Maternal Ideology in an MTN® Advertisement: Analysing Socio-Semiotic Reality as a Campaign for Peace

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It seemed that the issue of maternal ideology as a device to curb social menaces has not attracted scholars. Thus, the study examined the use of maternal ideology in mobile telephone network (MTN®) as a means of influencing recipients against vices instead of the primary assignment of the product advertising. The author utilised an advert of MTN, *Sharing is good*, as an object of analysis. The theoretical underpinning of the investigation was the concept of Theme as a functional approach to social semiotics. Theme interconnects the text with visual images to elucidate the meaning-making potential of the framework. The study revealed that the mother and the daughter operate in the same functional environment without any objections from either. The relationship demonstrates *humility*, *complementarity*, *shareability* and *generosity*. The message of the advert could influence corrupt elements of society such as terrorists, kidnappers, and violence campaigners to abandon nefarious acts and to embrace good behaviours. The idea propagated, perhaps, deserves voluntary emulation. Thus, the article argues that national and international stakeholders could make policy to direct advertising professionals to communicate their thoughts with materials that can support peace and harmony in our society. Such an exercise could persuade advertisers to reduce their focus on mental capitalism alone.

Keywords: advertising, ideology, MTN®, social semiotic, social system, thematic system

The mission of persuasion in advertising compels the discipline to function within the parameters of linguistic thoughts. These ideas, most of the times, must not only be new but must also be renewed in a consistent form in order to fulfill the purpose of attracting and influencing the target audience. Carter and Nash (1990, p. 20) recognise that by arguing that "ideas do not merely float in the air; they are produced and reproduced in specific social and cultural context by language users who are positioned in different ways in these contexts." Users of language create and utilise ideas to pursue certain objectives. The initiatives are not done, Carter and Nash assert, in isolation. The inspirations are executed within the circumference of a particular social system. In other words, a crucial factor in constructing ideas is the circumstance of a social system. One could then suggest that a social system, to a considerable extent, determines the construction of ideas. The consideration given to a social environment is to ensure that the public generate adequate meaning from the ideas generated. So, the construct that works in the situation A might not work in the situation B. It is also possible that a single idea can be exhibited to portray the entire socio-cultural system of the globe.

Either way, the author could argue that the operational domain of advertising is *octopus* in nature. In a way it is similar to an encyclopedia that touches different spheres of knowledge in society. Advertising appreciates all devices that can contribute and add values to its information and persuasion objectivity (Ogilvy, 2013). This allows advertising, perhaps, to spread its wings across all human ideologies in social systems as the sky covers the earth and seas. The main difference between the extent that the sky covers the earth and the domain of advertising is located in the nature of their beginning and end. The sky has no beginning and no end. Advertising began somewhere according to historical facts (Geiszinger, 2011, p. 6) but it seems to have no end. This remarkable attribute about the domineering operations makes advertising a flair enterprise that connects all possibilities. Advertising is linked to socio-cultural reproduction, psychological rumination, historical emancipation and ideological reality, as the writer has discussed

elsewhere. Advertising goes thus far to associate with several phenomena in the social systems because of the business responsibility that it shoulders. Thus, it plays an interfacing role between a product and consumers.

A chief reason of any advertisement (*henceforth*: advert) is to manipulate people to patronize a particular product. It means that consumers must have enough funds to buy the product. However, the girl child that depends wholly on her parents and guardians is systematically presented along with the mother to propagate the MTN® (i.e. mobile telephone network) advert, *Sharing is good*. Why is the child's picture in the advert? Someone might ask. The child's picture serves as a means of reaching the parents and guardians who love children, take great care of them, provide for all their needs, meet their request and listen to their pieces of advice, at least, once in a while. The child's appearance is a prepared "trap" set on a business track to capture the parents (Dalamu, 2017b). The deployment of the child in the frame can be classified as a sensational strategy. The MTN advert adopts the ideology of mother and child to sell the product to parents, who have affection for children. It seems that the advert explores and campaigns for love that exists between the mother and the child (in homes and virtually in all places) to consumers. For the mother and the child to show mutual love to each other without any restriction; the public should reciprocate, perhaps, not to the mother and the child this time, but to the product that MTN advertises.

The notion of maternal ideology is not a new concept in academics. Its assessment has been on but towards adolescence behaviour (Jessor & Jossor, 1977; Jossor, 1991), motherhood beliefs and practices (Ruzek, 1990), and abortion decision discourse (Fegan, 1996). Steele and Barling (1996) examine beliefs and gender-role satisfaction, while Alazaz (2016) considers subjectivity in maternal concerns as critical. To the best of our knowledge, hardly has one observed studies relating maternal ideology to advertising persuasion. That existing gap is the motivation for this analysis. As an interdisciplinary consideration in linguistics, communication and advertising, the study, on the one hand, explores and explains the application of maternal ideology in the MTN, *Sharing is good*, advert. On the other hand, the article demonstrates the propagation of the mother and the child as a channel used to inform the public to share love one with another. The love propagated in the advert might serve as the interchanged for the nature of love that MTN expects consumers to share with the advertised services. The theoretical slant is predicated on social semiotics reality tacked to the functional thematic concept of visual thoughts.

Ideology and advertising constructs

Reports have shown that Desttul de Tracy, whose writing as far back as the 18th century suggests that a science of idea should be called *idéologie* (Kenedy, 1979). The proposal perhaps stands the test of time. The suggestion seems to have attracted the interest of philosophers, economists, linguists, and others to recast de Tracy's *idéologie* to ideology. However, the constructs of Althusser (1971), Volosinov (1973), and Larrain (1979) further certify the initial efforts that influence general and more meaningful debates on the notion of ideology. Fairclough (1992, p. 86) classifies Volosinov's opinion on the subject as next to Althusser because of the outstanding contributions to ideological expositions. Since that time, van Dijk (1988, p. 3) articulates that economists, psychologists, philosophers and political scientists have embraced ideology as a study (in sophisticated dimensions) of system of belief in a particular social system. Ideology is imprecise and mutable with inherence of all-encompassing terms (Lemke, 1995, p. 2; Carter & Nash, 1990, p. 20). It further elicits to socio-cognitive analysis and discursive-discoursal analysis in order to motivate its rhythms in different spheres (van Dijk 1988, p. 1, 313-318). These remarks characterise the *raison d'être* for diffusion in the manner of its definition. The many spheres of ideology that touch enquiries on cognition discourse and society could have inspired van Dijk to suggest that triangular domain should be considered when describing ideology. It is a perspective that impinges on the system of ideas, the social system and the language use (van Dijk, 1988).

As a practice, Fairclough (1992) argues that, ideologies are significations of reality, which are built into various dimensions of the forms of discursive, and which contribute to the production, reproduction, or transformation of relations of dominion (p. 87). Perhaps, ideology is an artificial device in a society. This is because the people of a social system construct as well as create their model of ideology as events unfold in different dimensions. That behaviour encourages proliferation of different ideological appreciations from one structural domain or class to another. People fabricate the ideology that dominates them, which in-turn becomes a system. In that regard, Hall (1996) offers a cognitive explanation that ideology is a mental framework that connects "languages, the concepts and imagery of thought." These interconnect, Hall exemplifies, with "the system of representation which different classes and social groups deploy in order to make sense of the intelligible manner that the society works" (p. 26). The construction of ideological reality of a society seems to become its tradition in the long run. The representation of thoughts and demonstrations of the internal and physical worlds of

the actors construct ideological devices that the social groups and system operate. However, language serves as the nerve of most ideological practices. This is owing to the fact that language facilitates the intention of a speaker and sows meaningful seeds into the receiver's cognitive hemisphere.

Furthermore, van Dijk (1988) explains that "an ideology is...a shared framework of social beliefs that organise and coordinate the social interpretations and practices of groups and their members, and in particular also power and other relations between groups" (p. 8). The basis of living together and harmoniously co-existing in a society, in the opinion of van Dijk, provide and enhance an ideological interplay in a similar dimension among the people. That is why ideology can be referred to as a shared representation of mental acceptance of a norm among social classes and groups. Before social beliefs are institutionalised, they must first be identified, established, interpreted and properly managed through the authorities that govern the social devices. This is on the ground that "ideology", in Vestergaard's and Schroder's (1985, p.146) perspective, "is a necessary component of human life: if *people* did not cling to certain fundamental attitudes and ways of thinking, our consciousness would be in a total flux which would paralyse us completely." So, ideology defines the paths of the actors in society in terms of dos and don'ts. It shows the individuals the right to protest if the system goes wrong. Ideology is also a probable revelation of the scope of people's behaviours in relation to legality or illegality. Thus, ideology is the measure of values in society. That perhaps, informs the appreciation of ideology in multi-dimensional forms. In Thompson's (1984) sense, "ideology operates...through a complex series of mechanism whereby meaning is mobilised in the discursive practices of everyday life for the maintenance of relations of domination" (p. 64). Advertising is a mechanism that is linked to ideology in the study. Advertising is ephemeral as it is ubiquitous, and penetrates passionately into the fabric of human social activities. Consumers unmask meaning from the plates as advertisers express their intentions through ideology by the way of creative dexterity.

Advertising, as it were, constructs a relationship between a product and the public. It is a domain that generates cognitive and social ideas in order to influence the decisions of consumers. Cook (1992) says that campaigns come up as persuasive devices as a result of creative ideas. The appearance of advertising seems to have incited readers to consider its output as an ideological enterprise. This position projects advertising more of intellectual exercise than a mere element that leads consumers to a product for the purpose of consumption. Though it is that corporate bottom-line that inspires and shapes the expert's

intellectual capacity (Goldman, 1992). Consumers ought to read the adverts in the same way with the assumptions of advertisers. Ordinarily, the public might embrace the adverts as advertising specialists' desire. Another group of adverts' consumption is perhaps the set of people who possess intellectual potency in different disciplines. Such people consume and interpret adverts from a pedagogical perspective. The areas of their discipline inform the translations and meanings decoded from advertising frames. Some analysts might appreciate ideology from interdisciplinary frameworks. Such efforts could be owing to differences in their intellectual rationales. In respect of that, scholars seem to interpret adverts in dissimilar ways in which a combination of ideas at the long run can project wholesome of viable meanings.

The manifestation of the advertising phenomenon seems to have sensitised Leech (1966) to argue that "No one word is more often on the lips of the advertising specialists than *creative*. He works creatively on creative campaigns; when he is not engaged in creative planning, he is thinking up creative ideas" (p. 175). The acts of advertising entwine in ideological creativity; the practices are controlled in order to disperse persuasive intentions to consumers. The messages convey the benefits of the products to consumers. It is in that sense that Goldman (1992) explicates thus, "adverts portray only a fantasy world, providing vicarious satisfaction for people whose circumstances are quite remote from the lifestyles depicted" (p. 35). Imagination in advertising, as Goldman explains, is done within the consumers' ideological perspective as well as a means of appealing to the recipient's greed. It also incites the recipients' enthusiasm to patronize the product in the campaign regime. Sometimes, it could be that the thoughts in the adverts are contradictory to the reality in the social system. It might also be the devices operating in the system, and, yet, the public is not visibly observant of the phenomena. Advertising takes such as an advantage to propagate a product. A similar illustration is the MTN advert, *Sharing is good*, which projects the mother and the child as an allegorical representation of love in the Nigerian society where terrorists (e.g. *Boko Haram*), kidnappers, and snipers attempt to have their dominion. The natural relationship functions as the interface between the Nigerian society and vices experienced. The advert demystifies love to all citizens besides its hegemonic primacy of luring consumers to buy a product.

A brief profile of MTN

MTN Nigeria operates under a subsidiary called MTN International (Mauritius) Limited which in turn manages under the larger umbrella of the MTN Group. As earlier mentioned, MTN refers to mobile telephone

network (Wikipedia, 2016). The group was launched in South Africa in 1994 to function as a mobile operator. The headquarters is located in Johannesburg, South Africa. Besides Nigeria, MTN has its presence felt in some African countries and the Middle East bloc. It functions in places such as Ghana, Ivory Coast, Guinea Republic, Afghanistan, Cyprus and Syria. Significantly, MTN (2016) advocates that the firm is already an advanced communications network which is African oriented. In that respect, it connects globally to more than 203.8 million subscribers in not less than 22 countries.

The incorporation of MTN Nigeria Communications Limited occurred in Nigeria on the 8th of November, 2000 as a private liability company. After about three months the company secured a licence to operate a full-fledge digital telephone system, that is, Global System for Mobile Telecommunications (GSM). The Nigerian Communication Commission (NCC) granted MTN the licence on the 9th of February, 2001. The approval inspired the organisation to emerge as the first GSM operator to make a call on its network on the Nigerian soil beginning from the 16th of May, 2001 (ACL Services Ltd, 2014; Bloomberg, 2017).

On the accounts of MTN's over ten years of operation in Nigeria, HubPages Inc. (2011) argues that MTN 'has ever since been the biggest telecommunications (telecoms) company and one of the largest in Nigeria. The claim rests on the fact that MTN has made a formidable impact on the lives of many Nigerians in so many appreciable ways. Among others, the following highlights are some of the benefits:

- It has invested over $4 Billion in the Nigerian economy
- It has paid more than $1.8Billion to government as levies and duties
- It saves, within one year of its operations, about $60 Million in potential revenue leakages
- It has provided and created thousands of jobs directly or indirectly to make the socio economic lives of Nigerians much easier
- It has over 35 million subscribers and still winning more customers (HubPages Inc., 2011).

MTN has, however, made a lot of profits as well in Nigeria. That is the compelling reason that MTN can only threaten but cannot pack away from Nigeria when the enterprise violated the guidelines of Nigerian Communication Commission (NCC) that controls the telecoms. The infringement of the regulations attracted a sumptuous amount of fine slammed on the company.

Some of the products and services of MTN are *MTN Happy Hour, MTN Bundles, MTN Super Saver, MTN F@stLink, MTN Mobile Internet* and *MTN BlackBerry Services*. It is on these and other products that MTN places adverts as campaign practices that have the capacity to persuade the Nigerian public in order to patronize the services. Given MTN's contributions to the society and the importance of the adverts, the paper has examined the impacts of one of the adverts, *Sharing is good*, on the Nigerian society.

Theoretical reality

The syntax of the English text is organised in a distinct order. The model of arrangement known as organisation of a message and technically called thematic structure orients from the Prague School (Butler, 1985; Bloor & Bloor, 2004; Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014). In the clause communication dynamism, also known as *clause as message* is the structure that indicates how *clause as exchange* and *clause as representation* are organised to make appropriate meanings. Syntactic thematisation contains the structure of clause that begins automatically with Theme and follows with Rheme, which in Halliday's (1994) point of view represents as the point of departure (p. 37). The structure of a clause may be organised and classified in other reliable manners such as Topic and Comment, Given and New, and Subject and Predicate. However, from a functional perspective, Theme and Rheme are a departure from those earlier mentioned and more appropriate for this work.

The functional *grammatics* (i.e. theory) demonstrates Theme as the starting-point of the message, that is, the ground that the clause is taken off from. This characterises Theme not necessarily as a noun group or a subject but can be equal to, or less than, or more than such a structural element. This is because a clause of English has the capacity to depart with adverbial group, nominal group, prepositional group/phrase, etc. In that regard, Rashidi (1992) elucidates that "Theme is the clause-level constituent what the encoder uses as the starting point of the message, the constituent that begins moving the decoder towards the core of the communication" (p. 192; *also in* Thompson, 2014; Dalamu, 2017a). Theme, in Rashidi's sense, is encoder oriented, arbitrary as well as obligatory. The encoder determines the arrangement of the message the way he/she wants. Theme is universally obligatory as it is arbitrary because it provides the clause with the characteristics of message as it takes the speaker's point of view. In the experiential metafunction, that is the content of the message, the decoder construes the goings-on at the wishes of the encoder who tends to augment Theme with the Rheme where the wheel of the message revolves.

One might suggest that the thematic application is not limited to the textual constituent of a clause. It is

a social semiotic device for examining images in visual designs. In that respect, Kress and van Leuween (1996) gloss that "visual grammar makes a range of resources available: different compositional arrangements to allow the realisation of different textual meanings" (p. 41). Semiotics is the science that studies sign systems which include text as well as images (Chandler, 2012). It is in that capacity that the application of Theme, in Kress' and van Leuween's perspectives, is embraced as a tool to appreciate images along with the linguistic structures. The labelling resources that systemic functional *grammatics* adapted to explore textual components may not be fully adopted in visual grammar because texts and images might not have one on one corresponding terminology. For instance, the Theme of a text (clause) begins from left to right, whereas, the thematic analysis of visual images could begin from any portion of the framework. The application of the analytical device could start from left to right, top to bottom, or from the most prominent, pronounced and obvious element of the frame in terms of saliency. The consideration is based on the mechanisms of the visual composition.

On the basis of that multifaceted applications, Kress and van Leuween (1996) add that "verbal text becomes just one of the elements integrated by codes of information value, salience and framing, and reading is not necessarily linear, wholly or in part, but may go from center to margin, or in circular fashion, or vertically" (p. 185). Meaning dwells in texts as well as images in the manner that an analyst investigates the structures. The sedimentary meaning inherence discharges through textual theories might not possess enough strength to analyse visual images, which is the basis for applying social semiotics in this study. In a parallel dimension, Lemke (1995) explains that "Language does not operate in isolation. Meanings always get made in contexts where social expectations and non-linguistic symbols play a role" (p. 8; *also in* Hodge & Kress, 1988). One of the benefits of visual image is that both the literate and illiterate can decode meanings from it. Besides, one could argue that it is easy to show socio-cultural ideologies of the people through images than in verbal elements. People easily get influenced through pictures than texts (Hayko, 2010; Zipporah & Nberi, 2014; Pope, n.d.; and Cope, et al, n.d.). Therefore, social semiotics, from the bird-eye view of thematic realisations, provides an all-encompassing analysis for the study by considering the meanings in texts, images, relationships between them and the socio-cultural background of the text-image facilities. As such, as earlier stated, the investigation considers how MTN utilises maternal ideology as a strategy to lure consumers to consumption. The MTN advert of *Sharing is good* reveals contextual relationships in the devices of the communication.

Thus, the study argues, unlike other studies (e.g. Cook, 1992; Geiszinger, 2011; Forceville, 2017), that the emulation of *Sharing is good* advert might stimulate a peaceful coexistence among the citizens to neglect social vices. This is because love is the crux of its message to the Nigerian public.

Method

Participants

The MTN's *Sharing is good* adverts occupied some signposts across some cities in Nigeria, newspapers and the Internet. Hence, Wumi, a lady of 35 years, and the author moved around the Lagos metropolis with a car to observe the advert variants in order to make the appropriate choice for the analysis.

Research design

The study adopted a sampling (stratified) procedure by collecting and dividing the variants of the MTN's *Sharing is good* into four sub-groups. One advert was chosen for analysis as a true representative value of other adverts.

Measures

A Samsung WB50F camera assisted in capturing the frames of the MTN's *Sharing is good* adverts from both signposts and the Punch newspaper for the Punch has a large reading audience. Besides, the Internet was another option where a personal computer as well as a modem assisted in downloading the adverts. The population of the adverts was about 26 pieces. The motive for such data collection process was to ensure accessibility to and the understanding of varieties of the advert which could lead, as previously mentioned, to the appropriate selection of the right choice of the advert.

Procedures

The 26 adverts were grouped into four parts in relation to their pictorial constructions, colour demonstrations and textual contents. Discourse patterns also played a role in the segmentation. Employing Wumi for assistance was not tedious as we have been harvesting together adverts in the Lagos city many times. The choice of Wumi relied solely on her knowledge of the environment of Lagos streets. Any time we went for capturing activities the author paid the individual about ₦10, 000. 00 (₦ = the symbol of the Nigerian currency) for fueling the car and for personal upkeep. The analyst selected the frame illustrated in Figure 1 below from the Internet

as more appropriate among others adverts because it accommodates the features of communicative devices in the other *Sharing is good* advert varieties. Significantly, the selection of one advert out of the 26 adverts rested on the similar information that the MTN's *Sharing is good* adverts provide. Consequently, choosing more than one frame for investigation might be monotonous. Nonetheless, the author considered an advert from the Internet as a viable resource for the reasons of reliability, pictorial clarity, accessibility and 'permanence.' Thus, the choice of the Internet could serve as a reference point for readers.

Figure 1. MTN Advert.

Although, as illustrated in Figure 1, the advertising frame contains both images and texts, the study separates the texts from images and labels the texts as clauses (*henceforth*: CL). It is upon the separation that the Hallidayan clause as message (Theme and Rheme) acts as a tool for processing the texts. The analytical procedure permits technological devices of a table and graph to compute the recurring capacities of the Theme and Rheme on the linguistic organs as shown in Table 1 and Figure 3 respectively. The discussion predicates on these methods providing explanations for the image-textual relationships.

Data analysis

Figure 2 below translates the textual devices in Figure 1 into semiotic slots.

The study has interpreted Figure 2 into a table and graph below in order to show the values of Theme and Rheme operating in the semiotic slots.
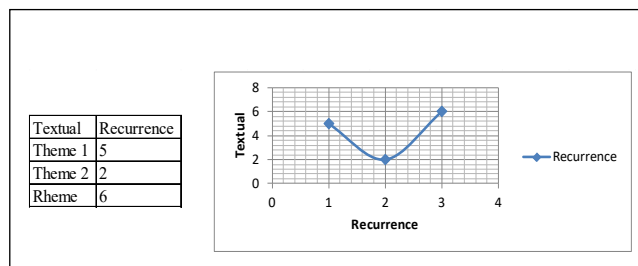
Results and Discussion

Table 1 below represents the syntactic analysis of the text of the MTN advert as a demonstration of the structural patterns.

Figure 2. Analysis of the MTN advert's text.

Table 1
Textual analysis of the MTN advert

CL	Textual Structure		
	Theme 1	**Theme 2**	**Rheme**
1	1	0	1
2	1	0	1
3	1	0	1
4	1	1	1
5	0	0	1
6	1	1	1
Total	5	2	6

Figure 3. The thematisation structure of the MTN advert.

The paper translates the structures of the advert into the table and graph in Figure 3 to report the structural postures of the texts and for prompt

accessibility. Figure 3 also serves as an indicator of the communication flow.

Significantly, all the clauses shown in the graph in Figure 3 communicate through the rhematic aspect. However, only clauses 4 and 6 inform through Theme 2 as Theme 1 places itself as the point of departure for all clauses except for clause 5. In sum, the heart of the message for the target audience is located in the Rheme. It means that the rheme disseminates persuasive values to advertisers in order to convince consumers, which is in consonance with Rashidi's (1992) remark about the functional domain of Rheme.

This investigation constructs the discussions from two linguistic domains of grammatical structures in relation to clause (Bloor & Bloor, 2004; Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014), and of visual grammar in relation to social semiotics (Hodge & Kress, 1988; Kress & van Leuween, 1996). Figure 2 indicates the analysis of the structure of texts that are available in the frame. There are six clauses in the advert. They are: (i) *Sharing is good* as in CL 1; (ii) *All it takes to share is a generous heart* as in CL 2, which are declaratives that function as an issuance of statements; (iii) *Dial *133*3* for Data Gifting* as in CL 3; and (iv) *or get E-Credit from the... MTN retailers* as in CL 4, which serve as imperatives that command consumers to act fast, and (v) *MTN* as in CL 5, which is an elliptical statement that operates as the logo of the company in focus. The logo is also accompanied with its shibboleth – *Everywhere you go* as in CL 6. The study analyses the clauses as a vehicle of interpreting the organisation of their structures. *Sharing* in CL 1, *All it takes to share is be generous in heart* in CL 2, *Dial, or get,* and *Everywhere* in CLs 3 and 4 are the Themes of the clauses. A suggested component in the semiotic slot of the Theme is provided for the fifth clause because the author observes that *This is* constituent is a probable element ellipted from the logo, that is, *MTN*. Out of the four declarative clauses, two of them have multiple Themes. They are *or* and *get*; *everywhere* and *you* in clauses 4 and 6 respectively.

The thematic realisation of the MTN advert, *Sharing is good*, seems to be succinctly clear based on the appearance of the recurring points in Figure 3. The advert frame, which seems to follow the structure of a textual organisation, is partitioned into two with a longitudinal line. A top-bottom thematic application illustrates the portion that contains images along with the bold text, *Sharing is good. All it takes to share is to be generous in heart; Dial *133*3* for Data Gifting; or get E-Credit from the... MTN retailers*; *MTN* and *everywhere you go* in the yellow ribbon occupy the Rhematic portion. There are two pictures in the Theme – a mother and a daughter. The images portray maternal relationship, which explains a strong tie that exists between the mother and her daughter. A maternal ideology, perhaps, has been chosen to

perform such a crucial function of agape love because the relationship between a mother and her child is seemingly sound among human beings. Most mother and child relationships seem to endure perhaps till eternity. It appears as a wise strategy for MTN to have propagated the love intention through a mother and her daughter.

Six commonalities establish the thematic images in the framework. They are dressing, eating, drinking from the same cistern, use of the same dining set, reciprocating sharing and focusing of the same flower. These attributes of a mother and child interchangeable components express love, oneness and unity. The individuals wear similar dresses, underwear of off-white colour. The underwear is called *spaghetti* in the Nigerian society because the shoulder anchors appear as strands of *spaghetti* noodles. That appearance shows the mother and daughter as twins who have things in common and do things with the same principle. Similarly, both the mother and the child are eating food, though from different plates of the same off-white colour. The separation of the plates of food may be as a result of cultural embracement or for a purpose of *hygienicity*. Besides, in the eating process, one person may be gluttonous or faster than the other. To avoid fracas, the separation of the plates of food becomes a necessity. Notwithstanding, eating of similar food at the same time and at the dining table terminate the concept of egotism.

In the world routine, egoism operates virtually in all ideological processes regarding groups and institutions in society (Bech & Beck-Gernshein, 1996; Heelas, 1996; Lash, 1996). The mother-child relationship on the dining platform attempts to nullify pride as experienced in society's ideological systems. The nullification of ego can bring absolute peace to our world. This makes the MTN message sacrosanct in communicating objective messages to the public. Despite that the mother and child do not eat in the same plate for whatever reason, they drink from the same *cistern* into their *cisterna*. This is quite commendable. A glass of water is placed between the two plates of food to be shared at will notably with seemingly unequal distance. To a considerable extent, the drinking of water from the same glass communicates absolute trust to recipients. Drinking water from the same glass cup is more dangerous hygienically or otherwise than eating from the same plate of food.

The study observes the notion of reciprocity in the thematised visual images. Food provision and flower presentation by the mother and child demonstrate *complementarity*. It is obvious that the provision and preparation of food are sole responsibilities of a mother not only to a child but also to the entire family concept. The mother provides the food for her daughter and the daughter reciprocates by presenting a flower

to the beloved mother. The significance of the flower presentation from the child is to show the mother, in the little manner within the child's reach, appreciation to her mother's undying efforts and care. No human being lives in an island of self-sufficiency (Jankowski, 2014). The greatest advantage domain of one person may be the greatest disadvantage domain of the other. Gifts, talents, and skills of individuals are never the same. That is the way that things of life are naturally distributed (Seymour, 1976; Brown, n.d.). As national actors, people have diverse cultural backgrounds, ethnic representations, religious persuasions, professional divisions of labor, socio-political and financial abilities, and different functional domains of excellence. These are applied for the development of the social systems. The viable point is this: people in a society need one another to survive, succeed, develop and progressively advance the environment. The appropriate harmonisation and utilisation of the human potential have the capacity to spark and sustain the above remarks. These are probable reasons for sensitising the society to share love.

The little girl presents a flower to the mother as a proposal. However, the mother does not reject the ideational proposition. She does not underrate the child's submission and throw it away. Actually, there are age differences among the actors in a society, but those distinctions do not indicate that the people who are below someone's cadre are nonentities. It is important to listen, scrutinise an idea whether it is good or bad. The relevance of a thought must also be considered before such is condemned and thrown into the dungeon. The perspective of MTN could imply that a meaningful and workable idea can sprout from any source. The action of the mother to the child demonstrates humility to the entire audience. There is an offer from a lower source and an acceptance from a higher source. The mother seems to abandon the food in order to give the child's offer the needed attention. As a result, the mother's humility demonstrated in one spirit, one mind and one focus dominates the relationship.

The six attributes that characterise the visual images – mother and daughter – portray maternal ideology as exemplified in submissive love. The ideology is an exclusive one. It resides more on societal concern than the goods and services that MTN campaigns for. It seems that the advert is MTN's contribution to stabilise peace in the Nigerian social system. Furthermore, the iconic pictures show that though the mother is almost finishing her food; the daughter is not agitating. Probably, there is nothing the daughter should be bothered about. She is patient because an extra plate of food is still on the table. MTN propagates additional meanings in the *rhematic* signification of the advertising frame

in three distinctions – the background colour of the ribbon, text and logo. The core of the thematisation of visual images does not dwell solely on the Rheme of the advert's visual illustrations as shown in textual organisation. Nonetheless, the advert of this enquiry demonstrates its message to the public in both its Theme and Rheme through the arbitrary signifier, *Sharing is good*. This is on the ground that the text is very pronounced. It also supports and provides clarity to the message of the images. *Sharing is good* is located in the Theme of the advert when appreciating it from top to bottom; textually, it accommodates Theme/ Rheme components.

The choice of colour is not necessarily a matter of aesthetic beauty. It is a decision that most times reflects style, emotion, belief and perhaps, symbolises a company's or individual's core values. To MTN, yellow is the most appreciable colour. The MTN yellow personalises and communicates symbolic beliefs and values that the company represents and reflects. According to PPG Industries Inc. (2016), a paint company, yellow is truly a joyous colour that possesses virtue in its warmth form, which discharges warm inspiration and vigorous distinctions. Yellow is the happiest of all colours that portrays perfect communication, enlightenment, sunlight and spirituality. Choosing yellow as a preferred colour means the possession of intellectual, idealistic and highly imaginative potential that perceives and thrives for a brighter future. Yellow colour, the Glidden explains, also leads to a cheerful spirit and greater happiness (PPG Industries Inc., 2016). The decision of MTN team to have chosen yellow as the colour, and propagate yellow as the background of the ribbon of the Rheme signification may not be excluded from the attributive qualities elucidated above.

Apart from the elliptical statement *MTN*, five clauses – *Sharing is good; All it takes to share is to be generous in heart; dial*133*3* for data Gifting; or get the… MTN retailer* and *everywhere you go* – show the mission of MTN in the advert. *Dial *133*3* for… Gifting* is imperative. The *Shareability* propagates a thought where the individual receives his/her allotted portion. By giving object A what belongs to A; and giving object B the dues will likely bring peace and harmony to the society. From a business point of view, the goodness in *Shareability* is perhaps to buy some services. That is: (i) to buy the MTN recharge card for somebody or (ii) to share the recharge card with someone else that is close to the individual and does not have enough credit on his/her phone (i.e. MTN line). Gift is good; it does not only blind the eyes of a receiver, it does give the individual happiness. *Sharing is good* is an advertising concept. However, its altruism cannot be contradicted or undermined. The terminology sells selflessness to the participants of a social system via

the idea of generosity. The advert points that out by recommending to the audience through a declarative that *All it takes to share is a generous heart.* The acknowledgement is a guiding principle propagated in the form of pleading. That is only a person with a kind heart can give to others. Being a commercial advert, directives on how to patronize the product are not left behind. The structures are highlighted imperative thus: *dial *133*3* for data Gifting*; *or get the... MTN retailer.* The imperatives refer consumers to the route to enjoy the advertised product. The sentences also command the public to act without any delay.

The third element of the Rheme is the logo, *MTN*, decoratively embroidered below the frame at the right-hand corner of the ribbon. The trademark is the tile that initiates and identifies the MTN's ownership of the advert. The emblem also authenticates MTN's concern for the society and at the same time sanctions MTN's message to the entire public. The catch phrase, *everywhere you go* as an adjunct provides supports for the intention of the advert. The remark is a strategic move to satisfy the yearning of the government – a need for loving and peaceful environment – and also intends to persuade the audience to appreciate and patronize the MTN product. This time around, MTN is not only focusing what the firm can benefit from the society; the institution as well centers what the society can gain from its advert. MTN demonstrates the claim by making sure that the product to be sold is faintly highlighted, yet, campaigns vigorously for love, elucidating through maternal ideology that the society should emulate. The applicability is boldly espoused in the visual images of a mother and her daughter on the platform of a dining table exercises and spirit.

Conclusion

MTN® adopts *shareability* in maternal ideology to educate the public about the virtue of love that benefits the society more than something else. Love is a sustainer of a peaceful society. The evil in the society seems the reality that influences MTN to have propagated such an emotional advert to the entire public domain. The MTN disposition indicates that adverts should not always be for commercialisation alone but to also influence the society in positive ways. Such bearing has the strength to build strong ties among the citizens. The author observes that the mother and the daughter in the visual expression operate understandably in the same level without pride, class segregation, mistrust, rejection, etc. Else, there would have been chaotic demonstrations from one end. The mother needs the child – vice versa – in order to contribute her quota to the social organism because none of the individuals is an island. The individuals are

both depending on each other. The advert enthuses the members of society as containing dependable actors that must play their roles accordingly by contributing different ideas at different given capacities. The individuals are responsible for turning around issues in society for national development. It is then that the society can tremendously experience irresistible growth. This goes along with the saying that it takes two entities to tangle. Every individual needs fellow human beings to succeed in life.

The core of the message of the MTN advert, *Sharing is good*, is abdication of selfishness in which MTN takes the lead by propagating the ideology of love. The message to the society is that all actors should share love one with another without any bias. Individuals should exterminate the spirit of selfishness (self-interest rests on *I* or *me*) to be replaced with the spirit of oneness (integrated with *we* or *us*). Selfless contributions from all domains have the potency to heighten the growth of the society. Conversely, the detrimental thoughts of corruption, terrorism, and kidnapping threatening many countries' wellbeing nowadays could be thrown to the abyss. *Shareability-cum-generosity* as propagated through maternal ideology seems what the citizens need in order to be safe, survive and succeed in the global space. However, as the advert, among numerous ones of MTN communications, promotes love, one would have expected that the *Sharing is good* advert is solely for societal marketing (Kotler, 2003; Jobber, 2004). The campaign for the product's consumption ought to have been totally averted in this very advert. There is no doubt that the Sharing is good communication is not a good peace-deal; as a result, the MTN Group could separately sensitise readers with purely commercial adverts and 'humanitarian' adverts in a ratio, perhaps, of one to ten. Such pioneering responsibility to society could be extended to nations where MTN functions.

The study suggests that advertising regulatory bodies should make it mandatory, as a matter of policy, for advertisers to produce adverts that project values that can cleanse the society of social vices. As a matter of importance, advertising professionals should not only concentrate their efforts on how to sell products alone but to make attempts to get rid of nefarious acts from the society that they operate in. The MTN advert is a dramatic episode; in its own capacity, it may influence the society passionately in a number of ways as earlier stated. Most adverts, to be candid, are irresistible in terms of their signification constructivism and strategic places that they are propagated. The author recommends that such an MTN advert and similar ones that reflect social virtues should be produced and displayed in some strategic domains, in a sustainable manner, in Nigeria, and by extension other countries of the world for people to

read, digest and perhaps act upon the information provided. In addition, researchers in communication domains may pride their investigations on advertising campaigns that ideally construct peaceful relationships among the people. After all, recommendations from the knowledge-based enterprise do not only motivate deeds of readers; the suggestions also serve as a compass of directions to societies that worth the salt.

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