

**UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA**

**A STUDY ON VISUAL AESTHETICS AND AURAL TECHNIQUES USAGE  
IN TELEVISION (TV) POLITICAL CAMPAIGN ADVERTISEMENTS  
DURING GHANA'S 2016 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS**



**STEPHEN OSEI AKYIAW**

**2017**



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**A DISSERTATION IN THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATION AND  
MEDIA STUDIES, FACULTY OF FOREIGN LANGUAGES EDUCATION  
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FULFILMENT OF REQUIREMENT FOR AWARD OF THE MASTER OF  
PHILOSOPHY IN (COMMUNICATION AND MEDIA STUDIES) DEGREE.**

**JULY, 2017**

**DECLARATION**

**STUDENT'S DECLARATION**

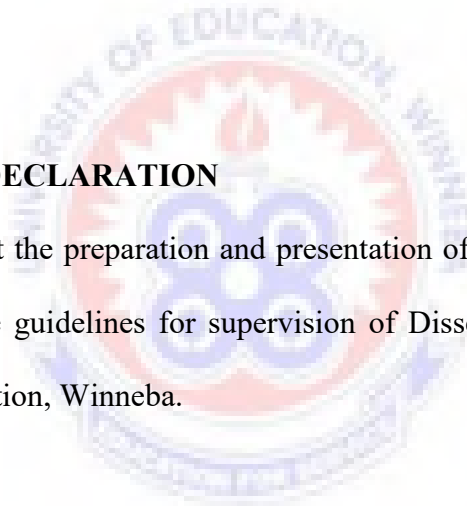
I, Stephen Osei Akyiaw declare that this dissertation, with the exception of quotations and references contained in published works which have all been identified and duly acknowledged, is entirely my own original work, and it has not been submitted in part or whole, for another degree elsewhere.

**SIGNATURE:** .....

**DATE:** .....

**SUPERVISOR'S DECLARATION**

I hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of this work was supervised in accordance with the guidelines for supervision of Dissertation as laid down by the University of Education, Winneba.



**NAME OF SUPERVISOR** : **DR. ANDY OFORI-BIRIKORANG**

**SIGNATURE** : .....

**DATE:** .....

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## **DEDICATION**

To my Brothers Mr. Frederick Mensah, Mr. Kingsley Osei Agyemang Badu and Kwesi Asare Boateng whose encouragement and insistence made my dream to the graduate school possible, My Father, Mr. Osei Agyemang Badu and my mother Mrs. Dorothy Osei for their love, prayers, and support that have shaped my life.



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## ABSTRACT

The study examined the use of visual aesthetic and aural techniques as used in television (TV) political campaign ads during Ghana's 2016 presidential elections. The study employed the framing and priming theories. 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 in congruency, music and graphics as the components that were used in the television ads studied. The study further showed that the six (6) ads were presented through the themes of persuasion, consistency, religion and appeal. The study also revealed that the two political parties based their ads on pertinent social issues with the strategic and technical application of visual aesthetics components and aural techniques to effectively communicate their messages. 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 should include the participation of prospective voters during production stage to enable them share their views on the application of visual and aural techniques in the ads.

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **INTRODUCTION**

This chapter provides an introduction to the study, background of the study, statement of the problem, objectives, significance of the study, scope of the study and organisation of the study.

#### **1.0 Background to the study**

The media is one of the most important institutions in every society. Azanu (2012) states that “the media is an important – if not the most important institution – through which people get information and opinions about issues (p. 4). According to Rossler and Schenk (2000), the media over the years have gained an ever increasing accessibility that has allowed it to achieve a pivotal role in the lives of many people and serve a number of functions. Oyero (2011) posits that people get most of their information from news in the media. In principle, the media play a vital role in dissemination of information to the public. The media inform the public, provide information and amusement, generate political ideas, mobilize political and social action groups, and generally help to shape the public policy agenda and priorities (Khouri, 1999).

The period of election is no exception, especially so when the media are key in disseminating political messages to the electorate. Stromback and Dimitrova (2006) state 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 wresting or maintaining power (Advertising Educational Foundation, 2005). According to Kaid (2004), political advertising is considered one of the most important means of electoral political communication. Arens and Bovee (1994) posit that political party advertising is a form of commercial advertising that politicians use to make voters aware of their record, their stand on issues and ultimately sell their political vision. Oye (2009) says that during elections, candidates advertise in the media such as television, radio, newspaper and the internet to convince voters. The medium used by candidates and their parties are selected strategically to enable them communicate effectively to their target audience, the electorates.

Jamieson (1996, p.517) notes that “political advertising is now the major means by which candidates for the presidency communicate their messages to voters”, and this medium through which the candidates and their political parties use to reach out to the voters are paid for. Diamond & Bates (1988) posit that 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 the 2000 US election, presidential candidates, Governor George W. Bush and Vice President Al Gore, spent a combined total of \$240 million dollars on TV advertising in the general election (Devlin, 2001). In 2004, a total of \$547 million was spent on TV advertising (Devlin, 2005). This implies that political advertising is very expensive. According to Poston

(2013), “today, it costs hundreds of millions of dollars to launch a successful campaign and with each subsequent election the costs rise substantially.”

Some researchers in the United States, Britain, Kuwait, Nigeria and Ghana (e.g. Alqaseer, 2013; Amegatcher, 2015; Boateng, 1993; Komey, 2002; Nkana, 2015; Oye, 2009; Poston, 2013) have studied issues surrounding political advertisement in varied ways. Most of the studies done in political advertisement showed that politicians in the Western, European and Asia make extensive use of political advertisement during elections in their countries. Example of such studies are, “Political Advertising in Kuwait (Alqaseer, 2013), “Targeting Political Advertising on Television (Lovett & Peress, 2014) and to mention a few. The situation is no different in Ghana when it comes presidential elections. 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 electorate in voting, Oye (2009), studied issues or image in political advertising in the 2008 elections in Ghana, and Amegatcher (2015), also examined television political advertising before the 2012 presidential elections in Ghana

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.

There have been quite a number of research on political TV advertising in Ghana such as “An examination of television political advertising before the 2012 presidential elections” (Amegatcher, 2015) and “Issues or Image? A content analysis of television political ads in the 2008 election in Ghana” (Oye, 2009). This research work intends to look at how visual aesthetics and aural techniques were used in television advertisements during the 2016 presidential elections in Ghana.

### **1.1 Television Advertising**

Television has traditionally been viewed as a broadcast medium where advertising is placed in order to reach as much of the population as possible (Lovett & Peress, 2014). Diamond & Bates (1988) state that since 1952, close to 50% of Americans owned a TV set. Television is often called "king" of the advertising media, since a majority of public spends more hours watching TV per day than any other medium, it combines the use of sight, colour, sound and motion and it works (Rawal, 2013). Rawal further posits that “television advertising offers the benefit of reaching large numbers in a single exposure” (p. 42). In Ghana, a research conducted in 2013 revealed that 39% (10,356,394) of Ghanaians have access to a television set (Ghana Television Report, 2013). The importance of television advertising is undisputed (Graber, 2009; Kaid, 2004; West, 2005). According to Arens (2006), television is the most effective means of advertising due to its ability to combine visuals, sound and motion. Verser and Wicks (2006) also indicate that pictures are said to be valuable in shaping attitudes about people because they can be used to convey a sense of



credibility. Advertisers who have the rich knowledge that television is so powerful have adopted the medium as a means of reaching out to their target audience.

According to Brader (2005) advertisements which appear on television and in video are the most successful, efficient and effective when appealing to emotions. Brader (2005) further speaks of the more effective medium through which advertisement of a product can gain its desired results, which is the television. Fundus (2016) states that TV is one of the most powerful advertising medium, because you can get very detailed information about a product. Brader's assertion is also backed by Fundus (2016) who suggests that the TV medium gives more information within a short period. Television advertising is the primary means by which voters gain knowledge about a candidate or issue (Geske, 2009; Hansen & Benoit, 2002). TV is passive and it can reach people who are not necessarily seeking information about politics (Brader, 2006).

With the television, Verser and Wicks (2006) argue that "even when a candidate's behavior is completely scripted and rehearsed, aspects of appearance and demeanour inevitably cause viewers to form intuitive understandings concerning the personality behind the images presented". In the election period, electorates use television as a means of getting to know what the various political parties have in stock for the nation, so as to, enable them cast their vote wisely on the day of election.

## **1.2 Political Advertising**

Political Advertising is the mainstay of elections (Amegatcher, 2015). Political advertising is one of the most essential vehicles that candidates and political parties

use to communicate with voters, especially when party identification is in decline (Rothschild, 1978; Trent & Friedenber, 2008). Political advertising is seen as the communication tool that aids the electorate to buy into the ideals of a political party. Holtz-Bacha and Kaid (2006) define political advertising as a means through which parties and candidates sell themselves to the electorates, mostly through the mass media. Holtz-Bacha and Kaid continued to suggest that political advertising should be seen as any controlled message communication through any channel designed to promote the political interest of individuals, parties, groups, governments, or other organisations.

The nature of political party campaigning is shifting from face-to-face interactions to mediated communications, which allows the electorate to follow political parties and campaign tactics via television broadcasts and political ads (Hofstetter, Zukin, & Buss, 1978; Joslyn, 1980). Briens and Wattenberg (1996) conducted a research on the impact of media sources on candidate knowledge. In the study, Brain and Wattenberg found out that political advertising contributed both positively and negatively to the voter knowledge of candidates and issues. Jamieson (1996) also argue that in the political season, TV adverts provide information for the voter, even more than television news broadcasts on politics.

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). The situation is not different in Ghana. Lartey (2016) states that “in spite of the vibrant media landscape in Ghana which has enabled transmission of political

information through newspapers, radio and television, poster campaigns are still a dominant feature in elections since 1992” (p. 2).

Early studies also found that political advertising expressed the strategy that candidates perceived to be important to win the hearts and minds of voters (Humke, Schmitt, & Grupp, 1975).

### **1.3 Visual and Aural Communication**

In communication through the television, visual and aural forms play significant roles. Pictures and sound cannot be ignored in television adverts. They all form part of the communication tools to enable any message sent across understood by its audiences clearly. Brader (2006) examined thousands of political advertisements and indicates that visuals are paramount to the success of the ads. Similarly, Zettl (1999, p.307) contends that “sound is essential to television” According to Doris Graber (2001), visual communication serves as a powerful means of disseminating information. Visual communication is so powerfully effective because our brains can process multiple visual images simultaneously, while verbal or written information must be processed serially (Pavio 1979). The English idiom that says “a picture is worth a thousand words” apply to communicating visually in political ads. Udosen (1990) is also of the view that “three words are worth A Thousand Pictures”. This is to support Nkana (2015) who says that “Pictures are devoted evidence of reality.”

Nkana (2015) further states that “since television is an audio-video medium, it is pertinent to combine both picture and sound for the clarification, intensification and interpretation of audience experience. Visual and aural techniques are “essential

instruments” for constituting reality (Saussure, Bally, Sechehaye, Riedlinger & Baskin, 1966). Reality in this context, is constituting meaning to an advert specifically political adverts. Political communication has become increasingly audiovisual communication (Richardson, 2001).

Political ads use symbols to relay their messages (Johnson-Cartee & Copeland, 1991) and visuals to convey emotion and influence voters (Brader, 2006). Many people distrust what they are told, but believe what they see, so visual arguments can be very persuasive (Condit, 1990). The power of visuals is essential in political communication. Graber (2001) said TV has more emotional power than other forms of political advertising because of the connection between the viewer and the pictures.

This study will concentrate on the audiovisual aspects used to help communicate to the electorate to enable them make a choice of their own. As said by Messaris (1994) “the general principle behind the ad’s visual/audio relationship is that the viewer must interpret how the picture and the audio go together.” When interpretation is done by the viewer during an election period, he or she may decide the political party to vote for during the polls.

#### **1.4 Statement of the Problem**

Political ads are purposely done and produced to persuade voters to choose a particular candidate and political party over the other. Kahn and Geer (1994) state that political ads provide information to voters to help them evaluate candidates. Oye (2009) states 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.

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” (p. 16). Johnson and Kaid (2002) also state 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 been conducted in United States of America, Europe, Kuwait, Canada, Israel and East-Asian countries. Some of such works are as follows; 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”, Rothschild (1978) “Political advertising: A neglected policy issue in marketing”, just to mention a few.

However, little has been studied in Ghana on analysing the aesthetics of political advertising despite the number of elections held every four years since Ghana gained independence. Some of the studies done in Ghana in the field of political communication have focused on coverage of politics in newspapers, e.g. Boateng (1993). Another research by Oye (2009) studied whether political ads in the 2008 elections was based on issues or image and also whether the parties resorted to negative or positive ads. Amegatcher (2015) also examined political ads before the 2012 elections. Amegatcher’s study focused on acclaims, attacks or defense and also whether any of the political parties relied more on negative ads. The studies discussed

above also looked at the issues captured in the advert and further employed quantitative research approach to conduct the research.

Some scholars say that audio and visual elements of campaign ads draw upon widely recognized networks of conventional understanding to provide the form or structure that viewers often use to reconstruct the meaning of political communication (Nelson and Boynton 1997). The visual and aural components of ads have their own peculiar role they play in making the ads effective and efficient in political discourse.

Poston (2013) looked at how visual and aural techniques were used to convey meaning in political advertising in the 2012 Presidential Elections in the US, Nkana (2015) also studied the pictorial impact of television political advertising on voters in a multi-cultural environment. The aspect of visual aesthetics and aural techniques have not been worked on in any of the research works conducted in the area of political advertisement in Ghana. The content of political TV advertisement comes with audiovisual components to create the exciting ads electorates watch on TV. **This research therefore seeks to document the visual aesthetics and Aural Techniques used in the political ads and to examine how political TV advertising attempts to build meaning using visual aesthetics and aural techniques to communicate the political message to voters as a content.** The study will be conducted using the qualitative research approach.

### **1.5 Research Objectives**

The objectives of the study are;

1. To investigate the visual aesthetic components and aural techniques used in the political ads.
2. To analyse how visual aesthetic components and aural techniques were used in conveying the messages of the selected political parties.

### **1.6 Research Questions**

The research questions for the study are as follows;

1. What are the visual aesthetics components and aural techniques used in the political ads?
2. How do visual aesthetics components and aural techniques help in conveying the messages of the selected political parties?

### **1.7 Significance of the study**

There is little literature on political communication and political advertisement in Ghana. The study will help political parties get to know the massive role visual aesthetics and aural techniques play in political adverts so as to guide them on how to inculcate these techniques positively when creating such ads. When politicians understand the impact of visual aesthetics and aural techniques in these ads, it will help them to produce good and convincing ads that will get the electorates to choose their political parties over others.

The study could add to the development of policy guidelines for political parties, advertising agencies and media organizations on political advertisement. The study

will add to existing literature available in academia. The outcome of the study will inform advertising agencies and political parties on the need for putting more emphasis on the design components on the TV ads to enable them communicate effectively to their target group.

### **1.8 Scope of the study**

This study will examine television political ads of the two major political parties in Ghana, specifically, the New Patriotic Party (NPP) and the National Democratic Congress (NDC) during the 2016 Presidential Elections. These two were purposefully selected since they are the two biggest political parties in Ghana; they have contested in general elections from 1996 and have access to more resources than other political parties giving them the ability to produce more ads for their constituents to view.

In terms of visual aesthetics and aural techniques employed in campaign ads, the researcher will examine how camera techniques, special effects, editing, graphics, and music were used to convey the message. Elements of design will also be considered.

### **1.9 Organisation of the study**

The study is divided into five chapters. Chapter one consists of introduction to the study, background of the study, statement of the problem, objectives of the study, research questions, significance of the study and the scope of the study.

Chapter two will entail the review of related literature of the study. It also encompasses the theoretical framework which brings to bare the ideas and concepts that guide this study. The theories backing the study will be explained in detailed.



Chapter three contains the methodology of the study which includes the research design, population, sampling method, sample size, data collection instrument, data processing and analysis, ethical issues of the research. It further outlines the research approach and design as well as how the data was analysed.

Chapter four provides findings and analysis of the data gathered. Chapter five which is the last chapter draws conclusions and makes recommendations for the study based on the analysis of the data in the chapter four. Areas for further research are also captured in this study.



## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

#### **2.0 Introduction**

The focus of this chapter is to review related literature on the topic under study, especially materials related to political advertising and communication. Specifically, the review of related literature focuses on studies done in the area of visual aesthetics and aural techniques in television political adverts, the contextualization of visual aesthetics and aural techniques in the political campaign messages as well as the implications of visual aesthetics and aural techniques on elections. This study is also anchored on the Framing and Priming Theories which are expected to contextualise the study..

#### **2.1 Review of related works**

##### **2.1.1 Advertising**

Advertising is an important tool in getting consumers to buy into the idea of producers or manufacturers. Lin (2011) posits that advertising has become one of the most important commercial activities in the modern competitive environment. Advertising is a “paid, mediated form of communication from an identifiable source, designed to persuade the receiver to take some action, now or in the future” (Richards & Curran, 2002, p. 74). Richards and Curran followed up by stating that “mediated communication” is “communication which is conveyed to an audience through print, electronics, or any method other than person-to-person contact”. On another ground, Kotler and Armstrong (2012) also define advertising as “any paid form of non-personal presentation and promotion of ideas, goods or services by an identified

sponsor” (p. 408). This form of advertising is done through mass media such as newspapers, magazines, television, radio, internet etc.

The concept of advertising deals with appealing to the conscience of consumers and in essence persuading them to take action. According to Manrai, Broach, Carter and Manrai (1992), the concept of appeal is defined as the basic idea behind an advertisement or the basic reason why an audience should act. These appeals tend to make the consumer decide on what action to take based on the advertisement because they feel the ads are speaking to their demands.

Kotler (2003) divided advertising appeal into rational and emotional appeals. Chu (1996) also mentions that to meet the varying demands of target consumers, advertisers commonly use rational appeal and emotional appeal in their advertising in an attempt to influence consumer behavior.

According to Lin (2011), in rational advertising appeal, the product can be emphasized by its benefits, in which the consumers' self-benefit is the key proposition, and the function or benefit requested by consumers of the product or service is articulately presented. Kotler (1991) defines rational appeal as rationally oriented purchase stimulated by directly giving explanations of a product's advantages. On the other hand, Kotler and Armstrong (1991, p. 426-427) define emotional appeal as an: “attempt to stir up either negative or positive emotions that can motivate purchase”.

In the field of politics, political ads play on the fears of the electorates, telling them that voting an opposition candidate will lead to financial ruin and economic crisis. In this context, politicians are using emotional appeal. These forms of appeals are used by the politicians to get the voter to choose them over the other opponents.

Advertising is the first promotional tool usually mentioned by authors and writers in Integrated Marketing Communications Mix (Korkeamaki, 2014). Kocabiyikoglu (2004) describes advertising as a communication tool whose main purpose is to inform potential customers and audience about services and products and how to obtain and use them. Otchere (2016) posits that advertising is a communication that exists between the buyer and seller through different media such as television, radio, newspaper, magazines, the internet, flyers and outdoor media such as billboards. The communication relationship that exist between the buyer and seller is the same relationship between voters and political advertisers. According to Till and Baack (2005), advertising is an essential mechanism for transferring images from organisations into the minds of potential customers and audience.

Price (2011, p.20) indicates that “the first goal in advertising is to gain attention; second, is to gain interest and likability; third, is to persuade by connecting the consumer problem to a product as a solution; and fourth, is to motivate movement in attitude or action.” Barthes (1988) says that “advertising messages do not just tell you to buy the product, they make it seem natural for you to have the product, “since it puts the reader in communication with the great human themes” (p. 176). Anyacho (2007, p.6) says that advertising involves research-consumer research, product research, marketing analysis, getting the appropriation and developing creative

strategy and plans, tactical decisions in regards to budgeting expenditures, media and scheme insertions and broadcasts.

Price (2011) says that not all advertisements are for products, in the case of politics, the ads are “selling” a person or an idea. Advertising in politics is meant to sell the ideals of the political parties and the candidates. The ideas and messages of the parties and its candidates can be communicated to electorates via any form of advertisement, and this study has its foundation in advertising.

West (2001) crowns all these assumptions by stating that political ads are the single biggest expenditure in presidential campaigns and the principal means by which a candidate or political party presents a specific message structured to influence the behavior of a voter.

### **2.1.2 Political Advertising**

Kaid and Holtz-Bacha (1995) define televised political advertising as a moving image programming that is created to promote the interests of a given party or an individual. According to Alsamydai (2000), political advertising comprises all means and technologies required and necessary to attract public opinion, and therefore the votes of the voters, as well as providing suitable causes that are selected according to several personal and objective criteria, hence creating a pleasing and ideal image for a political candidate, while showing and highlighting the negative aspects of the competing candidates in front of public opinion and the electorate. According to Oye (2009), the coverage of political advertising campaigns in the media (TV) is a vital source of political knowledge to voters during political seasons.

Alqaseer (2008) indicated in his study in Kuwait on Political Advertising that most political advertising studies focus on the U.S. or other western democracies like the U.K. and other European countries. In general, political advertising studies focuses on the content of political advertising especially on the subject of issues vs. images in advertising. According to Alqaseer, many studies of political advertising content focus on the topic of negative advertising. The study focused on political advertisement content in Kuwait as one of the developing democracies in the Middle-East. The interest of the study explored the content appeals used in political advertising in Kuwait and it was compared to relevant literature that examines advertising in the U.S and other parts of the world. The researcher also made comparisons of advertisements' content between winners and losers in elections to explore the differences. Findings of both the qualitative and the quantitative parts of the study indicate a unique approach to political advertising in Kuwait including lack of negative advertisements, which is a significant characteristic of political advertisement worldwide. In addition, Alqasser realized that political advertisements in Kuwait uses more character based discourse than policy based discourse. Character based discourse talks about the personality of the candidate. This study will employ qualitative research approach. It will look at how visual aesthetics and aural techniques were utilised to convey meaning to electorates.

Few studies have been done in the area of Television political advertising in Ghana. Oye (2009) studied issues or image in political advertising in the 2008 elections in Ghana. Oye's study indicated that political ads in the 2008 campaigns mostly discussed policy concerns (issues) in the sense that, all the political parties in the competition then employed issues ads. The findings revealed that the issues ads

contained some personal characteristics of the candidates and majority of the ads were negative in tone. The study further revealed that candidates praised themselves, attacked their opponents by framing them negatively by means of their past records or their parties' legacies. Oye's study utilised the framing theory, functional theory of political campaign discourse and the theory of issue ownership as bases for the analysis. This study will utilise the framing theory to help the researcher understand and analyse the findings.

Komey (2002) looked at the influence political advertising has on the choices of the electorate in voting with focus on television and radio political ads. The study established that advertising has very limited influence on voters in making their decisions to vote for or against a political party. The study further revealed that 67 percent of the respondents reported that there are not influenced by the political ads they see on the television or hear on radio, while 33 percent of them confirmed that the television and radio political ads do have influence on their choice of a political party to vote for. Oye (2009) asserts that though the mass media plays a vital role in determining the political parties' voters' choose to vote for, Komey (2002) notes that informal personal influences has a greater impact on voter choices. Komey recommended the use of informal personal influences by the political parties, and suggested that campaign messages should be carefully shaped to meet the socio-political aspirations of the electorate.

## **2.2 Television and Political Advertising**

Television is one of the most important electronic channels of political communication. Lovett and Peress (2014) aver that television has traditionally been

regarded as a broadcast medium where advertising is placed in order to reach as much of the population as possible. According to Oye (2009), television is the major source of political information for viewers, especially during political seasons. Kaid and Postelnicu (2005) also assert that television advertising is the predominant means of campaign communication for parties and their candidates. With the definitions and assertions above, television indeed helps in disseminating political information via news and advertisements.

Schwartz (1964) posits that with the advent of television in the US, candidates for political office entered millions of homes through ads that creatively employed audiovisual techniques to instill emotional connections. Carlson (2001) indicates that the visual nature of television which does not only send verbal messages but also non-verbal cues such as gestures, facial expressions and production styles, makes television very important in modern campaigns. The early use of television for political advertising was the beginning of a trend that has grown so dramatically that televised political advertising is now the major form of communication between candidates and voters (Kaid, n.d.).

The composition of political campaign television ads plays a part in conveying a meaningful message to the electorates. According to Ternor (2011) modes in television ads are primarily in the form of visual and auditory cues which are coordinated to send one message. Ternor (2011) further adds that modes in advertising are put together to form a coherent and meaningful whole. The modes are the components of the television ads which composite the visuals and aural elements.



These visual and aural components are in full play in the television ads for the political campaigns.

Kaid and Dimitrova (2005), studied television advertising battleground in the 2004 Presidential Election in the US. The study discussed the televised political advertising used in the US presidential campaign. The researchers used content analysis to describe 315 television advertisements sponsored by George W. Bush, John Kerry, and independent groups. The study found that both candidates focused more on issues rather than image in their campaign ads, but differences were found in the top issues addressed by each campaign. Advocacy groups played a significant role in the campaign advertising battle, and their ads were more negative than the candidate ads.

### **2.3 Usage of Television in Political Advertising in Ghana**

Television ads are very effective in Ghana. According to Amenyo (2014), Ghanaians are heavily exposed to television. Television was established in Ghana in 1965 by the Nkrumah government in collaboration with Sanyo of Japan (Hasty, 2008). Research in the area of television political advertising in Ghana dates back in the 1970s. Amegatcher (2015) states that even though television had been operating in Ghana for some number of years since 1965, it was still not easily available and accessible to the majority of the Ghanaian populace, which made it an exclusive medium. Despite television's exclusivity, Amegatcher (2015) indicated that "General Ignatius Kutu Acheampong used it to run the famous "*Abaaba se*" meaning, "*They will come back*" advertisement to popularise his UNIGOV campaign in 1978" (p. 14).

According to Amegatcher (2015), the first television advertising designed for election politics was undertaken by Lintas Advertising Company in 1979 for the Popular Front

Party (PFP) led by Victor Owusu. The political advertisement ran for about one month before the July 1979 elections and featured only on Ghana Television, as it was the only television station at the time. Simultaneously, the People's National Party (PNP) also created political ads to publicise and introduce their presidential candidate, Dr. Hilla Liman, on the national television.

Amegatcher (2015) also sought to examine television political advertising before the 2012 presidential elections in Ghana by means of the functional theory of political campaign discourse. The researcher aimed to find out which of the two major political parties, the ruling NDC and the opposition NPP relied heavily on negative advertising to achieve their aims and also to find out the issues the two parties focused their adverts on. The researcher did a content analysis of seventy-one (71) television advertisements of both political parties shown on television between March and December 2012. The party in opposition then New Patriotic Party (NPP) aired 26 advertisements whilst the incumbent National Democratic Congress (NDC) aired 45 advertisements. The television advertisements run between 45 seconds and 3 minutes. The study established that the NPP relied more on negative advertising whereas the NDC relied more on acclaims. It also found that both parties focused their advertisements on the issues rather than focus on their candidates. The research also revealed that the NPP television campaign ads made up 36.6% of the total whereas the NDC advertisements made up 63.4%.

#### **2.4 The role and Importance of Political Advertising**

Political advertising helps parties and candidates to establish a relationship with electorates. In the quest of creating that relationship through the TV ads, the parties

end up having an advantage over normal news coverage which is not necessarily about forming relationship but giving general information (Oye, 2009). The advantage political advertising has over news coverage is that with political advertising, parties have absolute control of the production techniques to employ and dissemination of information is only based on issues that connect with the elections and the party's interest (Cho, 2008).

Scammell and Langer (2006) argue that even though political advertising is the most derided form of political communication, it still plays a vital role in political campaigns. Oye (2009) states that political advertising is journalistically unmediated in nature. The advert offers the clearest evidence of how political parties and/or candidates choose to present themselves to the electorates without needing the services of journalist to sell the advert (Scammell & Langer, 2006). The presentation of the parties to the electorates via ads is to enable the parties influence electorates positively. Verser and Wicks (2006) argue that political adverts can be used to influence voter impressions. Granato and Wong (2004) explain Verser and Wick's (2006) position when they aver that campaign strategists aim at influencing voters to learn about their candidates, particularly if the voters have negative impressions about the candidate.

Another objective of political advertising is to popularize the party and its candidate. In political advertisement, the advertisers create the adverts with the intension of drawing the attention of the voter to persuade him/her to make a decision in their favour on the day of voting. Scholars such as Johnson and Kaid (2002) and Sabato (1981) stress that political advertising can also make candidates better known to the

electorates by establishing name identification; connecting the candidate with specific demographic groups; attracting new supporters; stimulating participation in the campaign; helping raise money for the candidate and party; and attacking the opponent.

Johnson and Kaid (2002, p.281) aver that “discussions of issues and the construction of image therefore feature predominantly in televised political ads. Political ads give parties and candidates the opportunity to state the issues that concern them the most and serves as a means of constructing their intended image. Gitlin (1980) as cited in Granato & Wong (2004) indicates that campaign strategists use issue framing to shape candidate favourability or unfavourability for an opponent.

Freedman, Franz and Goldstein (2004) state that political campaign adverts are rich in informational content. Meaning, it fulfils the democratic function of informing the general public. Freedman, Franz and Goldstein (2004) further stress that political campaign ads are efficient means to communicate with potential voters because voters are able to learn a lot about the issues at stake in an election and also learn about the candidates in the race.

## **2.5 Political Advertising and Content Production**

### **2.5.1 Visual Aesthetics**

Aesthetics is defined as “the aspect of communication presentation that creates feelings in viewers. It results from a good combination of picture, sound, space, time and other related elements. Gestalt: Is the outcome of good picture and sound combination as well as good picture – picture transition” (Nkana, 2015, p.221).

According to Asemah, Edegoh and Ogwo (2013), aesthetics is a branch of philosophy dealing with the nature of art, beauty and taste, with the creation and appreciation of beauty. Akpan and Etuk (1990, p. 3), also indicate that aesthetics is a science or the study of beauty. Akpan and Etuk's further suggests that aesthetics deals with beauty. Generally, aesthetics is a critical reflection on art, culture and nature.

Cho (2008) mentioned that political parties have absolute control of the production of the ads. Cho's assertion is supported and elaborated by Oye (2009). Oye (2009) indicates that "in designing political ads, campaign strategists employ various means of persuasion such as appeal to the emotions of voters" (p. 42). Political parties may create messages motivating voters to learn about their candidates by constructing political ads that appeal to emotions or raise anxiety (Marcus & Mackuen, 1993).

Aesthetics is the expected outcome when visual and aural elements are employed together to make a television advert beautiful and appealing. In the field of politics, 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.

## **2.6 Visual and Aural Components in TV Advertising**

The essence of advertising in general is to persuade people to buy products. In the area of political advertising, ads are purposely created to attract and persuade voters to make a decision to cast votes for the political party with the best strategy which is based on the beauty of the ad. The beauty of the TV ads is dependent on the visual and aural elements used to create that ad. Visual messages are the most significant part of ads (West, 2005). Visual messages give the first impression before a person

engages his/her logic (Barry, 1997). Brader (2006) showed that visuals are paramount to the success of the ads after examining thousands of political ads. He mentioned that pictures in ads can help the viewer to imagine him or herself being in the situation pictured. Asemah, Edegoh and Ogwo (2013) posit that aesthetics is all about beauty. According to them the likely aesthetic (visual and aural) elements in television advertising are: sound, music, character, colour, etc. Licenji (2015) posits that political advertising expresses the political identity of a party or a candidate through colours, logo, slogans, and sounds. All the components mentioned by Licenji (2015) are production techniques in visual communication.

Production techniques are an important part of the creation of commercials (Kaid & Johnston, 2001). Poston (2013) also indicates that the use of camera, special effects, editing, graphics and music. For the purpose of this study, the review is based on the use of camera, special effects, editing, graphics, pictures and music.

### **2.6.1 Special Effects**

Poston (2013) states that special effects include any electronic manipulation of visual or aural phenomena as a vehicle for communicating meaning to an audience. According to Poston, meaning can only be accomplished through colours, distortions, and sound effects. The use of colour is a technique in advertising and communicating to audiences (Price, 2011). Price (2011) further argues that colour can have an emotional quality that comes from personal or cultural associations. According to Asemah, Edegoh and Ogwo (2013, p.187) “Colour is the sensation that is created in the eyes. Colour is the visual perceptual property corresponding in humans to the categories called red, blue, yellow, green and others”. Colour signals to the viewer of

an ad an emotional response he or she may be unaware of. According to Brader (2006) bright colours offer the exact opposite response from black and white. Bright colours imply positive images, while gray or black and white are most often given negative connotations (West, 2005). Zettl (1999) says that the use of gray or black and white in ads makes the viewer “feel what is going on in the commercial rather than to cognitively observe it” (p.70). Coloured photos might add to a candidate’s humanity while a black and white image might be less complementary depending on the context of the ad (Dancyger, 1997). Barry (1997) says that the blue colour has a calming effect when used in an ad, while yellow gets noticed first. Television advertising should contain colours to make it very attractive (Price, 2011). The colour combination in a TV ad should be harmonious and appealing to the viewers, because the use of colour is very important in any production (political TV ad) and it adds up to the gaining the attention of the viewer (voter) to make a decision on Election Day.

According to Poston (2013,) distortion is a component of special effects in advertising. Kaid (1996) posits that distortion alters a given reality by visual and aural means. Distortions are in various types, they comprise colour variation, compressed sound, slow or fast motion, use of film, lighting variations, superimposition, blurred focus, screen asymmetry, dissolves, fades and graphics (Brader, 2006; Jamieson, 1992; Johnson-Cartee & Copeland, 1991; Kaid & Davidson, 1986; Noggle & Kaid, 2000). Jamieson (1992) claims that sound distortions affect our subconscious and probably make it less likely that we can process the information sensibly and rationally. Distortions in every aspects is important in complementing and reinforcing the message being sent across to viewers (voters).

Sound effects reflect reality in ways that visual images do not (Poston, 2013). Sound also emotionally conditions the audience for the intervention, arrival, or actions of a particular character (Brader, 2006; Price, 2011). Zettl (1999) says that “Sound is essential to television because it is more of a reflection of the reality” (p307). The major functions of sound in adverts are to supply or add information, to establish mood and add aesthetic energy, and to supplement the rhythmic structure. (Price, 2011). Dancyger (1997) mentions that, “Sound foreshadows disaster. Sound supports the dramatic core. Sound punctuates. It makes it more realistic. Over-modulated sound creates a violent and realistic effect” (p. 227). If a sound effects inserted in a TV ads it must correspond with the visual and textual (text) components in the ad to enable the viewer understand the message.

### **2.6.2 Use of Camera**

Camera positions are also vital in the creation of TV adverts. Camera position and distance determine whether the shot is a close-up, medium or long shot (Johnson-Cartee & Copeland, 1991). Close-ups force the audience to select a detail that otherwise might have been missed which creates more emotional involvement (Kaid & Davidson, 1986; Kaid & Dimitrova, 2005). Heiderich (n.d) affirms the penultimate assertion that Close Up shots appear more intimate than the medium shot, the expressions and emotions of an actor (candidate) are more visible and affecting and is meant to engage the character in a direct and personal manner. Close-ups used in television ads’ help provide viewers with a complex range of verbal and non-verbal material that appeals to the unexpected emotional responses (Poston, 2013). Close-ups enhances intimacy with viewers. Heiderich (n.d.) posit that with long shot, “the distance of the camera from its subject also reflects an emotional distance; the viewer



doesn't get as emotionally involved in what's going on as they would if they were closer" (p. 7).

The angle at which a shot is taken with a camera can depict so many actions which include, warmth and intimacy as was stated by Kaid in a research in 2004. A camera angle used during a shot; high-angle shots make a product look small, while low-angle shots make a product appear larger (McDougal & Houghton, n.d.). According to Poston (2013, p. 9), "low camera angles, such as looking up at the candidate, may produce feelings of dominance and importance, while a high angle forces the viewer to look down, perhaps associating a feeling of weakness and importance to the candidate". A subject will be perceived as more ominous when viewed from above. (Kaid & Davidson, 1986; Dancyger, 1997).

Camera perspective in shooting a video is also an important and most employed technique in creating ads. Johnson-Cartee and Copeland (1991) state that there are three camera perspective; they are reportorial, objective and subjective. Johnson-Cartee and Copeland further indicated that the reportorial perspective is straight-on shot, where an individual (candidate) looks directly into the camera. According to them, this perspective projects sincerity. The objective perspective are often used in TV dramas and sitcoms. With this perspective, the subject ignores the camera, whilst the subjective perspective replaces the camera for a person. In this scenario, the viewer watches the scene through his or her eyes. Poston (2013) says that if one is to compare the other perspectives, the subjective perspective is more likely to appeal to the viewer's emotions and that persuades the viewer feel as an "active participant" in the scene.

Camera movement plays a role in creating a relationship between the candidate and viewers (electorates). Poston (2013) states that “camera movement encourages identification and implies change. This occurs when the entire camera is trucked, or physically moves” (p. 10). Dancyger (1997) posits that camera movement suggests urgency and offers a TV ad with a dynamism that may be absent with a static camera. The position of the candidate in the screen may have a positive or negative effect on the viewer. Johnson-Cartee and Copeland (1991) stress that the right side of a screen attracts more attention whereas the left side is seen as the weaker position. Camera movement and position add to the image projection of a candidates and their political parties.

### **2.6.3 Editing**

Editing is “selecting and sequencing those parts of an event that contribute most effectively to its clarification and intensification” (Zettl, 1999, p. 265). Editing manipulates contextual meaning so it is quite different from “real-world visual experience” (Messaris, 1994, p. 73) and enhances the emotional impact of an ad (West, 2005). Editing comprises of making choices about the arrangements of pictures and sounds. This arrangements encompass the order and duration. According to Poston (2013), personalities, character, a sense of urgency, and information can all be projected through the skillful choices employed by editors. Truth be told, editing creates viewers connection and involvement. The moment a new visual and aural information is introduced in an ad, it catches viewers’ attention and give them an opportunity to think about a new idea. Equally, editing in ads is a way to introduce, reinforce and/or emphasize on an idea. The change that comes with editing “grabs attention and signals to the viewer that more is to come” (Poston, p. 12).

Dancyger (1997), states that “a cut is a promise of more information or more dramatic insight to come” (p. 297). Quick cuts create tension, expectations, energy and excitement (Brader, 2006). 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 (Kaid & Davidson, 1986).

A montage is a “compilation of images” or the order, composition, and timing of pictures as they are presented to the viewer (Poston, 2013). Kahneman and Tversky (1984) state that the arrangement of pictures and sound have a vast influence on interpretation. Nkana (2015) also states that if pictures are well-arranged they can give more information and can even mobilise without or with limited audio support. Ad creators arrange a montage in a way to establish mood and give a viewer a visual storyline to appeal to his or her conscience. Usually, 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, p. 364). According to Dancyger (1997), it is characteristic of a montage to utilize persons, ideas, images, colours, sounds and lighting that are connected to each other through editing technology to focus on a particular theme. It is also common to see one still photo dissolve into others in a montage. If done properly, the musical quality of a montage can have undeniable emotional effects on viewers. This is because, the pictures act together to create a more complete and infectious message giving a deeper meaning than what each individual shot would have had. Special effects such as slow motion and colour in a montage may coax viewers to be more attentive.

Therefore, a montage may be a better operational tool for revealing a character or an idea more vividly.

According Poston (2013),

Incongruency is the term given to the process by which pictures and sounds communicate to viewers a profound discord or conflict. The typical complement of sound by pictures and vice versa is purposely interrupted to connote incongruency. In order to build a particular understanding about a candidate, it is common for a director to make use of incongruent sound with video. (p. 14)

For example, in an ad, an announcer (voice over) may use an unfriendly word to describe a candidate, in this case a negative image is shown. An incongruent image and voice over put an ad target (candidate) in a bad light and has a negative connotation.

Comparing two contradicting pictures could also cause a similar if not the same effect. According to Dancyger (1997), “The shots don’t necessarily provide continuity; the contradiction between shots alters the meaning of the scene” (p. 316). This means that the misplacement of a picture influences how a candidate is perceived. Sound also suggests incongruency. Dancyger (1997) posits that the replacement of expected sound with a sound effect that moves meaning to the opposite extreme and alters the effect of the visual-sound juxtaposition. The conflicting images and sounds can be expressed through editing, camera angle, music colour, graphics and other elements to create a general impression on viewers.

#### **2.6.4 Music**

Music is another component that helps to shape the meaning of TV ads. Music in TV ads is the primary means by which an emotional connection is made with the listener (Hansen, 1989 as cited in Timmerman et al., 2008, pp. 303-324). This is because music expresses the full range of human emotion. Yue (2011) posits that music is one of the most important elements in all the mass electronic advertising. How notes are constructed and played may bring out emotions of regret, angst, anger, alienation, joy, and determination; virtually any range of emotion can be found by simply selecting among available musical options (Timmerman et al., 2008). Music in TV ads serves as an essential device for conveying meaning (Brader, 2006). The manner in which the music is composed has the power to get the listener either like it or dislike it. Western tonal harmony, as explained by Piston (1962), is the foundation of most music heard in the media. Harmony consists of the basic rules about the arrangement of notes played in succession (melody) and notes played at the same time (chords). Poston (2013) indicates that the arrangement of notes and chords reflect one of two scales with each consisting of seven notes: the minor scale and the major scale. At any point in a composition, the composer may deviate from the seven note scale to produce dissonance. Piston (1962) stated, “A dissonant interval sounds unstable, calling for resolution into a consonant interval” (p. 15). The essential quality of dissonance is to create a sense of movement. For instance, the resolution of a dissonant chord into a major chord produces a favorable reaction (Houston & Haddock, 2007). Through common practice over many centuries, Western harmonic rules have provided a common reference point for listeners irrespective of the musical ability of the listener (Piston, 1962).

Poston (2013) states that when hearing or listening to music in a TV ad, listeners are likely to develop harmonic and melodic expectations and this, in turn, affects their emotional involvement with a TV ad. For example, a minor chord may cause one to feel sadness. Music can suggest ideas about candidates that transcend rationale scrutiny. Hansen (1989) suggests that music awakens a primal instinct with strong noncognitive effects on viewers (as cited in Timmerman et al., 2008, pp. 303-324). Music engages the listener in ways that words do not. According to *The Secret Weapon of Advertising*, (n.d.), music and lyrics are 90 times more unforgettable than the spoken words. Music makes the listener feel something which helps to inspire pictures in their heads where they ponder ideas more deeply (Dancyger, 1997).

The 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. The power of the voice over has an impact on the listener. When combined into language, this musical instrument can have a similar effect on the listener in terms of establishing an emotional connection. For example, when speaking with a depressed person, mood congruency is established when the speaker slows down and speaks more softly (Houston & Haddock, 2007). This strategy is commonly found in TV ads, it is to identify and align the emotional state of the speaker with the message of the ad with the aim of getting the attention of the listener.

### **2.6.5 Graphics**

Graphics are used in ads to exaggerate startling information and give different opinions on personal and long held-on-to opinions. Graphics are often used as an additional confirmation of how true or false a candidate is. Graphics can express

urgency and impart a feeling of credibility that comes from the assurance that the matter being discussed is numerical and factual (Brader, 2006).

A graphic helps to send an exact message based on how it is represented. For example, with a graphic of a torn cedi note, its shape, size, colour as presented on-screen helps to send a specific message to viewers.

### **2.6.6 Pictures**

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 (Graber, 2001). Nkana (2015) posit that “Pictures are devoted evidence of reality. They tell, or are supposed to tell stories more than words” (p. 220). Verser and Wicks (2006) state that photographs enable voters to form impressions, opinions, and beliefs about political candidates. Verser and Wicks go ahead to say that even when a candidate’s behavior is completely scripted and rehearsed, aspects of appearance and demeanor inevitably cause viewers to form intuitive understandings concerning the personality behind the images presented. According to Nkana (2015),

“Pictures can create effect and impact on television viewers. They are important in information dissemination and audience mobilisation, and can cause people to act or not act depending on the point of view of the message they carry. Therefore, pictures deserve serious attention since they carry vital information. No matter how pictures are manipulated, the viewer believes in what he sees on the screen because that represents true experience.” (p. 221)

Pictures offer a concise and easily understood story. Pictures are being praised for their semantic, artistic or instructional quality, their satirical exposure of modern life as well as their didactic quality (Nkana, 2015). Idiong (1990) stresses this by asserting that the use of pictures or graphic materials to establish comprehension is integral to learning. On the power of pictures, Mboho (1990) says that a picture speaks a universal language. Nkana (2015) stressed that “television pictures are like any other pictures, subject to the conventional aesthetic rules of picture composition. Their communicative power depends on their quality and aesthetic appeal. Seeing, it is said, is believing” (p. 221).

In this study, pictures in the television ads are very essential components that the researcher looked at in conducting this study. All the components that make up television ads, as have been stated by Poston (2013), are very salient and would guide the researcher in coming up with good, fair and genuine analysis of all the selected political television ads used for this study.

### **2.7 Contextualising meaning using visual and aural elements in communication**

Poston (2013) states that visual and aural techniques are the means by which adverts are constructed. “The general principle behind the ad’s visual/audio relationship is that the viewer must interpret how the picture and the audio go together” (Messaris, 1994, p. 22). Brader (2006) indicates that ads should have “just enough” words to convey the message and enhance the visual imagery. Anute, Deshumukh and Pawar (2005) add that important aesthetic elements employed in television advertising can also include message given (information about the product or service) punch lines, logos and slogans.



Graber (2001) says TV has more emotional power than other forms of political advertising because of the connection between the viewer and the pictures. Pictures falls under visuals elements. Visual messages give the first impression before a person engages his/her logic (Barry, 1997). West, (2005) also posits that visual messages are the most important part of ads. After examining thousands of political ads, Brader (2006) showed that visuals are paramount to the success of the ads. Pictures also play a part in emotional ads. However, since television is an audio-video medium, it is pertinent to combine both picture and sound for the clarification, intensification and interpretation of audience experience (Nkana, 2015). Brader continues to say that political ads are “saturated” with emotion that affects voters. Brader puts the emotional ads into two types, namely feel-good that appeal to hope and enthusiasm; and fear that appeal to a person’s negative side with images, music, and sound effects. The impression given by the ad’s elements creates an effect that is more important than fact or logic (Barry, 1997).

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 the way 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 study was anchored using the framing, priming, and schema theories 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 study revealed that repeated aural and visual patterns in all the ads were used. It then studied how meaning was conveyed when the aural and visual techniques were combined.

## **2.8 Theoretical Framework**

Theories are universal statements that sum up people's thoughts of how the world functions or works (Severin & Tankard, 2001). They indicated that mass communication theories help in providing explanations as to how people learn from the mass media, the uses to which people are putting mass communication, the role of mass media in shaping people's values and views, and the effect of mass communication on the public. The study is situated within the theoretical backings of Framing and Priming.

### **2.8.1 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). This assertion was also supported by Cissel in 2012. 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. In 1991, Shanto Iyengar also adopted the framing analysis in media studies but several of the current frame analysis in media studies are attributed to Entman (1993).

Cissel (2012) indicates that media framing is the way in which information is presented to its audience. According to Entman (1993, p. 52), "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 (political ads) 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. Gamson (1996) also states that framing means to lay emphasis on certain features of the news to denial of others. These assertions also back de Vreese (2005) view of framing which says “it is an influential way of forming and shaping public opinion.” This means that the public is fed with information only suitable to the news producers.

Gitlin (1980) describes the framing process as principles of selection, emphasis and presentation composed of little tacit theories about what exists, what happens and what matters. Tankard (2001) also defines a media frame as a fundamental organizing idea for news content that supplies a context and recommends what the issue is through the use of selection, emphasis, exclusion, and elaboration. Framing, therefore is defined as the way the media disseminate information to its audiences depending on what they deem relevant for public consumption.

Scheufele and Tewksbury (2007) give credit to Entman as offering a detailed explanation of how the media provides audiences with schemas for interpreting events. Subsequently, Entman (1993) notes that news organisations frame reality by

making judgements on inclusion, exclusion, illumination, and suppression. Kuypers (2006) observed that media practitioners or media house who frame facts or events think that other people will perceive facts or events in their intended ways. As Gross (2006) asserted, frames will, be highlighting certain aspects of an event or policy, guide audience member's thoughts about the event or issue in predictable ways, to predictable conclusions. Gitlin (1980) wrote that framing is unavoidable because, at the institutional and individual journalist level, framing is essential to interpret, organize, and understand lots of information. According to Entman (1993) framing, functions to define problems, diagnose causes, make moral judgments, and suggest remedies. 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.

Framing theory has its roots in cognitive psychology, anthropology, sociology, economics, communication science, political communication, public relations and health communication (Van Gorp, 2007). In the context of media messages, Gamson and Modigliani (1989) say framing can be seen as narrative or storyline adding that framing is a creative process and a "symbolic contest over which interpretation will prevail" (p. 2).

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. Poston (2013) states that, 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. Media frames serves as a means of expressing an idea. Kinder

and Nelson (2005) noted that “frames supply a common vocabulary that enable elites and citizens to take part in the same conversation” (p. 116). Additionally, Kinder & Sanders (1996), states that “framing makes certain ideas more prominent in memory and give those thoughts a privileged position”.

Druckman (2011) states that the term frame has varied meanings across disciplines, including cognitive science, economics, sociology, psychology, and more. According to Kinder and Sanders (1996), when it comes to politics, the prototypical approach distinguishes between two uses. Firstly, a frame can refer to the words, images, phrases, and presentation styles a speaker uses to relay information; these are called frames in communication (Cappella & Jamieson, 1997). The frame that the speaker chooses reveals what the speaker believes is most relevant to the topic at hand (Gamson and Modigliani, 1987). For example, a politician who emphasizes economic issues during a political campaign uses an “economy frame,” suggesting economic considerations are pertinent. Same applies to the speaker who stresses on infrastructure issues during a campaign period is using an “infrastructural frame” A frame can refer to an individual’s understanding of a given situation, or what can be called frames in thought (Goffman, 1974).

The frame for a candidate can be compared to an artist painting or a design work. For example, an artist uses some elements and principles of design such as line, colour, light, harmony and perspective to represent reality and suggest an interpretation of an art piece. According to Poston (2013), framing theory in TV ads works in a similar way in that the ad creator is using visual and aural means to suggest a particular

meaning. In TV ads, specific visual and aural techniques are invoked as the “common vocabulary” for understanding a candidate.

This study will also employ the framing theory and its related frames to enable the researcher analyse the contents of the television ads correctly.

### **2.8.2 Priming Theory**

This theory was put forward by Iyengar, Peters, and Kinder in 1982 and labelled it as the priming effect. Priming is considered as the predecessor of agenda setting, one of the theories of media effects. For some, it is a term that is interchangeable with framing (Chong & Druckman, 2007). Priming has its base in cognitive psychology which relates to associative network model of human memory. When Iyengar & Kinder (1987) introduced the term priming to the study of mass communications, they defined it as follows:

“By calling attention to some matters while ignoring others, television news influences the standards by which governments, presidents, policies, and candidates for public office are judged. Priming refers to changes in the standards that people use to make political evaluations”  
(p. 63).

Political media priming is the process in which the media attend to some issues and not others and thereby alter the standards by which people evaluate election candidates. Iyengar and Kinder (1987) found that news coverage encourage viewers to evaluate a given candidate based on what the news story portrays as important. According to Poston (2013), “the idea of priming could apply to television advertising

as well, in that, the creators of the message are presenting the standards by which the voter will judge the candidate” (p. 7). This concept details how one thought may generate associated thoughts. West (2005) used the term priming to describe the process by which the audience point of reference for evaluating a candidate can be influenced greatly by TV advertising:

“In the media era, TV provides some of the most accessible material. By its patterns of coverage and emphasis on particular information, the electronic medium plays a significant role in influencing the standards of evaluation used in voter’s selection of candidates.” (p. 127)

Priming is an important concept in media effects. As framing looks at selecting and emphasizing certain aspects of experience or ideas over others, priming offers explanation on how the information from the media is stored in the human mind and how it influences in making decisions.

The priming theory states that mass media, by making some issues more salient than others, influence “the standards by which governments, presidents, policies, and candidates for public office are judged” (Iyengar & Kinder, 1987, p. 63). West (2005) elaborated on this notion when he suggested voters use available cues rather than relying on a comprehensive and thorough understanding of the candidate’s positions. For the purposes of this study, priming will refer to the process whereby visual aesthetics and aural techniques help to make ideas about candidates more prominent. These ideas, according to Poston (2013) become the criteria by which a candidate is to be evaluated.



## 2.9 Summary

This chapter focused on the premise of Framing and Priming Theory and related it to how political parties and their candidates use the theories to create their television campaign ads to enable them get the attention of electorates.

In reviewing the literature, there was an indication that candidates and their political parties rely on political advertising during election periods. The use of visual and aural techniques in television ads was also an important component that political parties and their candidates utilise during election periods for the purpose of appealing to the conscience of electorates.



## CHAPTER THREE

### METHODOLOGY

#### 3.0 Introduction

This chapter outlines the methods and procedures that were employed in collecting and analyzing data on how visual aesthetics and aural techniques are used in television political advertisement in the 2016 Presidential Elections in Ghana.

Specifically, this chapter entails the study's approach, design, sampling technique, data collection instruments, process and data analysis processes.

#### 3.1 Approach

A qualitative approach was adopted for this study. According to Lindlof and Taylor (2002), qualitative studies interpret the qualities of social phenomena rather than predict relations between predefined variables. The scholars are of the conviction that qualitative researchers seek to preserve and analyse the situated form, content, and experience of social action, rather than subject it to mathematical or other formal transformations. Similarly, my work seeks to analyse the content of the selected political advertisement videos and findings from this study will not be subjected to mathematical interpretation but rather the researcher will make value judgment of issues in these advertisements and interpret them accordingly.

Poston (2013) asserts that a qualitative approach has particular value in understanding visual and aural means of expression. Geske (2009) explains further that qualitative research is a way to deeply reflect on how people, through the text of advertising, construct and interpret realities. Therefore, using qualitative approach in this study

helps in explaining how visual and aural techniques are used in political advertisements in Ghana. It also aids in understanding how the textual elements in the advertisements are combined to help construct an overall message for the political parties and to communicate specific messages to the electorate.

### **3.2 Design**

Parahoo (1997, p.142) describes a research design as “a plan that describes how, when and where data are to be collected and analysed”. Burns and Grove (2003, p.195) also define a research design as “a blueprint for conducting a study with maximum control over factors that may interfere with the validity of the findings”. This study focuses on how visual aesthetics and aural techniques were used in television political campaign advertisements to convey specific and desired messages. The research design for this study is Content Analysis.

#### **3.2.1 Content Analysis**

Content analysis is a widely used qualitative research technique (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). Content analysis has been employed extensively in analyzing printed texts and communication media to be precise. Krippendorff (2004) considers content analysis as a research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from texts (or other meaningful mater) to the context of their use. In this respect, it is the researcher’s preferred design for analyzing the political ads on the television, with a focus on visual aesthetics and aural techniques. This is because Cavanagh (1997) asserts that

Researchers regard content analysis as a flexible method for analyzing text data. Content analysis is usually conducted for one of five purposes, which are, describing communication content, testing

hypotheses of message characteristics, comparing media content to the “real world”, assessing the image of particular groups in society, and establishing a starting point for studies of media effects (Wimmer & Dominick, 2011, p. 157-159).

From the inference above, this study will describe the communication contents in the television political campaign ads to enable the researcher analyse of the text flexibly. The study employed qualitative content analysis to analyse the ads. Hsieh and Shannon (2005) posit that qualitative content analysis is one of numerous research methods used to analyze text data. Babbie (2005) also posits that content analysis is linked to the study of communications. Babbie further states that it is used to answer the classic question of communications research as to: “who says what, to whom, why, how and with what effect?” Sometimes, e.g. within mass media research contexts, it is labeled as data collection method, because it extracts material out of a huge amount of texts. Kondracki and Wellman (2002) indicate that text data might be in verbal, print, or electronic form and might have been obtained from narrative responses, open-ended survey questions, interviews, focus groups, observations, or print media such as articles, books, or manuals. Qualitative Content Analysis focuses on the real content and features within a media text. This study analysed the content of television political ads, which are videos. Based on Kondracki and Wellman’s (2002) assertion, a video is considered as text.

In this study, the researcher used content analysis to describe the content of the ads because it helps to gain in-depth knowledge of the videos being analysed. These videos are made up of visual and aural elements. The researcher has the advantage of

delving deeper into the elements used in creating the videos and that also helped in having detailed meanings and understanding of the content and features within a media text. In this case, content analysis helped the researcher to identify how visual aesthetics and aural techniques were used to convey messages to electorates.

### **3.3 Sampling Techniques**

Sampling is one of the vital parts of every research. Sampling helps to locate the sites for the study. According to Tuckman (1999), sampling is the method of selecting a suitable sample, or a representative part of a population for the purpose of determining parameters or characteristics of the whole population. Lindlof and Taylor (2002) also argue that qualitative researchers adopt sampling in order to direct their choice of observations and respondents to particular characteristics to consider. Lindlof and Taylor further state that the effectiveness of a sampling strategy would be how it enables researchers to methodically collect the necessary information without wasting time and resources. This means making sure that the sampled texts (videos) are that which are needed in order to answer the research questions.

The researcher applied purposive sampling method to select political advertisements for the study. Barreiro and Albandoz (2001) explain purposive sampling as a strategy which the person who is selecting the sample tries to make the sample representative, depending on his opinion or purpose, thus making the representation subjective. Sekaran (2002) adds that purposively sampling a specific data or subjects for a study can provide the desired information either because they are the only ones who have such information or they conform to the criteria of the researcher.

Again, Wimmer and Dominick (2003) purport that purposive sampling includes data that are selected for possessing specific characteristics that are in line with the study. Patton (2015) explains that purposeful sampling is a technique widely used in qualitative research for the identification and selection of information-rich cases for the most effective use of limited resources. Baxter and Jack (2008) assert that availability of subjects that will provide quality data for the study is an important consideration in purposive sampling. The researcher chose to use purposive sampling because it helped the researcher in the identification and selection of information-rich cases and in this case, it was very convenient for the selection of the campaign ads. The purposive sampling technique was used because the videos that were chosen possess specific characteristics that are in line with the study. Purposive sampling was also chosen because it is described by Schwandt (2001) as a situation where sites or cases are chosen because there may be good reason to believe that ‘what goes on there’ is critical to understanding some process or concept or to testing or elaborating some established theory. In this study the researcher had to use the six ads to be able to understand what goes on in the ads.

The inferences stated above by Patton (2015) informed my decision to choose all the television political ads of the NDC and NPP aired on Television as the sampling for this study, but the focus was on the political ads of National Democratic Congress (NDC) and the New Patriotic Party (NPP) shown on Television. The researcher chose the two (2) political parties for the research because they are the two leading political parties in Ghana. Again, these two political parties have been the main parties elected into at different times, since Ghana’s 1992 democratic elections.

Almost all the television stations showed almost every political ad of the NPP and NDC. In order to curtail the sampling to enable the researcher perfectly and conveniently execute the research, the television political ads of both NPP and NDC shown on television during the 2016 Presidential Election were studied.

### **3.4 Sample Size**

Onwuegbuzie and Collins (2007) posit that in qualitative study, the researcher must make a clear decision on the number of respondents to recruit which is known as the sample size. Lindlof and Taylor (2002) posit that sample size is usually considered to be a factor that cannot be decided until much later in the course of a study. Sample size is the number of people or objects in the selected sample (Manheim & Rich, 1999 p.448). The sample size of this study consists of all television political ads of NDC and NPP aired during the period of 2016 Presidential Elections. This period is situated within six (6) months before the general election. Within that period, both the NPP and NDC campaigns and manifestoes were officially launched.

According to Opoku-Amankwa (2009), a purposive sample includes subjects selected on the basis of specific characteristics and eliminates those that do not meet the criteria needed for the study. Using purposive sampling method as stated above, and from the list of TV ads shown on almost all the television stations, six (6) political ads from the National Democratic Congress (NDC) and the New Patriotic Party (NPP) shown on television were selected as the sample size for the study.

The selected six (6) ads have the most striking elements of visual and aural techniques displayed in the ads. The ads studied here were aired at least once during the period of the campaign.

### **3.5 Data Collection Instrument**

Data collection in research is the most vital and important aspect needed to execute any study. Mostly a particular data collection instrument is needed to help collect the necessary data to conduct the research correctly without inconveniences. Abawi (2013) states that data collection allows one to collect the needed information about a study object. The data collection instrument for this study is textual analysis.

#### **3.5.1 Textual Analysis**

Frey, Botan and Kreps (1999) define textual analysis as a method of communication researchers use to describe and interpret the characteristics of a recorded or visual message. McKee (2003) also defines textual analysis as a way for researchers to gather information about how other human beings make sense of the world. Textual analysis involves analysing texts. A text refers to something that people make meaning from (McKee, 2003). Based on the inference of Frey, Botan and Kreps (1999) and McKee (2003), the television political campaign ads used for this study is considered as a text because it is a recorded audiovisual material and it was described and interpreted based on the elements it contained to make meaning to the viewers.

The purpose of textual analysis is to describe the content, structure, and functions of the messages contained in texts (Frey, Botan & Kreps, 1999). In this context, the researcher described the content of the ads and explained the functions (visual and



aural techniques) used in the ads. Frey, Botan and Kreps (1999) further argue that there are four major approaches to textual analysis: rhetorical criticism, content analysis, interaction analysis, and performance studies. This study used the Content Analysis approach. This approach is used to identify, emulate and analyze occurrences of specific messages and message characteristics embedded in texts. The researcher used this approach to identify all the visual aesthetic components and aural techniques employed in the ads, and analysed the components which further enabled the researcher to develop themes that helped in conveying the messages in the selected ads.

In content analysis, researchers are more interested in the meanings associated with messages than with the number of times message variables occur (Frey, Botan & Kreps, 1999). The researcher concentrated on discovering the meaning associated with the visual and aural techniques used by the ad creators in the ads. This method of data collection helped the researcher to understand and extract the components of visual and aural techniques used in the selected ads as well as how they were employed.

### **3.6 Data Collection Process**

This study seeks to know how visual aesthetics and aural techniques were used to convey meaning in the television political ads of both the NPP and NDC during the 2016 Presidential elections in Ghana. The study focused on the ads sponsored by the political parties and affiliate supporting groups of the political parties. During the collection of data for this research, I encountered some difficulties in getting officers in charge of media for the political parties to provide me with the ads they used during

the 2016 presidential elections. This hampered a smooth data collection process. The researcher then had to resort to the YouTube website to enable him download all the videos since they were available for the public. The researcher therefore downloaded all the videos used for this study from YouTube. On YouTube, there were a number of campaign ads that were available on the website so the researcher downloaded a number of them. However, six of the campaign ads were selected for this study because they had the characteristics and components that were needed for this research. Eventually, I collected the ads from youtube.com since ads were made available to the public on the site and also because there is no database for accessing television advertisements in Ghana as was stated by Amegatcher in his research in 2015.

### **3.7 Data Analysis**

The data analysis method used for this research is thematic. Boyatzis (1998) posits that thematic analysis is a type of qualitative analysis which is used in identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns (themes) within data or text. It is used to present themes that relate to the data being analysed. Miles and Huberman (1994) also argue that this style of analysis can be done by coding and categorizing data into themes.

In qualitative study because text and image data are so dense and rich, not all the information gathered can be used. Creswell (2014) indicates that in analyzing data, the researcher needs to ‘winnow’ the information gathered and the impact of this process is to aggregate data into small number of themes. This number of themes can be five to seven (Creswell, 2014). With the inferences made by Creswell, my analysis was set up into smaller themes for easy analysis of the data.

The researcher had to familiarize himself with the videos, understand the messages they carry and look at all the issues in the political campaigns. The researcher watched all the videos multiple times and used a pen and notepad to collate the information related to visuals and aural.

In order to be able to bring out the messages that are conveyed in the selected political parties ads, through the use of the visual aesthetics and aural techniques that have been described and analyzed in research question one, the researcher had to come up with themes.

In coming up with the themes, the researcher had to pay a lot of attention to the use of these visual and aural components and how they helped the political parties to convey their messages to their audiences. The process of generating themes was started by taking a critical look at the visual aesthetics and how they were used in the ads to understand the roles they played in conveying the message that the political parties wanted to put across. The researcher kept a note pad in which he jotted some important issues that were noted in the videos. The videos were watched over and over again and this time the researcher looked out for the aural techniques used and how they helped the message in the ads. Again, the researcher jotted some notable issues with regard to the use of aural techniques in the videos.

In generating the themes, the researcher took note of the issues that kept recurring in all the six selected political ads. In doing this, attention was given to how the visual aesthetics and the aural techniques helped the political parties convey their messages to their audiences. After studying the videos carefully, it was realized that some of the

issues run through or were recurring and so were noted in the researchers note pad. The recurring issues were put together into themes. The researcher read through the generated themes over and over to see if some of the themes could be broken down further and whether some of them could be collapsed into others. The researcher finally came up with four (4) themes namely; Persuasion, Consistency, Religion and Appeal.

### **3.8 Ethical Issues**

Any research study ought to have a number of ethical dimensions to enrich it. This relates to moral standards that the researcher should consider in all research methods in all stages of the research design. Creswell (2014) indicates that in conducting a study, attention needs to be directed toward ethical issues prior to conducting the study. This study recognized the ethical issues regarding the areas of ethical concerns outlined by Creswell. Prior to conducting this study, approval was obtained from the Department of Communication and Media Studies of the University of Education, Winneba to conduct the study. In developing the central idea of a study, Creswell (2014) states that the deception occurs when the researcher does not disclose the purpose of the study to the participants. This research work did not need the involvement of participants, it only called for the researcher to content analyse the visual and aural components of the videos of the political parties' campaign ads. Official Letters were obtained from the Department of Communication and Media Studies and delivered to the two (2) political parties informing them of this study. Also, all the sources used in this research were duly acknowledged in the form of in-text citation and bibliography. The final report reflects a true outcome of the study because the researcher bracketed his biases and analysed the issues genuinely.

### **3.9 Chapter Summary**

This chapter looked at the method employed for the study. It also dealt with the approach and research design which encompassed the design strategy, the data-collection processes and data analysis. The sampling technique for the study, that is the purposive sampling technique and why it was chosen for this study was also discussed. The chapter also dealt with the instruments used in collecting the data.



## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS**

#### **4.0 Introduction**

This chapter discusses the research questions that the study sought to answer. The research seeks to answer the following questions;

1. What are the visual aesthetics and aural techniques used in the political ads?
2. How do visual aesthetics and aural techniques help in conveying the messages of the selected political ads?

The research questions would be answered based on the description of the visual aesthetic components and aural techniques used in the six ads chosen for the study. The research question two then discusses how these techniques and components help the political parties to communicate their messages to their audience. This would be done by generating themes upon which the discussions would be based. The chapter would conclude with a brief summary.

#### **4.1 R1. What are the visual aesthetic components and aural techniques used in the political ads?**

In answering research question one, a detailed description of the selected ads were done. In order to understand the various techniques and visual components used in the selected political ads, the researcher did a detailed analysis of the components and how they were used.

This section starts with the detailed description of all the six selected ads and then it is followed by an identification of the various components that are used in the ads.

The visual aesthetics used and aural techniques identified in the ads analyzed were Camera Movement, Special Effects (Colour, distortion, voice over & sound), Editing (Pacing, montage) Graphics (*Text*), Pictures and Music.

#### **4.1.1 Description of NPP Television Ad One**

This campaign ad talks about infrastructure and how the New Democratic Congress (NDC) Party used that against the New Patriotic Party (NPP) to score political points during a previous presidential election. The ad has 6 scenes and each lasted one (1) minute and five (5) seconds.

The video opens with Mr. Mahama making a speech which was recorded during the 2008 elections campaign; the scene was filmed in grayscale (black and white). Mr. Mahama was standing behind a set of microphones with two (2) gentlemen who partially appeared in the video standing behind him. The platform they stood on had a plain background. The second scene was shot full colour with a gentleman who was speaking on behalf of NPP. The scene had a pale but not plain background, with part of a yellow door appearing behind the gentleman. The third scene was also shot in black-and-white with Mr. Mahama sitting in his office. The background is an office setting with the Ghana flag appearing in the left side of the video just behind Mr. Mahama. The fourth scene had the same representation as the second scene. The fifth scene displays the Presidential Candidate for the NPP, Nana Addo Dankwa Akuffo-Addo's picture boldly positioned on the left side of the video frame, with the NPP

emblem placed at the right top corner of the video frame. Underneath the emblem, is a red and blue vector shape with “Change is Coming” inscription on both colours. The sixth and final scene opens with a sky blue gradient background. In the middle of the background colour is a white rectangular vector which has three (3) parts resembling a ballot sheet. First on the rectangular vector shape is Nana Addo Dankwa Akuffo-Addo’s picture on the left, the NPP emblem in the middle, and an impression printed by a thumb. Far below the rectangular vector shape reads “Authenticate at [www.newpatrioticparty.org](http://www.newpatrioticparty.org)”. The sixth scene also has some editing features, and following that is an “Endorsed by the NPP” design.

The first and third scenes are speeches by the leader and presidential candidate for the NDC, Mr. John Dramani Mahama. The second and fourth scenes feature a gentleman who spoke on behalf of the NPP. He acts as a mediator between the two speeches of Mahama and the fifth scene. In the first scene, Mr. Mahama says

“When a presidential candidate (reference was being made to Nana Addo Dankwa Akuffo-Addo, NPP Presidential Candidate, 2008) launched his campaign he said this election is about a comparison of records. That is a recipe for mediocrity. The fact that the government (NDC) before you built 20 hospitals and you (NPP government) built 23 hospitals, you are happy that you performed better than the government that preceded you. It is a recipe for mediocrity”.

Mahama branded that talk as “a recipe for mediocrity”.

In the second scene, the gentleman representing the NPP in the ad makes mockery of Mr. Mahama’s speech, and stressed in the local dialect that “if comparison of records



is a recipe for mediocrity, then listen to the same person” (Mahama talks in the third scene). Mahama states how his government has increased accessibility of water from 58% in 2008 to 76% in 2014/2015. He continues to mention explicitly that his government had increased the number of health training institutions to about 95% from 34%. The NPP representative comes in the fourth scene to make fun of Mr. Mahama’s comments and says that the leader of the NDC has shot himself in the foot. The fifth scene comes with a background song which is the NPP’s official song and voice over that says “Vote for change”. The song that plays in the background continue through the sixth scene till the video ends. The sixth scene showed a ballot sheet with Nana Addo’s picture and a finger is seen to be thumb printing the right side of the sheet, which is in the space provided in front of the presidential candidate. A stamp is seen endorsing the ad which reads, “Endorsed by the NPP”.

In conclusion, the ad portrays Mahama as a liar and a leader who should not be trusted since his two comments in the ad were self-contradictory, in effect telling the viewer to choose the NPP over the NDC.

#### **4.1.2 Camera**

The camera captures the important scenes that are used to frame a candidate or a political party literally or symbolically. Framing is about making certain information in a text salient (Entman, 1993). The camera is also used in the similar manner, in that, it is used to provide a margin of information, specifically selecting a particular point of view for the audience to see 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.

### **4.1.3 Close-up shot**

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 viewers.

### **4.1.4 Special Effects**

The above ad features 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.

#### **4.1.4.1 Picture Distortion**

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. It encourages the viewer to associate negative attributes to Mahama.

#### **4.1.5 Colour**

Colour played its role in the ad to illicit a negative and positive reaction. 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 black and white to suggest to viewers

#### **4.1.6 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.

#### **4.1.7 Vocal Delivery**

The human voice is a musical instrument that employs all the elements of sound such as rhythm, melody, tempo, pitch and rate (Poston, 2013; p.16). 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 melodious voice for the voice-over, which said “vote for change” to probably get the attention of viewers since the voice is pleasing to the ears.

#### **4.2 Description of NDC Television Ad One**

The 60 seconds ad opens with a popular Nigerian song ‘Godwin’ playing in the background. Three key words; ‘EDUCATION’, ‘WATER’, ‘HEALTHCARE’ are written over a sky background with a hoisted Ghana flag. All the above stated keywords were written with bold fonts and rendered in white colour. These three words; later separated with red lines are arranged on a green thin line and beneath it is the inscription, ‘change is happening’. It is accompanied by a picture of President Mahama in a white buttoned up shirt with a rectangular lapel pin bearing the colours of the Ghana flag on his left breast pocket.

The next scene shows a group of school children sitting on desks under a hut in a village setting. Later it shows another hut with a man and a woman, probably teachers, standing before the children. There is also a man with a camera in hand shooting from among the children. The next scene shows school children on the

compound of a properly built school building. There is a quick switch to students in a well-furnished classroom taking an exam and it is followed by students using computers in class. The next scene is a bird view of the school building showing its plan, neatly painted white with violet roofing and the picture of President Mahama in a white shirt with a design of the Ghana flag colours on his left breast pocket. The green grass that separated the walking paths could also be seen. The caption ‘SCHOOLS NOW’ written in white colour could be read. The school environment is dominated with lots of green vegetation and trees.

The next scene is that of a nucleated settlement, with several yellow gallons, buckets and basins all around two water sources. It seems to be an almost hopeless situation of a struggle for water. A similar scene with women queuing with their gallons for water is also shown. The two water crisis scenes are accompanied with the caption ‘WATER BEFORE’. This is followed by still pictures of dams and water bodies and built water connectivity showing the engineering works and machines and regulators for such dams. The next are two images placed side by side of an elderly woman fetching pipe borne water in a home setting. The woman fetches a little into her scooped palm and throws it in the air with much joy. There is also a boy with both hands rightly under flowing pipe borne water, with some of the water dripping from his wide-opened mouth. They both have cheerful faces as though they are glad to have access to portable water. President Mahama’s picture is seen on the right side of the screen and the caption “WATER (NOW)” could be read in between both pictures. The Ridge Hospital in Accra is also captured, looking old and unpainted with a caption ‘RIDGE BEFORE’. This is immediately followed with a picture of a new edifice and different building with the caption ‘RIDGE NOW’. The new building has

a wooden and glass finishing. It is painted white and there is a sign post in front of it with the inscription 'RIDGE' and also two logos to both sides. The ad goes on to show the interior décor of the hospital with some equipment supposedly for health purposes.

#### **4.2.1 Camera Movement**

This ad is dominated by still photos of the state of Ghana before President Mahama was given the nod to lead the nation and current pictures of the projects his government has completed. The movement from one picture to the other serves the purpose of balance, rhythm and visual appeal. The excitement expressed on the faces of the woman fetching water from a tap and that of the school boy drinking water communicates to the viewer that their needs have been met. The aforementioned puts the viewer in a position to critically evaluate and judge the sitting president contrastively.

#### **4.2.2 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.

### **4.2.3 Colours**

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. 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

### **4.2.4 Graphics**

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.

### **4.2.5 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 have 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.

### **4.3 Description of NPP Television Ad Two**

The ad communicates that voting for the NPP Presidential Candidate, Nana Addo Dankwa Akuffo-Addo will end eight years of hardship and deception to restore the value of Ghana. The 59-second ad opens with a serene, bird-view of an outskirts community which is filled with green vegetation and few houses. Three (3) cloud-like streams of the NPP colours, blue, white and red suddenly appear.

The three cloud-like streams of the NPP colours travel over a long stretch of landscape across the country. It stretches over an outskirts of a town, very likely a newly developed area with very few completed buildings, vegetation and views of mountains and hills across a forest area.

The three streams of colours intermittently intertwine themselves and then go back in single colour streams. They travel over an urban area with certain landmarks that give an idea that they are travelling over some parts of Accra and also run over some principal streets in the country.

In the next scene, the three streams of colours catch the attention of different categories of people. A young lady talking on her cell phone gets caught by the fast travelling streams and in her amazement takes the phone off her ears. The streams travel from one location to another in a very fast pace. A young man driving his car gets distracted and veers off to admire the streams of colours. The streams are also seen to have passed through identifiable places like the University of Ghana Business School in Accra, where another young lady, in astonishment, runs to catch a glimpse of the fast travelling streams.



The next scene also comes with two (2) ladies walking along the street. One is in a NPP branded T-shirt with the picture of Nana Addo Dankwa Akuffo-Addo, NPP Presidential Candidate, while the other lady is in a black T-shirt. The one in the black taps the lady in the NPP branded T-shirt drawing her attention to the fast moving streams of the red, white and blue colours. They both look up in disbelief. The streams keep moving and we see some children happily running after them and jumping, probably, with the hope of tangibly touching it.

The streams of colours travel over an area in Accra called Osu, specifically Danquah Circle, and the three cloud-like streams of red, white and blue fuse together across the sky. There is a quick flashback of all the previous scenes where the people were watching in astonishment and the streams flash a bright light over a brightened sky and then fuse together to form the NPP emblem with the picture of the Presidential Candidate Nana Addo Dankwa Akuffo-Addo in the middle of the logo covering the Elephant image.

There is a voice over introducing Nana Addo Dankwa Akuffo-Addo and encouraging electorates to vote for him. The inscription “Vote 2016” could be read at the topmost part of the emblem and below it is the NPP’s theme for the election year “Change is Coming”.

The ad ends with an image of the NPP emblem boldly covering almost the entire video frame.

### **4.3.1 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.

### **4.3.2 Special Effects**

#### **4.3.2.1 Colour**

In this ad, the creators made good use of the traditional colours of the NPP from the beginning to the end of the ad. The three (3) cloud-like streams of the NPP colours were used to hover around the nation.

#### **4.3.3.2 Voice Delivery**

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.

#### **4.4 Description of NDC Television Ad Two**

This is a 31-second ad, and it focuses on a water project done by incumbent, President John Dramani Mahama. It opens with a man dressed like a farmer standing in front of a maize farm. Although the man spoke in a local language (twi), the words are subtitled in English. He spoke on behalf of the people of Mampong and thanked the President for making it possible for them to have potable drinking water. He expresses the difficulty they had in getting get potable water in times past and how the efforts of the President have freed them from that struggle.

The man's voice partially serves as a voice over, while the video plays scenes of greened vegetation, a dam, a white painted building and neatly tarred street. Another scene showing water gushing out, probably, from a built water source is also shown. The representative of Mampong ends his testimonial by encouraging the President to continue his good work.

After the man's words, the popular Nigerian song "God win" plays at the background. The video continues with a scene of President John Mahama on an NDC decorated campaign platform with his wife Mrs. Lordina Mahama standing next to him. He wears a black trousers and white NDC branded T-shirt, he also has dark sunglasses (shades) on. He points his index finger towards the sky.

Then comes a white background with red and black colours flagged across the lower right corner, it is followed by a hashtag with the inscription “JM Toaso”, which means “JM continue”.

The ad ends with an image of President John Mahama wearing a white shirt with the colours of the Ghana flag imprinted on his breast pocket. The background displays two colours: black and red, flagged to the right side of the screen. The inscription “Vote” could be read on the left side and “John Mahama 2016” on the right beneath the NDC logo.

The last scene shows a ballot sheet numbered ‘3’, a picture of the President, the NDC logo and thumb-print indicating a vote.

#### **4.4.1 Bird-Eye Camera**

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 party to enable viewers appreciate the work done so far.

#### **4.5 Description of NPP Television Ad Three**

This ad begins with a voice over, while the grayscale background displays a newsletter with blurred words. The words in the voice over are captured on the screen emphasizing that idea the NDC’s eight years in government has brought nothing but hardship and international embarrassment. Certain key words, ‘Ghana’, ‘hardship’ and ‘embarrassment’ are all flagged red, for emphasis.

The next scene captures President Mahama wearing a smock delivering his speech at the Ecowas meeting. In the act of reading the speech, he pauses briefly and looks back as though he is looking out for something or someone. The scene captures the silence and seating arrangement of heads of states and dignitaries on the podium and that of the audience. To his right is the Nigerian President, Goodluck Jonathan. President Mahama indicates to all present that he cannot locate some pages of his speech and is not sure what might have happened.

The next scene captures the president in an interview with a journalist who poses a question of how the economy of Ghana got to a bad stage under his watch. The President takes an unusually long pause and stammers slightly in his attempt to answer the question. The voice continues to describe the two scenarios as incompetence, clueless and embarrassing Ghana. Two pictures of the NPP presidential candidate flashes the screen concurrently. In the first photo he is wearing a blue-black suit over a white shirt and necktie. In the second photo he is wearing a white African style shirt with stripes of the NPP colours running from the neck down to the chest. Meanwhile the voice goes ahead to admonish the public to vote wisely and vote for Nana Addo.

The ad ends with a picture of the NPP flagbearer wearing a black jacket over a white shirt. Beneath his picture is the caption 'NANA AKUFO-ADDO FOR PRESIDENT. To the right side of the screen is NPP logo and right beneath it is another caption 'CHANGE IS COMING' written over a red and blue background.

After this, there appears a blue background showing a sample ballot paper with Nana Addo's picture to the left, the NPP logo in the middle and a thumb voting, thereby leaving a thumb print on the right end of the paper. A short jingle singing 'change is coming' accompanies the rest of the ad. A stamp presses on the background and leaves on it the inscription 'endorsed by the NPP'. It is followed by a red check sign, marking the sample ballot paper with the thumb print to end the ad.

#### **4.5.1 Camera**

The ad creators combined both long and middle shot camera technique of the incumbent President John Mahama at an ECOWAS Summit and a One-on-One interview with a TV Host.

#### **4.5.2 Special Effects**

##### **4.5.2.1 Picture Distortion**

The original videos that were displayed in this ad were cast in full colour, but the ad creators distorted it to give it a poor outcome by rendering it in a poor grayscale 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.

##### **4.5.2.2 Colour**

The pictures and videos used in this ad are rendered in grayscale and partially coloured but in a poor quality to give the video an antiquated look even though its

original was shot in full colour. 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.

#### **4.5.3 Editing**

In this ad, the creators thought of framing the incumbent president Mr. Mahama as incompetent, clueless and an embarrassing character who does not fit to be voted for as president of Ghana. This was done by strategically cutting Mr. Mahama's speech to emphasise 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 see 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.

##### **4.5.3.1 Pacing**

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.

#### **4.5.3.2 Incongruency**

In this ad, the video of the president is intentionally disrupted by the ad creators to portray a negative image of President John Mahama to the viewer. This ad takes Mr. Mahama's mistakes in a speech and an interview and turns them against him. The voice over displays the image of an incompetent politician who does not care so much about the country and further depicted as a disorganized president. This is in contrast to the real Mr. Mahama, who is normally portrayed and seen as a communication expert and a well composed individual.

#### **4.6 Description of NDC Television Ad Three**

This ad starts with a student talking about how a new edifice (a school building) has made it possible for some of them to be enrolled into Senior High School. The student is wearing a violet checked dress which resembles a school uniform as he stands in front of a school building. The next scene comes with a quick flash of President Mahama's photo. Then a man, presumably a teacher, standing in front of the same school building comes on to also talk about how the edifice has helped most of the students who were home based until it was built.

After the man's words, the popular Nigerian song "God win" plays at the background. The video continues with a scene of President John Mahama on an NDC decorated campaign platform with his wife Mrs. Lordina Mahama standing next to him. Also, to his left is a former Foreign Affairs Minister, Hannah Tetteh and to his right, a former NDC Party Chairman, Mr. Kofi Portuophy. The President is wearing a black trousers and white NDC branded T-shirt. He also has dark sunglasses (shades) on. He points



his index finger towards the sky. This is followed with two other flashes of the President with the same pose of him pointing his index finger towards the skies.

Then comes a white background with red and black colours flagged across the lower right corner. It is followed by a hash sign with the inscription “JM Toaso”, which means “JM continue”. An image of the President wearing a white shirt with the colours of the Ghana flag imprinted on his breast pocket is then displayed. The background displays two colours black and red, flagged to the right side of the screen. The inscription “Vote” could be read on the left side and “John Mahama 2016” on the right beneath the NDC logo.

#### **4.6.1 Camera**

##### **4.6.1.1 Close-Up Shot**

Ad creators used close-up shot to get viewers’ attention on the subject while the female student speaks. Same was done for another subject while he was talking about the benefits students are enjoying after a new classroom block has been constructed by President John Mahama. This camera technique appears warm and draws the viewer’s attention in a direct and personal manner. This is in line with Heiderich (n.d) assertion that close up shots appear more intimate than the medium shot, the expressions and emotions of an actor (candidate) are more visible and affecting and are meant to engage the character in a direct and personal manner. The gestures contributed in drawing the attention of the viewer to actually know the essence of the infrastructural development done by President Mahama. The ad creators used that camera technique to engage viewers to concentrate on the good initiatives of the NDC party.

#### **4.6.1.2 Camera movement**

In this ad, the camera shows a crowd of students heading towards a new constructed classroom block. The camera moves in a tracking shot over the crowd of students. In this specific ad, the high horizontal tracking of the camera does seem to generate feelings of excitement. Viewing from above, the students confirm excitement of moving into the new edifice with an added message that reads “most of our students were sitting in the house without money to go to school but this edifice is adding a lot to academic work in the area”. In this regard, viewers would evaluate John Mahama based on what the ad (news story) stressed which is his contribution to education.

#### **4.6.2 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.

#### **4.6.3 Colour**

A pale background was employed by the ad creators 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.

#### **4.6.4 Music**

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.

#### **4.6.5 Graphics**

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.

#### **4.7 R2. How do visual aesthetic components and aural techniques help in conveying the messages of the selected political ads?**

The research question two seeks to look at how visual aesthetics and aural techniques help in conveying the messages of the selected political ads. Through the literature that was reviewed for the study and the theories that underpinned this study, some themes were derived and are discussed in this section.

#### **4.7.1 Persuasion**

The theme of persuasion was in full display in all the ads of both parties.

In the NDC video One, the focus was on three very important sectors of the Ghanaian economy; Education, Water and Health Care. Through transitional effects, progress made so far by the NDC government was matched with the states they were met when they assumed office. The first scene portrayed the strides made by the NDC government in the Educational sector. Still pictures showing the deplorable conditions of schools in the previous government were used. To portray the progress made by the NDC government in this sector, motion pictures showing a more conducive environment for education were used. The struggles of getting portable water before the assumption of the NDC government was also depicted with still pictures which clearly reflected queues of people with pans and cans, suggesting an acute shortage of water. In transition, still pictures and motion pictures that suggest the sheer availability of portable water to the comfort of the Ghanaian citizen were emphasized. Subsequently, the comparison of a popular dilapidated hospital in the NPP government's era and the ultramodern refurbishment the hospital has seen under the NDC government was also used to reflect a vast change in infrastructure in the health sector as well. These comparisons suggest an absolute change in the sectors of education, health and water. This persuasive means of comparison in the video put forward clearly what the NDC government has been able to do so far.

Another overt feature of the video is the use of colours throughout the video. To facilitate an equal evaluation of the achievements of the then and now government, the ad employed coloured still and motion pictures. This facilitated the appeal of the ad to impress the viewer to keenly evaluate every detail. This emphasizes Poston

(2013) statement that suggests grayscale pictures as pictures that give the viewer a past impression of ideas portrayed. This would have defeated the purpose of comparison on the same scale.

The NDC video 2 features coloured scenes throughout the video. The colourful video shows a serene environment where portable water is produced. But the scene which shows the water produced was not well manipulated. The water flowing out of the tap is not as clean as the ad purports. It rather portrays a well-structured water project in a serene environment which is not enough to suggest that portable water is being produced there. Moreover, the video casts a person who speaks the native language of the people of Mampong. He portrays himself as an individual who has stayed in the vicinity for a long time and is grateful for the deeds of the NDC government. This implies the ad may have cast a native of the area to give a testimony of his experiences under this government. This emphasizes the validity of the message portrayed in the ad.

In the NDC Video 3, the setting of the motion picture was staged right in front of the edifice, which shows that the individuals who gave their accounts are from the school. The free movement of students in the background also presupposes that the school was in session and the pupils were on break. The fact that the background showed students on recess indicates that the individuals selected to give their accounts were randomly selected. Hence their accounts cannot be perceived as contrived.

Basically, the three NDC videos showed the various projects their government undertook which are prominent infrastructural developments spread across the

country. They were artistically presented through contrasting themes which compared the infrastructural effort put in by the previous government in key areas of the economy to that of the incumbent government. And in each instance the opposition party, the NPP was significantly flayed.

The NPP, to refute the claims in these ads by the incumbent government, also developed similar short adverts. 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. 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 handling of scenes in the ad were 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 President John Mahama has a priming effect on viewers or voters in that he is negatively evaluated as a liar, inconsistent and an embarrassing character that Ghanaians cannot trust let alone have as a president. 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 intercessor 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 intercessor was saying by pitching high the volume as against Mr. Mahama's speeches which had the volume pitched lower than the intercessor's.

The NPP ad 3 continues to paint President John Mahama as an embarrassing figure to the nation Ghana. It focused on excerpts extracted from two international platforms that President John Mahama's apt leadership qualities became questionable. The two scenes 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 the video indicates the use of grayscale (black and white) in the scenes involving President John Mahama, a thematically sad tunes 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 persuasive 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 flagbearer of the party. This manipulation of colours, cast, music and text editing was to indict the flagbearer of the NDC and hoist the flagbearer of the NPP as a better candidate.

The second video of the NPP (NPP 2) portrays the flagbearer of the party as a theatric messiah. The voice over in the ad had a booming effect. It is portrayed in the biblical indication of the messiah. The three cloud-like streams of red, white and blue are effectively manipulated to outdoor the flagbearer of the NPP as the messiah to save Ghana from her predicaments. The logo of the party is effectively positioned to block the face of the sun, which is considered a powerful element in the universe. Meaning when the NPP is given the nod they will ensure good governance of the country as the sun oversees the happenings of this world. This persuasive imagery of the party’s flagbearer was to imply the candidate as the most powerful opponent among all the other contenders. This is finally crowned with all the cast endorsing him by a devoted thumbs-up.

The theme of persuasion also comes into play again. This time the NPP ad creators manipulated previous speeches of Mr. Mahama to carry out a message about how clueless the man is. In NPP ad 3, two of these speeches were deliberately repeated in a way that sent a message of confusion to the electorates, to play on the minds of viewers on how incompetent Mr. Mahama and his NDC government were by



manipulating the colours and shades that the ad is produced in. It is worth noting that in the ad all the aspects in the add about NDC were shown in black and white while all that of NPP were rendered in coloured even though the original video of the NDC was actually cast in full colour. The producers manipulated the video to cast down the NDC in those colours but showed themselves (NPP) in full colour to help them give themselves prominence and also send the message to electorates that the NDC is in the past now and they NPP are now going to win the current election.

Again, with the use of colours, NPP was able to send a message of hope to the electorates about how they will shine bright the hopes of the Ghanaian compared to the NDC who are already seen in the black and white which do not bring any excitement or hope.

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 NPP ad creators pitched the volume of the NDC video lower and increased that of the NPP to give viewers aesthetic energy of hearing the information being provided by the intercessor of NPP over the speech of the NDC by Mr. Mahama.

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

#### 4.7.2 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, original full coloured videos were converted to black and white and grayscale by the ad creators to portray a negative effect to viewers about the deceit and incompetence of Mr. Mahama and his government. This supports West (2005) claim that grayscale or black and white colours often give negative connotations.

In all the three NDC ads that were selected for the study, two of them talked about education and water. In those two ads, still and motion pictures of the many schools that the NDC had built while in power were used. This consistency gives viewers a positive impression that Mr. Mahama and his government prioritize and value education, and this was evident in the ads. The consistent nature of the ads also helped convey the very messages in those ads.

Consistency was also seen in the use of background music for the ads. The ad creators used the same background music for all the selected NDC ads. This consistency is likely to influence viewers to associate themselves with ads of the NDC.

Again, consistency was displayed in NPP ad 1 and 3 where past videos of the Mr. Mahama giving a speech and in an interview was used in framing him as a blatant

liar, an incompetent and a clueless man and someone who continually embarrasses Ghanaians and Ghana as a whole on the international stage.

Subsequently, 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 “JMToaso” 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. Dancyger (1997) notes that a moving camera generates excitement. In NPP ad 2, ad creators used the bird's eye camera angle to give viewers a broader view of events as they are displayed in the ads to establish setting. The movement of the camera throughout the country in the ad gives the viewers an impression of how the NPP is monitoring the state of affairs in Ghana, and when given the nod they would see to it that all aspects of the economy would be seriously monitored. The camera movements employed in this ad help to generate feelings of excitement and change for viewers.

The same bird-eye camera technique was also employed in NDC ads 1 and 2. On the 19-second mark of NDC ad 1, ad creators used this technique to show a wide view of the “*E Block*” to give viewers the opportunity to see the great impact done in infrastructure towards education by the Mahama-led NDC government. The bird-eye camera technique was on display on the 26-second mark of NDC ad 1 and 3-second mark of NDC ads 2. This time it was used to show the development in Water Projects done by Mr. Mahama’s NDC government to get viewers to know his contribution to national development during his tenure of office. Same technique was used on the 37 second mark of the NDC ad 1 where a renovation of “Ridge Hospital” in Ghana was shown to make viewers recognize the enormous contribution of the NDC government. The use of camera serves a priming function (Poston, 2013). Poston says that, when ad creators make camera decisions they are choosing some of the standards by which the viewers will base on to judge the candidates or the parties, in this case, evaluate Mr. Mahama’s work.

A close-up camera shots contains just one character's face. This enables viewers to understand the candidate's emotions and also allow viewers to feel empathy for the character. In the case of all the tail ends of the NDC ads, this technique was employed to project Mr. Mahama and to increase the emotional intimacy between viewers and Mr. Mahama. This supports Kaid (2004) statement that close-ups camera technique creates warmth and intimacy with the viewers. On the part of NPP ad 1 and 3, the same close-up camera technique was used, but this time the oral communication was negative as compared to preferred response expected when one uses the close-up camera technique in an ad. Poston (2013) posits that the use of close-up camera

strategy in ads increases the power of framing by selecting for the viewer a more intimate view of a candidate.

#### **4.7.3 Religion**

Religion refers to the belief in, and worship of a supernatural supreme being. It is characterized by showing an esteemed reverence to one's object of worship. Ghana is a very religious country therefore integrating themes of religious nature into a viral political ad has political relevance.

Both the NDC and NPP ads analysed adopted the use of religious themes. Current statistics show that about 70% of Ghanaians are Christians with a larger chunk of the remaining populace been Muslims. These prominent religious groups (Christians and Muslims) believe in a one True God who dwells on high. Therefore looking up in the skies implies looking up to God or Allah.

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.

Further, a smile is mostly an expression of delight, fulfillment and hope. Mr. Mahama wore a smile in all the still pictures used to portray him as a religious individual. This was to indicate how religiously astute he is. The first two still pictures, portrays Mr. Mahama as one who delights in declaring where his help comes from. The last picture shows him as an individual who either feels fulfilled with what his supreme being has done or as one who is rest assured (hope) of the capabilities of his maker. This depiction of Mr. Mahama was to buttress the fact that he is indeed religious.

The three NPP ads analysed in this study, showed less religious themes, compared to the NDC ads. They were more politically inclined than religious. However, 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 video showed three whirling clouds, with the colours of the NPP swiftly moving through suburbs in 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, is a sign to indicate the second coming of “*the saviour*” is near. Eventually this thrilling announcement of an incoming saviour is culminated with the NPPs flagbearer appearing in the heavens as the Christian prophecy suggests. Finally, the revelation of the flagbearer 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. Comparing the level of religious themes used in the NDC ads to that of the NPP ads, it can be clearly seen that, the NDC ads showed a candidate who is more religious than that of the NPP’s candidate. It can therefore be inferred from the adverts that, the NDC wanted to portray their candidate as a more upright individual among the other candidates. As the ads creators have tried to portray both parties, viewers have the final say to evaluate the candidates and thereby make their decision as to who to vote for.

#### **4.7.4 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 music appealed more to youth as of the time. 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. In these ads, the music which would be termed as ‘Hip Life’ in Ghana was often enjoyed by the younger generation and by so doing the ad creators strategically appealed to the youth by using the *God win* music.

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. In the ad, it is seen that the roofing of the “E Block” is purple and the students are also in purple uniforms. This creates a feeling of uniformity in the eyes of the viewers and also makes it very attractive to the viewers. Naturally, any student or parent watching the video would love to attend such school or would want their wards to be there because of the appealing nature of the environment.



In addition, anyone watching the video will identify the beautiful interior decors in the classroom which are made very attractive and appealing through the use of close-up shots. 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. Again, the creative directors of the ad intentionally framed the images to look so appealing to the eyes and this has a way of convincing the voters of all the projects they undertook while in office and to appeal to the emotions of the audience so that they would vote for them. 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. Colours have a greater effect on attention (Farley & Grant, 1976). 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.

One of the effective ways that the ad creators used to successfully send the message to the audience is through the use of the high camera resolutions. The camera resolutions that were used in all the ads were very high and made the ads very appealing and attractive. The theme of appeal goes a long way to help persuade the audience. Appeals are very important if a marketing communications person wants to persuade an audience to patronize their goods and services. The audience will first need to make an emotional and rational appeal to the audience. This is seen in the NPP ad 2 where the cloud-like streams of colours are seen running through some of the important places in Accra. The remarkable thing about that ad is that whoever saw the colours in the sky stood for a while to look at the colours. It depicts how the people got attracted to the ad and had no option but to stand there and take a second gaze. In bringing out the issues that depict how attractive and appealing the colours streaming in that fast movement way, the theme of appeal also becomes very evident because the people who stood to watch the fast moving streaming colours included children and adults. This explains why the ad is able to appeal and attract all generations, both old and young. Usually, an appealing image makes people stop in their tracks take a better gaze. In this ad, creators used the streaming colours to attract the attention of the people including children who are running after the sight just for the fact that they got attracted to it. In helping to convey the message, the ad creators were able to send the message that the NPP is a much attractive and appealing party for both the young and the old. Again, the fact that the people stood and watched the streaming colours which eventually was depicting the coming of Nana Addo as the presidential candidate was very successful because all the people who would have been attracted by the colours to stop and watch, will have the opportunity to get the message that they should vote for the NPP presidential aspirant.

The theme of appeal also comes to bear in the NDC ad 1. The excitement on the faces of the woman and the school boy fetching portable water provided by Mr. Mahama appeals to the emotions of the viewers. The joy expressed by the two characters to show how happy they are to have pipe borne water in their homes will surely create an emotional appeal. Through this, the NDC is able to send a message of how caring and sensitive they are to the needs of Ghanaians.

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. In the NDC ad 1 the text is written with a very clear and bold font. The font style attracts attention and is very appealing. The following words: 'EDUCATION', 'WATER', 'HEALTHCARE' are written over a sky background with a hoisted Ghana flag. All the above stated keywords were written with bold fonts and rendered in white colour for the sake of contrast and emphasis and this creates a rational appeal. Through this proper use of text and font, the NDC is able to appeal rationally to the intellect of their audience to communicate their policies and achievements of their government.

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 appeals to the viewer's sense of hearing.

Voice overs played key roles in catching people's attention to the ad and through that very strong, commanding and clear voice, the ad creators had the intention of telling

the electorates to vote for the NPP Presidential Candidate. The voice artists can imbue the script with emotion. Professionals know where to pause and where to change the inflection of their voice and most of the ads used this to send messages to the target audience. The viewer makes an emotional connection and becomes invested. The tone used and the mood of the piece all have a role to play in appealing to the electorates.

#### **4.7.5 Chapter Summary**

This chapter presented and discussed the findings and discussions from the content analysis of television political advertisements of the two main political parties in Ghana, the New Patriotic Party (NPP) and the National Democratic Party (NDC). The study undertook a content analysis of six (6) political advertisements which were aired between June and December 2016. It does this by revealing the visual aesthetics and aural techniques employed in the ads and then analyses how these components were used to convey the messages of the selected political parties. The results of the analysis are explained. The analysis included only the ads with the most striking examples of visual and aural techniques. The analysis also looked at the detailed description of the selected ads and components identified were discussed accordingly. The chapter also discusses the components and the themes derived from the analysis and the findings.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 5.0 Introduction

This chapter looks at the summary of the study and the conclusions derived from the findings. It further discusses the limitations of the study and finally ends with some recommendations and suggestions for future study.

#### 5.1 Summary

The study sought to investigate the visual aesthetic components and aural techniques used in the political ads and how these components helped to convey the messages in the selected political ads. Conclusions are made based on the content analysis of the television ads of both NPP and NDC using Entman's (1993) Framing Theory and Iyengar and Kinder (1987) Priming Theory.

##### **5.1.1 Based on the research objectives, the following key findings were made in the study:**

The first research objective revealed all the components that were used in the television ads to help in conveying the messages of the selected ad. 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 were the components that were used in the television ads studied.

It was found in the study that camera and its movements were used to provide information on a political party, or specifically frame a political candidate to its

audience or viewers in a positive or negative manner. This was achieved with the help of the techniques used in handling the camera in terms of angles and different types of shots. Close-up shots and Bird-Eye camera techniques were well utilised by the ad creators to give viewers a clear view of the political candidates, and the developmental projects being done by these political parties to facilitate viewers ability to evaluate what they were seeing in the ads.

Special effects is another visual aesthetic and aural technique employed in the creation of the ads to enable ad creators achieve their aim of disseminating the messages in the selected ad. Colour, distortion, and sound were the elements the ad creators used to attain the special effects employed in the ads. The use of colour was instrumental in all the ads. Ad creators were consistent with the various party colours, and also selected scenes with bright harmonious colours to make the ad look appealing and attractive to viewers.

The voice overs in some of the ads were distorted and the pitching were high at a point and low at other points in the ads. The ad creators used that strategy to frame candidates and political parties positively or negatively based on the message that was being sent across. In all the NDC ads, voice deliveries were very clear and succinct unlike the ones in the NPP where some of the voices where pitched low and distorted a little.

The editing aspect of components of the ads were carefully brought into being by the ad creators in different styles and using different elements. At a point in some parts of the ads, the creators of the ads used the cutting technique to get a specific aspect of a

video to display to viewers, in another vein, still pictures and motion pictures were well edited to convey the appealing messages they intended the ads to express to viewers.

The study also revealed that the use of music was key in the creation of the ads. All the ads had music playing in the background and each helped to communicate the message being sent across. In one of NPP ads, music was uniquely used to actually explain the ad and helped to communicate to viewers in a special way. All the NDC ads also had the same music at the background which communicated a feeling of consistency on the minds of viewers.

The study further revealed that text and some vectors which forms the most part of the graphics in this study were also used very well. Ad creators used text and vector designs in all the ads to help complement the message clearly to viewers.

The second research objective sought to know how the visual aesthetics and aural techniques helped to convey the messages of the selected ad. In conducting this study, themes of persuasion, consistency, religion and appeal were also captured in this study. The ad creators manipulated the visual elements and aural techniques in all the ads to help convey the messages in the selected ads. The ad creators strategically manipulated the visual and aural components in all the NPP ads to frame Mr. Mahama as incompetent, a liar, a clueless leader and an embarrassing character who is not good enough to lead Ghanaians as president again. The NDC ads also used the theme of persuasion to inform electorates of their interest and priority in developing Ghana in the fields of Education, Water and Healthcare. Framing in this study dealt with

manipulating all these components in a positive or negative manner to get viewers of the ads do their own evaluation and make a decision for themselves.

The ad creators were very consistent in some aspects of the ads to enable them get viewers to follow the message in these ads. The NDC ads were consistent with the use of one background music which was composed by Korede Bello in all their ads. The NPP ad creators were also consistent in the messages they shared with viewers, in the sense that, all the ads were directed at tarnishing the image of Mr. Mahama and the NDC party while the NDC ads were geared towards developmental projects they had spread across Ghana. Both NPP and NDC ads were consistent with their ending signature of all the ads.

Religion was another theme I found during the discussions. Both NPP and NDC portrayed their presidential candidates as religious leaders but there were unique aspects about how they went about it. The NPP portrayed Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo in their ads as a “messiah” who coming in to solve all the problems engulfing Ghana, while NDC portrayed Mr. Mahama as a leader who is reliant on God for success in his governance and victory for the elections.

The general purpose of every ad was to get the attention of viewers to follow the message in the ad. In the ads analysed, high camera resolutions were selected by ad creators to shoot videos and take pictures so that they could produce sharp and nice outcomes to make the ad appealing and attractive to viewers. Close-up shots and Bird Eye camera techniques were also technically employed in the creation of the ads which gave the final outcomes of the ads an appealing effect. This strategy was used



by the ad creators to get viewers to evaluate the ads and influence them to make decisions on the party to vote for during the election. Music was also an aural component used to appeal to viewers especially the younger generation. This is supported by Diamond and Bates (1988) who argue that music has the ability to produce feelings of commonality and familiarity. Bright harmonious colours, traditional party colours and party logos were also elements that were used to appeal indirectly to viewers to follow the message in the ad since the ad looks attractive. The use of voice delivery and voice overs were strategically and intentionally used to appeal directly to viewers to vote either the NPP or NDC during the elections.

## **5.2 Conclusions**

The findings of the study indicate 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 also made good use of the framing and priming theories 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: 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, water and healthcare.

The framing and priming theories were well employed by the NDC ad creators to create an impression of Mr. Mahama as a competent and focused leader who has the development of Ghana at heart. The NPP also employed these theories well to also project their candidate Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo as a “messiah” and one who would end the economic crisis and corruption which have engulfed the country.

With all these manipulations of visual and aural techniques in creating the ads to make it appealing and persuasive, it is the voter that is at the mercy of the ad creator’s distortions of reality just to get their attention.

In a nutshell, 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 entreated them to conduct their own evaluation that would lead to making a decision to vote for either NPP or NDC.

### **5.3 Limitations of the study**

One may attest to the fact that, there may be no research carried out without the researchers encountering difficulties. I encountered some challenges in getting officers in charge of media for the political parties to furnish me with the ads they used during the 2016 presidential elections. I travelled to the parties’ head offices several times but all these attempts proved futile. On almost all the occasions, I did not meet the officers in charge of communications. Those I could reach via mobile

phone also could not create time for a meeting let alone provide me with the videos needed for me to do this research.

The research should have been wider enough to include a number of campaign ads from all the political parties that contested in the 2016 Presidential Elections. This would have enabled the researcher to really come out with much wider findings on how political parties are able to communicate to their audiences through the use of these campaign ads.

Another limitation was the problem of time. The research is time bound and besides it was not that simple collecting data from even the two political parties let alone all the political parties in Ghana. Even though there were lots of political campaign ads on YouTube, the researcher could not have analysed all due to time. As a result six campaign ads from two political parties were chosen purposely for the research.

#### **5.4 Suggestions and Recommendations**

Future studies could take a critical look at the ad creator's intent when manipulating visual and aural techniques to construct meaning. That is, to know how they came up with the script for the ads they used. Again, scholars can look at using a quantitative approach to know if the visual aesthetic components and aural techniques in the TV ads actually influenced voters to vote for a particular political party. Future researchers might also consider the 2016 ads in terms of the effects of the visual components and aural techniques on voters.

Findings from this study revealed the visual aesthetic components and aural techniques used in creating political TV ads by the NPP and NDC for their presidential campaigns and how some themes were used to help convey the messages in the selected ads.

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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