory was also used to explain how the NPP framed and also projected their candidate Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo as a "messiah" and one who would end the economic crisis and corruption that have engulfed the country. With all these manipulations of visual and aural techniques in creating the ads to make it appealing, it is the voter or electorates that is at the mercy of the ad creator's distortions of reality just to get their attention.

In conclusion, this study shows that the two political parties based their ads on pertinent social issues with the strategic and technical application of visual aesthetics and aural components to develop ads that communicate the messages in the selected ads effectively. All the ads tried to attain either a positive or a negative effect on the viewers or electorates which allowed them to conduct their own evaluation that would lead to making a decision to vote for either NPP or NDC.

VII. RECOMMENDATIONS

Future researchers might consider the 2016 ads in terms of the effects of the visual components and aural techniques on voters. Also, scholars can analyse these ads and other political campaign ads thematically.

This study recommends that TV ad creators for the political parties should involve voters participation and voices prior to the production of the ads to enable them get the views on the application of these visual and aural tactics in the ads.

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