

AESTHETIC ANALYSIS OF UNFAIR TRIAL AS EMOTIONAL PROPAGANDA APPEAL IN NIGERIA'S PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN

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ABSTRACT: *Disinformation in image projection seeks to achieve irrational protest consideration in message consumers of political commercials. It explains why a candidate's image is subjected to emotional evaluation by the electorate, in an election situation. The Unfair Trial advertisement, used to separate Goodluck Jonathan of the PDP from Muhammadu Buhari of the APC, in 2015 presidential election in Nigeria, was the basis of this aesthetic analysis. Four aesthetic appreciational factors of environment, language, costume and action were used to determine how presented pictures, text and sound were expected to affect the television commercial consumers' psyche. It is believed that emotion, introduced in political arguments, was likely to influence voter behaviour against incivility, capable of translating into loss of voter support for the disparaged candidate. It means that image projection of candidates at election should be done with dexterity, as to achieve the desired communication objective in political commercials. It is when arguments are elevated to rational discourse that emotional considerations become inconsequential in adverse contemplation for any particular candidate at elections.*

KEYWORDS: Aesthetics, emotion, propaganda, appeal.

INTRODUCTION

Political persuasion is the major objective of television commercials, used for election campaigns. It addresses the mind of message consumers and directs them to the idea expected to evoke sympathy in favour of a particular candidate, at an election. It is an argument on the acceptance-rejection scale of human consideration, designed specifically to influence voter behaviour. It is the extent to which the electorate is affected that determines the efficacy of emotion as a propaganda appeal strategy in political communication.

The television commercial shows how fundamental frames of picture units where blended by transitional devices in the achievement of a synergy as film. It reveals how aesthetic considerations work in artistic creations. The film, therefore, is what the audience appreciated as television commercial, presented to viewers for the realisation of a specific objective. It means, that the crafting of a film is an exercise in aesthetic considerations, where harmony is expected to excite believability, and acceptability of a canvassed idea. It becomes an aesthetic appreciation where the evaluation is made without any personal attachment to the used artistic elements other than for pleasure and emotional excitement (Hospers, 1969), like in the current appraisal of *Unfair Trial*, as used in the 2015 presidential campaign in Nigeria.

How message interacts with their receivers through used signs and symbols as artistic elements, in order to generate meaning, is an essential intellectual consideration in political communication. This semiotic consideration (Fiske, 1999), explains the significance of word choice, sentence structuring and presentation style in message content and their desired influence on voter behaviour at election. It is the convincing capability of the presented idea to move a mass audience, to support or accept a particular idea over another that defines electoral success arising from political communication, such as the television commercial used in the Nigerian situation, titled *Unfair Trial*. This study therefore, sought to evaluate how artistic elements are used in a significant form (Bell, 1969) for the achievement of an emotional appeal, as a propaganda strategy in political advertising.

Election campaign sometimes, witness hate speeches and name-calling, as propaganda approaches for swinging voter support to a particular candidate. The political communication uses television as the medium for reaching a mass audience simultaneously with the same message. It means that this analysis, as a study, is not only relevant to human constituencies globally, but it is also significant in understanding how artistic elements blend to produce the desired emotional effect in political television commercials.

Statement of Problem

How to affect the sensibility of the electorate, in order to influence compliance to a specific desired viewpoint, is a problem in political communication. Propagandists, therefore, use various strategies to achieve that communication objective among which “name-calling”, as an emotional appeal is one. It is believed that information which is conscious in orienting feeling against a particular candidate in an election, would adversely affect voter support for that candidate, more so, when presented in an unsuspectable manner.

This analytical study of *Unfair Trial* assesses how aesthetic elements relate to appreciational factors, as to affect voter behaviour in the 2015 presidential election in Nigeria. It is the level of emotional appeal, generated by the used propaganda strategy in an artistic manner that would determine the realization of the television commercial’s objective.

Study Objective

Four research objectives were set for this qualitative study as follows:

1. To understand the environment of presented characters as being capable of generating any sympathy from the electorate.
2. To explain if the costume of characters justified message content within the political environment, as to arouse sympathy from the electorate.
3. To evaluate if used language in the commercial is capable of evoking sympathy from the electorate.
4. To know how the actions of artistes in the television commercial are expected to attract protest against a considered political opponent.

Research Question

The four research questions that guided the artistic analysis were as follows:

1. Does the political environment of the canvassed issue justify the tagging of a political candidate as “a dictator that lacks compassion”?
2. How does the costume of the political candidates deal with emotional appeal in the television commercial?
3. How would the language used in the television commercial, evoke sympathy from the electorate?
4. Is there any relationship between the “name tag” given to the different political opponents and their actions in the television commercial, as artistes?

THEORETICAL UNDERPINNING

In the political television commercial under evaluation, tags or labels were used as referents in the identification of political opponents by the propagandist, as the message source. For instance, Muhammadu Buhari was substituted with “dictator” while Goodluck Jonathan was substituted with “democrat”. The essence was to separate the presidential candidates with referents considered apt in projecting a desired image. The referent, therefore, reduced political choice to either a “dictator” or a “democrat”. It shows that the commercial provided information about the political candidates in a manner which “reduces uncertainty or the number of alternative possibilities in the political situation (Schramm, 1974).

Also, the contextual situation requires a political action by the electorate as viewers of the television commercial. The used referents were intended to attract voter attention to the qualities and characters of the political candidates. The provided information was designed to help the voter, “structure and organize those aspects of the environment, which are relevant to a situation in which he must act” (Roberts, 1984 p.350). the assigned tags by the persuader were, therefore, expected to elicit empathy and stimulate emotion in voter reasoning so as to affect opinion adversely towards Buhari, as a presidential candidate in the 2015 election in Nigeria.

The artistic rendition of used words as political concept in the television commercial, led to the portrayal of Buhari as a soldier with dictatorial tendencies, unlike Jonathan as a civilian with a democratic disposition. The *Unfair Trial*, therefore, represents an exercise where artistic elements were used in substantiating political concepts, designed to affect emotional considerations in voter response and support. It exhibits how conjured political concepts are subjected to unscientific artistic proof, in the establishment of argument, designed to affect voter behaviour.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The association theory in communication, postulated by this author in 2007, is the normative consideration applied to the subject under review. It explains that substitution of an issue with a referent, which projects a desired meaning in the views of an audience, produces the expected

response, provided the appropriate referent is used in a contextual situation. If the used referent is apt in describing a subject in a substantiated artistic manner, then, understanding stimulates action from the message consumer in the required perspective, within the communication scenario.

The association theory is considered suitable for this artistic analysis. It relates feelings with actions in the realization of a specified objective. In the *Unfair Trial*, Buhari as a Head of State was related to an arbitrary power in the murder of Gladys Iyama, a widowed single parent and mother of two miserable-looking children. Buhari's action in the commercial was, therefore, associated with brutality and lack of compassion. The theory, therefore, explains why a dreaded dictator should not be allowed to govern a decent society, where the rule of law prevails.

The essence of using the association theory in this analytical study is to show how a word or group of words with specific meaning, substitutes the brand image or the candidate, in the garb desired by the propagandist in achieving a preconceived fatality to the political aspiration of a presidential candidate at the election. It implies that a repulsive meaning must be generated in the minds of the electorate, as vital in casting protest votes against the disparaged candidate. The referent, therefore, transfers an image unto the candidate, expected to be inimical to his success at the presidential election of March, 2015 in Nigeria.

CONCEPTUAL DISCUSSION

Unfair trial used instantaneous transition of scenes, presented in a specific order to achieve a specific storyline for effective communication. It adopted cut as a transitional device in creating the picture of the fate of Nigerian citizens, represented by Gladys Iyama and her children, in the hands of the "Head of State", identified as General Muhammadu Buhari. The transitional device is the bridge used in crossing the viewers from one event location to another or from one shot to another [Zettle, 2000]. The essence was to create aesthetically acceptable experience that could be pleasurable to feeling and emotion [Beadsley, 1958], as a communication experience.

The semiotic school in communication, with proponents, like Woolacott [1977], De Saussure [1974] and even Peirce [1931-58], believes that communication involves the generation, production and exchange of meaning. It relates to the strategy for actualizing understanding, based on the use of text within the cultural context of implied meaning. It is the universality of used codes (Fiske, 2000) that generates the shared meaning in an interactive situation. The text presented in the television commercial, purporting to explain the fate of Gladys Iyama in a trial situation, portends judgment passed for her execution. Nothing however was said of her offence and the nature of expected punishment, as to determine whether the woman was guilty or not. Schramm (1974, p.15) reminds us that "the message exists as a sign or a collection of signs with no meaning of their own except that which cultural learning enables a receiver to read into them". It is this gap in information provision by the message source that was expected to be filled through psychological closure (Owuamalam, 2007) in the achievement of a desired emotional appeal. The omission or information void represents disinformation which encourages irrational considerations in the content of the political television commercial.

Again, the process school in communication with proponents, like Shannon and Weaver (1949), Lasswell (1974), Gerbner (1956) and Berlo (1960), believes that communication

transfers message from a source to a receiver. The transmitted nature of presented idea is expected to carry an idea with its preconceived objective to a receiver, who shares in the same used codes in the communication experience (Owuamalam, 2010). *Unfair Trial*, therefore, projected images in a despicable manner and transferred or transmitted them through the television medium, in order to create a conflict situation in the minds of the message consumers, in choosing between civility and incivility as alternatives. It is the cognitive attribute (Oskamp, 1977), inherent in the distorted information that was expected to generate an emotional flux in the electorate, as television audience, based on the presented circumstantial expediencies. The essence was to persuade a disposition which supports the expectation of the television message source (Borcher, 2002), which in the *Unfair Trial* was to reject Buhari “a dictator that shows no mercy” and choose Jonathan “a compassionate democrat”.

Unfair Trial is a communication experience in the realm of propaganda. It contains a set of messages aimed at influencing the opinions of the electorate and a mass voter behaviour (Graber, 1981), in favour of Goodluck Jonathan, as a presidential candidate in the March 28, 2015 presidential election in Nigeria. The message source, as propagandists, used “name calling” to discredit Buhari as Jonathan’s opponent and arouse prejudice against him. Buhari was labelled “a dictator that shows no mercy”. The aim of labelling was to enable “the audience to construct a negative opinion or feeling about the person, idea or belief that the propagandist wants them to denounce”, (Agbanu, 2014).

Again, the employment of fear-appeal was obvious in the television commercial as a communication experience (Assal, 1981; Shimp, 2000). The choice of words in describing Buhari in that television commercial as “dictator” sends goose pimples down the spines of the message consumer, confronted by an impending devastating choice. The word was used to create panic and fear in the electorate whose only alternative to relaxation and confidence rested in Jonathan as a “democrat”. This view is further supported by the description of Buhari as a man that “shows no mercy”, while Jonathan was presented as “compassionate”. It is the generated meaning of the used words, within the context of political considerations that shows how emotional appeal was designed to affect voter behaviour.

The thesis of the communication strategy was hinged on a belief that appropriately addressed message to the electorate would achieve the desired effect, where a discerning impulsive element was introduced to arrest the psyche of the message consumer. The used words, therefore, were designed to evoke emotion, capable of re-orienting public opinion, as to translate beliefs to a change in voter attitude towards the disparaged candidate and a positive electoral disposition to the expected political objective. The import is that politicians use metaphor, euphemism, irony and sarcasm, to define how meanings of words are tinkered to serve a specific political goal (Owuamalam, 2005). It means, therefore, that all communication is purposeful and deliberate.

Candidates in the 2015 presidential election in Nigeria were treated as brands, within the same political constituency, as a market. The brand image strategy (Kotler and Armstrong, 2004) was used in creating an image about the candidate in the minds of the television commercial consumer. It used artistic presentations, crafted in a specific garb, to separate the candidates as brands. It thenafter, used consistency in image projection, regularity in message presentation and frequency in consumer exposure to the message, in planting the desired effect in the minds

of the electorate as audience of the political television commercial (Kaid, 1976). The essence was to control the mind of the voters through an impressionable mental picturization that dominates any conscious consideration of the political candidates. Ozoh (2013) believes that the strategy is a deeply rooted in psychological appeals”, like in the case of this analysed *Unfair Trial*.

Analytical Approaches

This is a qualitative study of *Unfair Trial* as a persuasive experience in mass communication. It involves an understanding of the commercials content, its message and how artistic elements were used in delivering information to the Nigerian electorate as viewers of the television commercial. The analysis, therefore, dealt with the nature of presented content and the medium of its delivery. The essence was to establish how political persuasion is conducted artistically in order to affect voter behaviour from a political communication perspective.

Synopsis of TV Commercial

Unfair Trial is a political television commercial presented to show how Muhammadu Buhari as Head of State in Nigeria, caused the death of a single parent “Gladys Iyama” who had two deformed children, as presented in the advertisement. The children pleaded with Nigerians to beg the Head of State (Buhari) not to kill their mother, as not to make them orphans. A letter was scrolled, probably portending to be the appeal for clemency to the Head of State. The plea was ignored and the woman was shot. Buhari was seen dressed in a General’s military attire as he rode and smiled after the shooting of Iyama. Buhari was, therefore, introduced as “a dictator that shows no mercy”. Another photograph of his opponent, Goodluck Jonathan, was shown as a modern and compassionate leader. The message source urged Nigerian voters to reject Buhari and choose Goodluck Jonathan.

Media Use Considerations

Film is an audio-visual presentation designed to convey a specific process message from a source to an audience, who are expected to consume its content (Owuamalam, 2003, p.17). It provides a communication experience for sharing meaning. It means that the recorded and stored content has a recall characteristic in the form of either celluloid or an electronic storage device. The import is that the film was recalled at will and presented at times when the audience share of the delivery medium, like the television, was considered highest. In Nigeria, the source chose the news break on national network news time of the Nigerian Television Authority, NTA, from 8.00-9.00pm GMT to expose the stations audience to the film, as political television commercial.

The film addressed the pitfall of television as a transient and ephemeral medium through its repeated presentation on a regular basis, (every night since January, 2015 till Monday, 23rd March, 2015). It also used the redundancy approach in providing the same content to the same audience at the same interval, in order to harass their sensibilities on a consistent and frequent basis. The essence was to establish a persistence of vision (Owuamalam, 2003), capable of forming a picture in the heads of the viewers (Lipman, 1974) that would affect voter opinion about Buhari as a dictator. The provided recall ability also addressed the transient nature of television programmes, as communication formats.

It is probably, the rapidity and frequency in the presentation of a “dictator” that is expected to introduce anxiety and fear in the electorate, within a democratic setting, like in Nigeria. The

fear appeal was, therefore, used as the propaganda strategy for affecting the opinion and belief of the electorate, in the psychological realm. It was anticipated that since safety and security ranked high in Maslow's hierarchy of needs, then the viewer who is made to be afraid would reject the source of freight and accept a peaceful alternative.

The choice of television, as medium for the political communication, seemed appropriate where it is considered that the audio-visual characteristics of that channel, made it easier for the message source to tell a story with text, commentary and photographs for the generation of a desired picture in the heads of the television audience. It is the picture as an interpretation of events that creates the image, expected to generate a protest vote against incivility. The protest votes as suggested by the message source, were to be given to Jonathan in the March 28th, 2015, presidential election in Nigeria. Such votes would represent a rejection for dictatorship and an endorsement for democracy.

The television commercial extensively used the Nigerian Television Authority (a public owned TV station), NTA, for accessing voters as viewers of television commercial. The NTA prides itself as "the largest television network in Africa" and reaches more than 30 million viewers." (TV guide, 2014). The import is that if Nigeria has less than 80 million voters and more than 30 million of them could be reached with the message of *Unfair Trial* by a "dictator", then a substantial number of the electorate, capable of rejecting incivility would have been accessed for the benefit of Goodluck Jonathan.

The theatrical presentation of the television commercial shows how artistes respond to circumstances in which they find themselves, within a contextual environment. The characters represented how persons deal with issues, like love and compassion. Love was not evident in an "unfair trial" situation. Also, compassion was presented as absent in the rejection of the appeal from Iyama's children to the Head of State, Buhari. Again, it is the lack of affection and affinity that extols the emotional appeal embedded in the television commercial under study.

The performance environment showed Muhammadu Buhari in a full military attire and as a Head of State. It means that since Buhari is no longer in the Army after retirement, then the presented scenes were a **flashback** of an event in the past, situated between 1983 and 1985, when Muhammadu Buhari was the Head of State in Nigeria. It was an activity which occurred in the period of military regime in the country, (assuming it ever happened), that is brought for consideration in 2015 under a democratic civil rule in Nigeria. The **costume** of the artistes and the commentary made about characters in the film confirmed the exact **time** of the performance, which dates more than 30 years ago, when many of the voters in Nigeria, were not even born. It is the naivety of such voters and duration memory loss of even those who lived in the military era that the presented television commercial was designed to exploit. The storyline and performance delivery for artistic appreciation was a plot that explored the use of feedback in the creation of a persistence of vision for the generation of an intended voter behaviour.

Aesthetic Appreciation of *Unfair Trial*

The use of **colour** in the costume of the artistes was symbolic in the generation of meaning. For instance, Buhari was shown in a military uniform as a General who "shows no mercy". Goodluck Jonathan was presented in a flowing gown, reminiscent of the Nigerian politician of the modern times. The pictures created a sharp contrast between anachronistic dictator,

represented in that film by Buhari as against the contemporary democrat, represented by Jonathan. It is the rejection of the archaic despotic tendencies of dictators that was canvassed as composed to civility, as experienced in a modern democracy, like current day Nigeria. It was a call for the rejection of the ancient and the acceptance of the modern that signified the emotional appeal, used in the political communication as a propaganda strategy.

Sound was presented in two forms, in the television commercial. It was first used as voice in the rendition of message as the information content of communication (Schramm, 1974). The artistes used sound to communicate their experience, like the plea from Iyama's children to Nigerians. The mute nature of the scrolled letter was designed to excite anxiety, as the viewers tried to match its content with the appeal made by those children in respect of their mother. The tonal quality of the said appeal, as well as that of the heard commentary, showed an exercise in pitch and timbre.

Also, the indexical sound (Owuamalam, 2007) of the gun-shot, heard when Iyama was supposedly killed, sent chills into the nerves of viewers, to confirm the murder from a man, "who shows no mercy," as the spent bullet shells were exhibited. The experience from a psychological closure perspective was expected to affect the viewers' emotion and generate the desired protest against Buhari, which was to be exploited by Goodluck Jonathan in the March 28, 2015 presidential election in Nigeria.

Communication Consideration

Communication is an exchange of meaning. It is the sharing of experience between persons involved in an interaction. In such a scenario, there is no permanent source or receiver because the feedback process converts the status of participants from source to receiver and the reverse. It is designed to achieve a specific objective as intended by the initiator who uses either verbal or non-verbal codes, as means of expression and articulation of an idea.

Language as an appreciational factor in artistic performance, explains how the artistes respond to issues in the television commercial. For instance, the plea from Iyama's children were rendered in English language so as to reach and be understood by so many viewers, since the used language is the *lingua franca* in Nigeria. It is probably, how the message was rendered in a pitiable tone that was designed to arouse the expected sympathy. The children claimed that they would have no mother if she was killed by the Head of State (Buhari) and they would also become orphans. This verbal expression from the children of Iyama was pitiable as a discourse and, expected to generate sympathy from the viewers. The communication experience set the stage for evaluating the action of the Head of State. That was a verbal rendition of language in a code that was universally understood (Fiske, 1999).

The mistreatment meted to a woman and a mother, represented by Gladys Iyama, is a gender-related consideration. It was calculated to stir a protest from women and mothers against someone who "showed no mercy" on one of its kind. It was the votes from this demographic class that was targeted for Goodluck Jonathan. It was the use of the word, "mother" by Iyama's children that extolled the gender-related consideration in the political television commercial.

The still photograph of Gladys Iyama and the picture of her deformed children were also an exercise on how non-verbal communication interacts with viewers, in order to generate meaning. The choice of an old black and white photograph showing the side-view of unkempt

Gladys was also designed to show that the “dictator” does not care about whom he wanted to deal with. Again, since such representation was to be interpreted as the “down-trodden” or the masses within the electorate, it becomes obvious as to why those represented as “in dire need”, within the society, should reject someone without “compassion” and “shows no mercy”.

The choice of name for the women in the film, as a political television commercial, was also expected to attract protest from other segments of the society. The purported dictator is a moslem who was shown as not having any mercy on Christians, since Gladys is a christian English name. It is calculated that where christians protest against incivility to one of its own by a moslem, then, they would have no other justification not to protest against Buhari, by voting Jonathan, a christian as one of its own. It is this religious consideration in used name, as a means of communication that gives credence to the assertion as herein made. The use of an English name as opposed to an Arabic name further substantiates the viewpoint.

Also, the choice of the woman’s surname as “Iyama” portends an ethnic connotation of someone from the Igbo ethnic origin in the South-East geopolitical zone in Nigeria, comprising Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu and Imo State. The name is also apparent in the Igbo of Delta State, as well as Ikwerre and Etche of Rivers State and parts of northern Cross River State in Nigeria. It means that persons within the area would become offended where one of theirs was shown “no mercy” by the projected “dictator” in the commercial. It is the protest vote from the areas against Buhari that the television commercial targets in particular and urged them to vote a “compassionate democrat”, Jonathan, as the alternative, at the 28th March, 2015 presidential election.

The performance **environment** of the event shown in the political television commercial, defined its contextual aesthetics (Owuamalam, 2007). Gladys Iyama and her children lived in the era when Muhammadu Buhari was the Head of State. The use of “Head of State” as a title, located the environment within the military interregnum in Nigeria and outside civil democratic situations. This view is supported by the military uniform of a General, worn by Buhari in the commercial. It was under the military situation that Muhammadu Buhari was projected as a “dictator” who “shows no mercy”. The scenario is different in a civilian dispensation where civility prevails.

It is the omission of the contextual considerations of performance environment that introduced disinformation, which was expected to adversely affect the psyche of the electorate, as consumers of the television commercial. There is, therefore, no presented alternative for choice among candidates within the same contextual consideration, since Goodluck Jonathan is performing within the ambits of civil democracy at least from a rational perspective. The assertion explains why the said television commercial relished on the emotional plane as propaganda strategy.

The used **costume** in the television commercial was also intended to play an emotive role in the achievement of its intended objective, to ensure that the electorate “vote Goodluck Jonathan, the compassionate democrat,” in the March 28, 2015 presidential election in Nigeria. For instance, Buhari was seen in a military uniform, reminiscent of military dictatorship in the 80’s and 90’s in Nigeria. Iyama’s children had no clothes, depicting poverty, even as destitute. Jonathan was clad in a flamboyant dress, usually associated with modern day politicians in Nigeria. The “agbada” worn by Jonathan is symbolic as a dress code, particularly in the South-

West geopolitical zone. His cap is common in the North-Central geo-political zone. It is believed that a “democrat” in the garb of those political constituencies should attract support from voters who identified with his costume. It is reasoned that where voters from the six states of the South-West geopolitical zone as well as those from the other six States in the North-Central zone vote for Jonathan, then his successor at the presidential election of March 28, 2015, in Nigeria would have been enhanced.

The costumes, therefore, showed how the poor received no compassion from the dictator and urged voters to reject the despot and vote the contemporary. It signified the call for rejecting the archaic (dictator) and acceptance of the modern (democrat).

The **action** of the artistes in the film showed how characters interact among themselves in order to generate meaning. For instance it was how Iyama’s children reacted to the imminent death of their mother that explains their predicament. It is their plea to Nigerians that exposed their travail in the hands of the “Head of State”. The photograph of a smiling Army General, riding on an open vehicle and not perturbed by the case of Iyama and her children, helped in painting the desired picture of a despot. It is the gun shot sound and the picture of spent bullets, signifying “no mercy” in the *Unfair Trial* and death of Iyama that portrayed Buhari as an autocrat who should not be voted for in a democracy. Again, it was the emotional appeal of projecting Buhari as an autocrat that the commercial urged voters to reject and vote Jonathan as a democrat, since no information was provided as to substantiate the voter’s claim in the same commercial.

Characterization was considered for specific communication purposes to give substance to language, environment, costume and action in the commercial. For instance, Gladys Iyama as a “convicted person” in the *Unfair Trial*, was speechless and helpless. Her children’s still photographs had a voice commentary on the fate of their mother in a pitiable tone. Buhari was seen as an elated despot who rode in grandeur even when his subjects suffered, depicting a “dictator who shows no mercy”. Goodluck Jonathan was shown as a gentle and charismatic democrat, capable of “showing compassion”, to Nigerians unlike Muhammadu Buhari. The role played by characters in the political television commercial was therefore, aimed as substantiating why Jonathan should be preferred to Buhari in the March 28, 2015 presidential election in Nigeria.

ANALYTICAL FINDINGS

There were different political environments presented in *Unfair Trial*. The first was a military era symbolized by a “Head of State” and the other is a democratic era, represented by a “President”. The commercial brought a flashback projection of Buhari as Head of State, to present him currently as a “dictator” who has no place as president in a civil democracy, unlike Jonathan. The pitiable circumstances of Gladys Iyama and her children, their plea to Nigerians for assistance to mitigate the “killing” of their mother and making them orphans, was an exercise on emotional appeal. It was capable of generating sympathy from the electorate as television viewers, exposed frequently and regularly to the political advertisement on a consistent basis. This finding satisfied the first objective of the study.

The costumes of characters in the television commercial justified the roles played by them in the generation and confirmation of meaning in the political advertisement. For instance, Buhari

was dressed in an Army General's outfit, hence, depicting dictatorship in public conduct. Iyama's children wore no visible clothing, showing their poverty stricken nature, like that of their mother. Their physical presentation evoked pity and sympathy, hence, their "appeal" to Nigerians. Jonathan was dressed in a political toga, reminiscent of what is expected in a democratic Nigeria. His attire evokes a favourable emotional appeal as the right man in a democracy. This finding satisfies the second objective of the study.

The choice of words in describing the various artistes in the TV commercial as identified, like Buhari "a dictator" while Jonathan "a democrat", is an exercise in psychological excitement. It was designed by the persuader, to label the candidates differently and use derogation to create prejudice against the unwanted presidential candidate before the electorate in the election. It is the choice of words and language use in idea articulation, as an expressional communication strategy that was considered capable of evoking sympathy from the electorate as the television commercial's audience. The finding satisfies the third objective this study.

The plea from Iyama's children to Nigerians in respect of their mother's fate in the hands of a "Head of State" (a dictator) was symbolic and significant. It was a strategy for attracting sympathy from the viewers, many of whom were expected voters in the March 2015 presidential election in Nigeria. The radiating smile from an unperturbed dictator after the killing of Gladys Iyama was also an action designed to generate protest against incivility. The commercial expected, therefore, to excite protest from women voters represented by Gladys Iyama; males as Nigerians who desire the rule of law from where Iyama hails and Christians like Gladys who feel offended by a moslem Head of State, same as Buhari in the 2015 presidential race in Nigeria. The studied political television commercial was targeting the various classes of voters to protest against Buhari and choose Jonathan as the alternative. This finding satisfied the fourth objective of the study.

SUMMARY

Unfair Trail is a political television commercial designed to separate political candidates in the March 28, 2015 presidential election in Nigeria. It used words whose meaning within the political environment in Nigeria was to label one of the candidates as unfit for voter consideration. It utilized costume, action, environment and words used in language, to address cultural and gender-related emotions against Buhari, as a "dictator". It is the presentation of Jonathan as a "democrat" in that commercial that was expected to swing the protest vote against incivility, represented by Buhari in the commercial, to civility represented by Jonathan.

The television commercial provided a communication experience for understanding how "fear-appeal" combines with "name calling", in the generation of emotional appeal in propaganda. It used apt transitional devices in combining various fundamental picture frames for the achievement of an artistic synergy, in the realization of a desired communication objective (Owuamalam, 2007).

It is probably, the use of flashback in the era of military regime in Nigeria, with General Muhammadu Buhari as a "Head of State", brought into the present day democratic dispensation that was explored through the use of psychological closure in achieving a persistence of vision. It is expected that the persuasive effect of the film plot would provide a "logical" impact in

voter behaviour. The commercial, was an artistic rendition of political persuasion, using emotional appeal as its aesthetic platform for audience appreciation.

CONCLUSION

This is a pre-election study, conducted prior to the March 28, 2015 presidential election in Nigeria. The use of name-calling as a propaganda device creates disinformation which confuses rational reasoning. The conveying aesthetic elements fail to address appreciative factors, in a logical manner. It means that the presented message must not only use words for the excitement of reasoning but must also, synchronize them with pictures, in an acceptable manner, for the generation of the desired meaning. It implies that the environment of presented idea must be factual in content and context, so that message consumers who evaluate issues rationally would then swim with those who are swayed by mere audio-visual content of the television commercial as believable entertainment in the political realm.

Election occurs frequently and regularly at different times in many countries of the world. It is a selection process for choosing a particular candidate or political party to administer a specified constituency. The marketing of such a candidate is captured in political advertisements, hence, the significance of understanding how contents interact with their consumers in order to achieve a desired political objective. The political scenario, therefore, portends how propaganda, as a set of messages designed to influence opinion and achieve an expected political behaviour becomes apt as a communication experience. This is the significance of *Unfair Trial*, as a propaganda appeal in presidential campaigns, like in Nigeria.

How the television viewer appreciates the projected images of a political candidate, creates a psychological flux, laden with emotion and persuades action, based on interpretation and generated meaning. The emotional attachment is expected to facilitate consideration in the choice of alternatives. It is the signification of the projected image that symbolizes the communication objective. Propaganda, therefore, uses the most moving experience in wooing voter support, through arguments that favour a specific view-point. This is the situation which *Unfair Trial* as political advertisement, within the realm of political communication, was set to achieve.

IMPLICATION FOR RESEARCH AND PRACTICE

Propaganda devices should be well researched and understood, as applicable to any circumstance of use, within a specified human environment. The words to be used must match its language delivery style for the desired effect to be realized. How the words as texts, blend in the generation of meaning must be well considered and decided before use. The medium of message delivery must be identified and its characteristics understood, so that used aesthetic elements and artistic considerations become contributory enough to enhance persuasion in the message consumers. It is when believability is attributable to presented argument that the message becomes reliable in persuading support to any given cause. The bottom-line is that the presented message must be acceptable to an audience before a desired communication objective can be assured.

RECOMMENDATION FOR FURTHER STUDY

Another study in the quantitative form is recommended to be conducted, so as to determine if generated emotion translate to a desired protest vote against the disparaged in the March 2015 presidential election in Nigeria. It is when the extent to which emotion translates to protest votes in that election is determined that a justification or otherwise can be adduced for use of “name-calling” and “fear-appeal” in political advertisements. Such an empirical study would contribute substantially in substantiating results and finding from this analytical approach in the qualitative research format. The suggested post election study will complement the current pre-election analysis in providing an invaluable insight into propaganda use in political communication, from a political advertising perspective, within the Nigerian context.

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