Covid-19 #Takeresponsibility: A Multimodal Discourse Analysis of Select NCDC's Online Public Health Advertising Campaign

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Abstract

This article examines the Nigerian Center for Disease Control's (henceforth, NCDC) Covid-19 #TakeResponsibility online public health advertising campaign. This is with a view to exploring how the representational, interactive and compositional resources are realized in these advertising visuals as well as their communicative functions. Forty purposively selected data samples, which were subjected to qualitative analysis, are examined from a multimodal discourse analytical approach. The analysis reveals that the narrative, transactive, action, offer, and the frontal resources, among others, are realized in the adverts. These resources interactively perform the directive, informative, reinforcing, preventive, cautionary and collective functions. Thus, the representational, interactive and compositional resources deployed in the NCDC's Covid-19 #TakeResponsibility online visuals discursively cohere as multimodal public health campaign strategies geared towards sensitizing the Nigerian populace on the safety guidelines to adhere to in containing the spread of Covid-19 in Nigeria.

Article information

Introduction

Covid-19 (Coronavirus Disease-2019) is a novel and highly contagious viral infection that emerged in Wuhan, Hubei Province, South China, towards the end of 2019, and steadily became a grave global pandemic in 2020 as the world witnesses its alarming spread to over 150 countries. Coronaviruses are part of the 'Coronaviridae family in the Nidovirales order' and the term 'Corona' itself stems from 'the crown-like spikes on the outer surface of the virus' (Shereen, Khan, Kazmi, Bashir & Siddique, 2020, p. 91). This novel virus was originally named by Chinese researchers, 'Wuhan coronavirus or 2019 novel coronavirus (2019-nCov)'; the International Committee on Taxonomy of Viruses (ICTV) later renamed it 'SARS-CoV-2'; and WHO officially designated the disease, 'Covid-19' (a shortened form of Coronavirus Disease-19)

(Shereen et al., 2020, p. 92; World Health Organization, 2020).

The coronavirus disease is reportedly caused by 'severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2)' and it spreads rapidly from human-to-human via exposure to respiratory droplets produced from the coughs, sneezes or aerosols of infected persons. Its common symptoms are cough, fever, pneumonia, 'acute lung injury (ALI) and acute respiratory distress syndrome (ARDS)' which could lead to 'pulmonary failure' and fatality (Shereen et al., 2020, p. 92; Ahmad, Hafeez, Siddqui, Ahmad, & Mishra, 2020). The potent contagiousness of the virus across nations and its high mortality rate have, therefore, prompted both national and international public health agencies to develop various preventive measures to contain its rapid spread. A few of these agencies are the Chinese Centre for Disease Control and Prevention (China CDC), the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the World Health Organization (WHO), the United Kingdom Public Health England (PHE), the Nigeria Centre for Disease Control (NCDC), the Ethiopian Public Health Institute (EPHI), among others. Our leading concern in the present paper is the NCDC.

The NCDC is Nigeria's foremost public health institute at the vanguard of the fight against the dreaded disease. Nigeria recorded her first index case of Covid-19 on February 27, 2020, and ever since, cases have been increasing at an alarming rate (Anjorin, 2020; Osahon & Memedu, 2020). In a swift response to contain the spread of the lethal disease, the NCDC, in March 2020, launched a campaign tagged *Covid-19 #TakeResponsibility* to 'encourage Nigerians and residents to take individual and collective responsibility to reduce the spread of the coronavirus disease' (NCDC, 2020, p. 2). The campaign comprises a range of activities that showcase the NCDC's coordinated response strategies geared towards containing the spread of the virus. These activities include recommending decisive actions on infection control and preventive guidelines, training health officials, provision of isolation centers and diagnostic materials, prompt identification of infected persons cum contact-tracing, regular updates

on the infection rate, sensitization of the populace about the reality and the dynamics of the virus, among others.

In actualizing these series of operations, the NCDC employs campaign tools such as handbills, banners, television and radio jingles, briefings, sensitizing playlets on TV and radio, newspaper and online adverts, bulk SMS, talk shows, billboards and posters. Considering the multifunctional nature of these tools, there is the need to examine the role of each in the NCDC's Covid-19 *#TakeResponsibility* campaign. In view of the above, this paper specifically focuses on the NCDC's Covid-19 online adverts due to its multimodal nature.

Most studies on Covid-19 have examined its pathogenesis and clinical characteristics (Fehr & Perlman, 2015; Shereen et al., 2020); diagnosis, treatment and prevention (Ahmad, et al., 2020); students' perception on the virus and its impact on education (Jegede, 2020); social and healthy responsive attitudes of the Nigerian masses (Adepoju, 2020; Osahon & Memedu, 2020); as well as extent of preparedness at national and global levels (CDC, 2020; Qian, Ren, Wang, Guo, Fang, Wu, Pei-Long & Han, 2020). Language-based studies on Covid-19 have interrogated quantitatively or qualitatively discursive aspects such as Covid-19 lexical and/or semantic neologisms, linguistic properties of Covid-19 fake news; coronavirus corpora and persuasive strategies in strengthening its awareness (Asif, Zhiyong, Iram & Nisar, 2020; Iqbal, Aslam, Aslam, Ashraf, Kashif & Nasi, 2020; Kim Hua et al., 2020) as well as its pronunciation fallouts (Obiorah, 2020).

Despite this gamut of linguistic and non-linguistic studies on Covid-19, the campaign tools of national and international public health agencies in the fight against the pandemic remain under-explored. Although Kim Hua et al. (2020) carry out a comparative content analysis of official announcements on Covid-19 in Malaysia and the US and also explore parliamentary proceedings on Covid-19 in Malaysia, their language-oriented data are basically political tools; hence, such data can be subsumed under political genre. Public health agencies' Covid-19 campaign tools largely remain under-researched. In view of

this paucity, this study seeks to explore the NCDC's Covid-19 *#TakeResponsibility* campaign tools, specifically its online adverts, with a view to examining the multimodal resources deployed in the adverts in terms of their representational, interactive and compositional meanings and how these meanings discursively cohere.

Public health advertising campaigns are series of public health enlightenment strategically undertaken by healthcare professionals to disseminate basic public health information to a target audience with the sole aim of creating community awareness on the health risks associated with some health-related attitudes (Health Development Agency, 2004). These campaigns remain effective means of reducing health risks through the promotion of positive health-related behaviours. Quite a number of these campaigns have been deployed nationally and internationally to promote health programs such as HIV/AIDS prevention, sexual and reproductive health, family planning, tobacco control, drug abuse, mental health, cancer prevention and treatment, vaccinations, Ebola containment, etc., and most recently, Covid-19 prevention and containment. Some of these campaigns have been variously labelled as: the Heart Truth, a campaign to increase awareness about heart-related diseases (National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute, 2020); the Diabetes UK/Tesco public health promotion campaign (Brookes & Harvey, 2015); the UK government's anti-obesity 'Change4Life' (C4L) public health campaign (Mulderrig, 2017); Public Health Enlightenment (PHE) undertaken to fight Ebola in West Africa (Otu, Ameh, Osifo-Dawodu, Alade, Ekuri & Idris, 2017); Rapid Public Health Enlightenment (RPHE) deployed in the fight against Covid-19 (Lawal &, Amzat, 2020), among others.

Public health advertising campaigns, as do all advertising forms, are most often multimedia; hence, they typically construct and reinforce meaning through the synergy of verbal and visual modes. These modes have thus become rich and viable objects of enquiry in linguists' quest to understand the multimodality of the design structures of public health advertising campaigns on diverse health promotions. In this quest,

scholars like Bok (2008), Oyebode and Unuabonah (2013) and Kahari (2013), among others, have investigated HIV/AIDS prevention advertising campaigns nationally.

Bok (2008) evaluates the effectiveness of the multimodal texts deployed in select loveLife HIV/AIDS prevention campaign in South Africa, with a view to understanding how the choices of images and texts in the campaign cohere meaningfully to disseminate the HIV/AIDS prevention messages to the target audience. Findings from the research reveal that the multimodal design of the campaign is sophisticated; hence, the target audience have been inadvertently narrowed down to urban, Western middle class rather than the general public. Oyebode and Unuabonah (2013) also explore the communicative acts and the generic structure employed in some select HIV/AIDS advertising campaign posters in Nigeria which focus primarily on people living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA) with their relations and friends. Their findings reveal the dominance of composite resources such as 'participant representation, size of frame, social distance, angle, color, gaze, posture, linguistic resources, and so on' in the campaign posters which foreground the significance of multimodal resources in projecting the intended messages of the posters' producers (p. 825). Following the recommendations of the WHO and the UNAID that the Voluntary Medical Male Circumcision (VMMC) should be implemented as 'an additional HIV prevention strategy in countries with high HIV prevalence but low male circumcision rates such as, Zimbabwe, Zambia and Swaziland (WHO/UNAIDS: 2007 as cited in Kahari, 2013, p. 16), Kahari (2013) uses multimodal discourse analytical approach to examine the meaning potentials of the multimodal features of some VMMC public health campaign posters for HIV/AIDS prevention in Zimbabwe. The study aims at understanding how VMMC health campaign for HIV/AIDS prevention could be improved in the country.

Furthermore, Brookes and Harvey (2015) explore, via a multimodal critical discourse analysis, the semiotics of fear in the Diabetes UK/Tesco public health promotion campaign (2013-2014) on Type 2 diabetes. By

identifying fear-inducing and stigmatizing commercial strategies in the campaign visuals, the study questions the legitimacy of deploying such strategies in public health campaigns. Using also multimodal critical discourse analysis in conjunction with Foucauldian concepts of governmentality and biopolitics, Mulderrig (2017) examines the multimodal strategies employed in a series of cartoon government adverts in the UK government's anti-obesity 'Change4Life' (C4L) public health campaign. The exploration addresses how the strategies are used as 'nudge tactics' in public health policy to influence parents and children to embrace 'anti-obesity' healthier lifestyles.

Sabihah and Christo (2019) looks into tuberculosis health campaigns in South Africa, the United Kingdom and India via multimodal visual semiotics. The study portrays the manner in which multimodal resources such as color, typography, positioning, iconography, among others, are deployed socially to persuasively disseminate tuberculosis prevention messages. Dias and Gusso (2016) also investigate the Brazilian blood donation campaign through a blend of visual grammar and politeness theory, with a view to understanding how the visual structures of the advertising pieces in the blood donation campaign aid the relations among the participants in the discourse environment. Zhao, Lyu, Cheng and Huang (2020) compare public health video advertisements on tobacco-control in China and Australia by using corpus-based multimodal discourse analysis.

Without any doubt, multimodal studies on public health advertising campaigns on diverse health issues abound; however, Covid-19 prevention advertising campaign, the leading concern in this treatise, is sparsely researched in multimodal studies. Although scholars such as Nasambu, Khasanda and Nyandoro (2020), Guo and Li (2020) as well as Yusuf, Gusau and Maiyaki (2020) have explored the meaning potentials of the visual and verbal modes deployed in Covid-19 containment discourses, the data samples for these studies are not drawn from public health agencies. On the other hand, Khadohi and Odhiambo's (2020) study that examines the visual resources in select Covid-19

containment campaign posters used by the Kenyan Ministry of Health (MoH) is limited to Kenya thereby necessitating the need to expand the literature. This paucity of research thus gave the impetus for an exploration of the multimodal properties of the NCDC's Covid-19 *#TakeResponsibility* online campaign as a genre of public service advertisements.

This article, therefore, explores the multimodal resources deployed in the NCDC's Covid-19 *#TakeResponsibility* online campaign adverts. This is with a view to broadening the knowledge on how the representational, interactive and compositional resources are realized in these advertising visuals to reach the Nigerian populace, as well as understanding their communicative import. This study is also germane considering the need to understand the NCDC's multifarious efforts in preventing, detecting and controlling the spread of coronavirus in Nigeria.

Methodology

The data for the study comprise forty purposively selected NCDC's Covid-19 *#TakeResponsibility* online advertising campaign encoded in English and sourced primarily from the NCDC official twitter account, Nnamdi Azikiwe University Coronavirus (Covid-19) Alert and PIND Foundation Covid-19 Updates. The campaign adverts cover a range of Covid-19 related themes such as daily situation reports on the number of infected persons in Nigeria, preventive measures against the infection, pathogenesis of the virus, caution against stigmatization, among others. However, the select data in this study have been narrowed down to adverts on preventive measures owing to space constraints and the need for a thorough analysis. Forty adverts that broadly reflect this theme were purposively selected and grouped into two: a) Covid-19 adverts promoted during the total lockdown in Nigeria between March-June; and b) adverts promoted after the lockdown. Two adverts, labelled Figures 1 and 2, were picked from the first group, and three adverts, further tagged Figures 3, 4 and 5 were selected from the second. The study adopts Kress and van Leeuwen's (2006) social semiotic metafunctional theory of visual

communication as theoretical base. This theory is considered suitable for the data analysis because it explores multimodality using Halliday's social semiotics.

Kress and van Leeuwen's (2006) multimodal approach to visual communication is set within Halliday's (1978) social semiotics. Visual designs, just like all semiotic modes, serve three basic functions designated as metafunctions in social semiotics. These metafunctions are the ideational function (representational), the interpersonal function (interactive) and the textual function (compositional) (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006, p. 16).

The ideational function represents the world as it is experienced in reality by humans. Two representational processes adopted in this study are narration and transaction. Narration connects participants via a vectorial pattern to represent them 'as doing something to or for each other' while transaction relates or connects an actor and a goal through a transaction (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006, p. 59). Narration could be action or reaction. The action process must have an actor from which the vector will emanate from; however, if an image has only one participant, the participant is the actor and the structure is non-transactional but if the transaction flows from an actor to a goal, then the structure is transactional. Also, when the transaction in an image is bidirectional resulting in the exchange of actor-goal roles, the participants become interactors. A reactional process, on the other hand, results from a vector formed by the eyeline (gaze) of one of the participants. In this case, the gazer is not an actor but a reacter and the object of his/her gaze is the phenomenon. Reactions could also be transactional (presence of a phenomenon) or non-transactional (absence of a phenomenon) (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006, pp. 50-62).

Participants in images could be 'represented participants (the people, the places and things represented in the images)' or 'interactive participants (the people who communicate with each other through images, the producers and viewers of images)' (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006, p. 114). The interpersonal function portrays the social relations among these participants. The image act construes demand and offer relations. An image that shows the represented participant looking directly at the viewer's eyes is a demand. The direct gaze of the represented participant forms a vector via the participant's eyelines. In other images where represented participants do not look directly at the viewer (no direct eye contact with the viewer), the image act is an offer which merely presents represented participants to viewers as objects of observation or contemplation (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006, p. 119).

Choice of frame size interprets social distance between participants. There are the close shot, also known as close-up, in which only the head and the shoulders of the represented participant are shown; the very close shot ('extreme close-up', 'big close-up') anything less than the head and the shoulders; the medium close shot which shows the represented participant from the waist up; the medium shot which depicts the subject from the knees upwards; the medium long shot which shows the full body; the long shot in which 'the human figure occupies about half the height of the frame; and the very long shot is anything "wider" than that' (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006, p. 124). Furthermore, an image could be frontal or oblique. The frontal angle indicates the involvement of the image producer while the oblique angle indicates detachment. The last interpersonal resource relevant in this study is the enactment of power relations via high angle, low angle and eye-level angle camera positionings. A represented participant, shown from a high angle, usually appears small, insignificant and weak. A low angle positioning makes the represented participant appear imposing and significant while the eye-level angle is a positioning of equal power relation.

The textual function presents diverse compositional resources for realizing different textual meanings. These compositional resources operate through three systems: information value, salience and framing (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006, p. 176). Information value is the placement of elements into various sections of the image – the left-right section (the Given-New relation), the top-bottom section (the Ideal-Real relation), and the

centre-margin section (the Centre-Margin relation). The horizontal structure realizes the left-right partitioning in which the elements on the right are the new while the elements on the left are the given. Also, the top-bottom partitioning is realized via a vertical structure: the top section contains the ideal while the lower section presents the real, specific, factual and practical information on the image. The central structure realizes the center-margin sections. The element at the center is the center, 'the nucleus of the information', while the surrounding elements are known as the margins which are subservient to the center (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006, pp. 180-197). Salience is realized by placing elements in the foreground or background, relative size, sharpness or dullness of the image, color contrast, among others. Framing is also realized through dividing lines meant to connect together or disconnect some specific elements of the image for the sake of achieving inclusion or exclusion in visual meaning (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006, p. 177).

In view of the above explanations, this treatise seeks to explore the representational, interactive and compositional resources deployed by the NCDC in its multimodal Covid-19 *#TakeResponsibility* online advertising campaign. The exploration will examine how the representational, interactive and compositional resources are realized in these advertising visuals and their communicative functions in the actualization of the NCDC's multimodal campaign strategies against the spread of Covid-19 in Nigeria.

Results and Discussion

The basic duties of the NCDC are to 'prevent, detect, and control the spread of communicable diseases' in Nigeria (NCDC, 2019, p. 1); hence, infection prevention tops the list of its basic duties. With the first confirmed case of Covid-19 in Nigeria, adverts on preventive strategies against the spread of the virus flooded the NCDC's websites. The multimodal nature of these adverts and their deployment as public health advertising promotions in the NCDC's campaign efforts against the spread of the pandemic among the Nigerian masses are of keen interest in this study. The multimodal resources of the select

adverts at the representational, interactive and compositional levels will be examined in this section coupled with their communicative functions.

Figure 1 is an image with a vertical structure having its top and bottom separated unequally by a thick white rectangular dividing line. The top section, which comprises an image of a cluster of commuters, relates the semiotic landscape to Nigerians in a locative manner. The cluster of orange commuter buses and commuters, all situated in a roadside parking landscape, is representative of the unceasing, disorderly and frenzy commutation system peculiar to Lagos, a hyper-active commercial state in Southwestern Nigeria. The locative relation is realized via the overlapping of the represented participants (the commuter buses, the commuters and the roadside parking spaces) and the orange color saturation that typifies Lagos commuters. This top section therefore represents an aspect of the experiential world of Nigerians, specifically commuters in Lagos State. Ideationally, the visual structure contextually represents Nigerians as commuters.
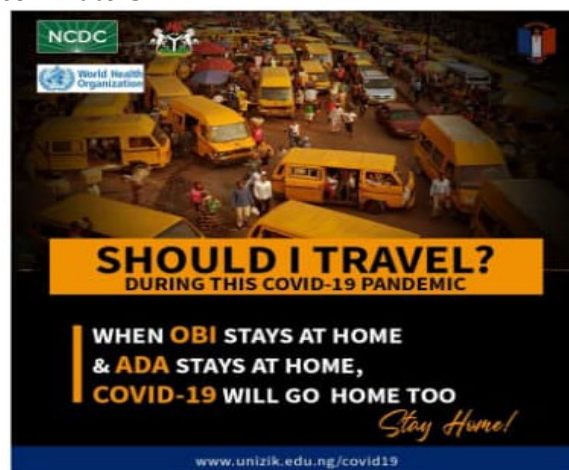

Figure 1

Furthermore, the upper section of the visual structure is narrative due to the presence of the vector, the orange rectangular

structure that bears the dark color verbal rhetorical text (SHOULD I TRAVEL? DURING THIS COVID-19 PANDEMIC), which runs diagonally across the roof of the commuter bus. This rectangular structure, which doubly serves as the vector and the nucleus, also functions as the actor involved in the process of questioning the goal, the commuters. This actor is the most salient represented participant in this upper section due to its placement in the foreground (at the center of the pictorial representation) thereby making it more conspicuous, giving it a sharper focus and contrasting it against the low background of commuters. The goal represents the commuters placed in the background who the actor is in a questioning transaction with, which thus represents the dilemma of the actor. The commutation system presented in the image shows the high risk of exposure to Covid-19 that Nigerian commuters are faced with. Therefore, the actor's question, placed at the center as the most salient, conveys a strong reinforcing sense on the need for commuters to stay at home during this Covid-19 pandemic. The reinforcement is further strengthened via the less salient verbal text directly below the rectangle. The visual structure is thus a narrative representation and the action is transactive.

However, the transactional process is bidirectional which gives the represented participants double roles thereby depicting them as interactants. As the rectangular visual depicts the actor communicating with the goal, the commuters below, so also the commuters can be portrayed as beckoning to the actor to come and board the commuter bus. It could be assumed that the implicit beckon from the commuters serves as the trigger for the actor's question. The bidirectionality of the transaction thus makes each represented participant actor and goal in each transactional process, although the actorship of the orange rectangular structure is placed in the foreground making it more conspicuous and superordinate.

Interpersonal processes in Figure 1 are also visually codified. The image act is an offer as the represented participants' facial features are not shown neither are they shown looking directly at the viewers; they are only offered to

the viewers as 'items of information, objects of contemplation, impersonally, as though they were specimens in a display case' (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006, p. 119). The placement of the commuters in the background via a distantly long shot diminishes their personal impact on the viewers and portrays them impersonally and exclusively as others. Their background placement only represents their locative relation. The image of the commuters has a frontal point of view taken from a high angle which indicates that the image producer (the NCDC) is aligned with the world of the commuters and the questioner, an alignment also imposed on the viewers. The alignment thus signals the involvement of the producer and the viewers in the narrative and also portrays the representation as an insider's objective perspective. However, the high angle of the shot makes the commuters to be seen as insignificant, powerless objects of observation.

The bottom section, divided from the top by a strong white rectangular frame space, contains the image of a hand in a non-transactive offer at close distance to disseminate objective knowledge to viewers on the exigency of hand sanitizer to avoid contracting the virus. By not pointing at the viewer, the image is not inviting the viewer into any imaginary relation, it is rather presenting a model case for the viewer's observation. However, the extreme close-up of the image, although at an oblique angle, signals the alignment of all participants as regards the object of observation. The alignment indicates that the practice of regular hand washing concerns all participants.

In sum, the upper section of the visual is the ideal which portrays the image producer's (NCDC) emotive appeal to commuters to stay at home during the pandemic. The non-salient verbal text below the rectangle depicts staying at home as the only panacea to overcoming the pandemic. The lower section is the real which contains an informative practical appeal to commuters to regularly disinfect their hands via hand sanitizer. The information values of the upper and the lower sections of the image are representationally harmonious in spite of the fact that the strong dividing frame space presents them as separate units. However, the lower section of the visual (the real), is the

most salient, more catchy and worthy of attention than all the other elements.

Figure 2 is also a narrative representation as it depicts a vector formed by the eyeline, the direction of the gaze of the female participant in mask. The female participant is the reacter, thereby making the narrative a reactional process. However, this reactional process is non-transactional as the phenomenon (the participant the reacter is gazing at) remains implicit in the visual. The viewer is left with the task of imagining or making sense of the phenomenon, the focus of attention of the reacter. Figures 1 and 2 are both narrative representations; however, Figure 1 is a transactive action process while Figure 2 is a non-transactive reactional process.

Figure 2

However, the female participant's direct gaze at the viewers and the distance choice of extreme close-up, that shows a part of her head and shoulders, seek to establish an imaginary interpersonal relation between her and her audience. The advert producer (NCDC) presents the woman as a model and demands that the viewers enter into an imitative social relation with her. The face mask used by the woman reinforces the modelling impact of the visual as it presents the woman as a perfect example to be copied in the use of mask to contain the spread of coronavirus. By using an image act of demand with a frontal angle, the text producer directly addresses and thus includes the viewers in the narrative. The frontal angle indicates the involvement of the producer and the viewers in the narrative. This involvement signals the interactive participants' alignment and identification with the world of the represented female participant. The low angle image thus demands an action from the viewers. With this demand, the represented participant is depicted in

a personal way and she wields a power of influence over her audience.

Compositionally, Figure 2 has a vertical structure (top-bottom). The top section (the ideal) has on its left side the half face of the woman putting on a face mask, at her forehead is the logo of the WHO, above it the logo of the NCDC, and beside it the Nigeria's coat arm. At the center is the verbal caption: 'We Will Beat', embedded in a red background, directly below it is another caption: 'Covid-19 Together', in a neutral color. The background of the top section is grey as against the lower section which is black. At the bottom (the real) is the verbal text: 'PLAY YOUR PART', embedded in red and directly below the text is a sentence written in capitals in white color but with a black background: 'WHEN OBI STAYS AT HOME & ADA STAYS AT HOME, COVID-19 WILL GO HOME TOO'.

The ideal projects the information value that the contest against Covid-19 is a collective effort. The inclusive 'we' in the verbal text 'We will Beat…' saliently captioned in red serves as a verbal reinforcement of the joint effort that must be demonstrated by the citizenry in the battle against the pandemic. The red color is also functionally committal as it commits all participants to this preventive course of action. The grey color used as a background for the top section, however, suggests neutrality and uncertainty. 'We will beat' in red suggests the passion attached to the commitment but the phrase 'Covid-19' in neutral is indicative of the uncertainty surrounding the actual time Covid-19 will become extinct.

The real (the lower section) presents more specific details as it substantiates the ideal by attempting to allay the uncertain gesture projected in the upper section. In achieving this, viewers are advised to play their parts passionately, which the bright red color in which the phrase is embedded suggests. Also, the background black color, being a color associated with death in the Nigerian socio-cultural context, communicates to viewers that Covid-19 will become extinct when everybody stays at home. This further suggests that the failure to keep indoors could lead to the spread of the infection and its eventual fatality.

The ideal is more salient than the real in this image because it is given a sharper focus and more color saturation. However, the framing device achieved through the discontinuity of colors does not disconnect the information value in the upper section from the lower section. The rectangular red shape that houses the verbal text, 'PLAY YOUR PART' serves as a harmonizing vector for the two sections to realize connectedness.

Representationally, the five participants in face masks in Figure 3 are depicted as doing something for one another as they are all connected by the four directional arrowheads that form oblique lines which serve as distance vectors. The distance vectors indicate the physical distance being observed by the actor. Hence, this image realizes a narrative representation, and the center (the male participant at the center from whom the arrowheads depart) is the actor while the four surrounding participants (the margins) are the goal whom the distancing action of the actor is aimed at. This image thus represents a narrative transactive action process.

Figure 3

The interpersonal process depicts an offer image act in which all the represented participants do not look directly at the viewers in spite of the close-up portrait. Although the participants appear frontally, as if they are facing the viewers, their frontal positioning is from a long high angle distance which disconnects them from the viewers and also reduces the salience of their directionality and

significance. They are presented indistinctly and impersonally via a medium long shot that indicates a far social distance; hence, they are mere objects of information for the viewers' contemplation. However, the frontal angle, which signals involvement, aligns the image producer and viewers with the actions (observance of physical distance and use of face masks) of the five represented participants.

Figure 3 is also a combination of the vertical and the central structural compositions. In the vertical composition, the top section displays the five represented participants trying to maintain social distancing while the bottom part contains a verbal text reinforcing the need for face mask and physical distance. The five represented participants are the ideal which presents a display case to practically reinforce the information value of social distancing verbalized in the real. There is, however, no frame line demarcating the upper section from the lower. This makes the information values in both sections to run harmoniously in a continuous flow. Also, the ideal and the real are equally salient, none is given sharper focus than the other. Centrally, the five represented participants are portrayed with one at the center (the nucleus) flanked by four identical margins. By using this central composition, the image producer (NCDC) deploys distance vectors to practically demonstrate to Nigerians the need for physical distance when in public. The vertical and the central compositions are both directive and emphatic in function.

Figure 4 is also a narrative as the yellow circular frame line forms a vector that connects the right section to the left. The narration is a transactive action process in which the female participant is the actor while the strong yellow rectangular frame that bears the verbal text 'PREVENT COVID-19 SPREAD' is the goal. The circular yellow line is the vector connecting the actor and the goal in the image to represent the narrative of physical distance from an infected person.
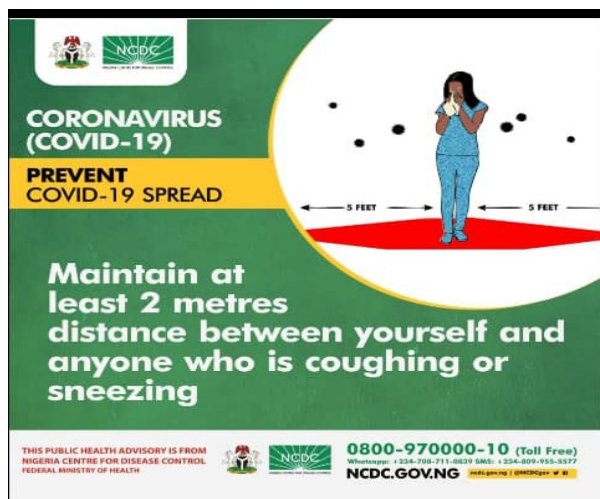
Figure 4

The image is positioned on a horizontal axis where some elements are placed on the left and others on the right and a yellow circular frame line demarcates the left and the right axes into two unequal parts. The elements on the right section are new while the elements on the left are given. At the right section, there is the female represented participant seen coughing or sneezing as depicted in the cough- or sneeze-aerosols, represented by the small circles that surround her. Cough is one of the prominent symptoms of Covid-19; therefore, inasmuch as these aerosols can travel as far as 2m or more, the distance vectors (the arrows) recommend that those close to her should maintain a distance of five feet. The redness that marks the ground upon which the woman stands indicates infection: she is infected and anyone who fails to maintain the required distance from her will also be infected. Therefore, this right-side new information serves to practically warn viewers. The left-side given elements are familiar and agreed-upon information for viewers. There, information on the image producer (NCDC) and some verbal reinforcements to the practical visual at the right-hand side are provided. However, the salience of the verbal text that runs from the left to the right side of the image (Maintain at least 2 meters distance…) is thematic, and thus summarily projects the whole essence of the image. Therefore, the new is more salient due to its sharper thematic focus. In addition, the yellow circular line that separates the left from the right serves as a vector that runs from the

edge of the left corner to the image of the woman on the right to unite the two themes.

The image can also be structured into top-bottom. The top represents the ideal thematic information of the advert on the need to maintain some required physical distance from an infected person while the bottom merely contains some specific information about the advert producer (NCDC).

The represented female participant in Figure 4 also depicts an offer as she does not look straight at the viewers. In fact, the distance choice of a medium long shot from a high angle makes her appear distantly far away from the viewers. This far social distance shot presents her as an individual instance representing some samples for contemplative observation. Inasmuch as the participant does not address the viewers directly through her eyelines, her visual display fails to enact any personal social relations with the viewers. Her visual angle is also less frontal as her gaze is slightly turned away from the viewers. Her partial frontal and indirect gaze are indications of the partial involvement of the producer and viewers with her. This partial involvement encodes the message: 'Although we are part of your world, we have to keep away from you because of your infection to avoid contracting it'. Therefore, the point of view signals unequal social relation between the interactive participants and the represented participant.

In Figure 5, the image of the two men at the left bottom section represents a narrative transactive action process as they are connected by a vector, the directional arrowhead line. This transactive narration is bidirectional in that each participant plays the role of actor and goal as both are seen trying to maintain some physical distance from each other simultaneously. Hence, the two participants are interactors observing the physical distance directive even at the religious sphere.

These two males in a medium shot apparently enact no connection nor social relation with the viewers. By backing their viewers via a far social distance, the visual depicts the participants in an impersonal manner and also offers them as specimens of observation. Their frontal back-view is diametrical: the frontal angle identifies the producer and the viewers with the world of the two men while their back-view detaches the producers and the viewers from their religious posture. The back-view indicates that religious groups in Nigeria are exclusionary. Although the back-view shot is a mark of detachment and exclusion between the interactive and represented participants, the eye level angle signals power equality between both groups.
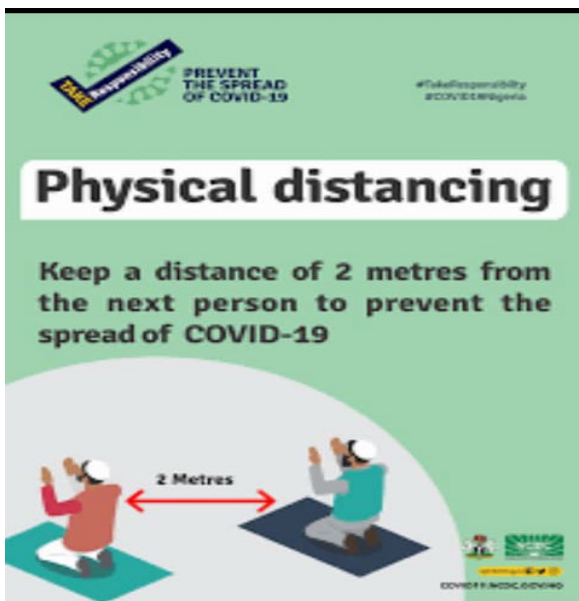

Figure 5

The image also has a vertical structure. The topmost section, which is mostly verbal, is the ideal as it contains a directive: (PREVENT THE SPREAD OF COVID-19) and other verbal elements which situate the image in the Nigerian context; hence, this upper section is semiotically directive and locative. The lower section is more practical and dramatic. However, this lower section has a left-right structure where the left axis contains the image of two men observing some religious rites typical of Muslims. The directional arrowheads, which serve as distance vector, demonstrate to viewers how to maintain social distancing even when observing religious rites. This left side, cuts off from the whole visual by a cylindrical grey frame space, is the

given which operates as a visual reinforcement to the verbal text in the upper part. The right section is the new that contains some specific information about the NCDC. However, the given is far more salient, worthy of the viewers' attention than the new. Also, the cylindrical dividing grey space is a frame line that mildly disconnects the left from the right and also the top from the bottom. In spite of this demarcation, a sense of continuous flow of information from top to bottom and left to right still runs through the advert; hence, there is no thematic disconnectedness between the two sections. Additionally, the verbal text 'Physical Distancing' positioned at the center of the image is the most salient, the prominently displayed element that carries the thematic essence of the image. Therefore, there tends to be harmony in the information values of the upper-lower and left-right sections.

Conclusion

Attempts have been made in the preceding sections to explore how the ideational (representational), interpersonal (interactive) and textual (compositional) resources are realized in selected NCDC's *#TakeResponsibility* online campaign advertisements on Covid-19 prevention as well as their communicative functions. Findings from the data analysis reveal that the images mostly represent narrative, transactive action processes coupled with offer image acts and frontal angles. These representations communicatively perform the directive, informative, reinforcing, cautionary and collective functions. The directive and informative functions are instructional as guidelines on how to contain the spread of coronavirus are presented for participants. Such guidelines include adherence to the stay-at-home order (specifically during the total lockdown phase), the use of face mask, regular usage of hand sanitizer and social distancing. The cautionary function serves to warn participants against the risk of exposure they face from non-adherence to all Covid-19 prevention directives. The reinforcing function embodies verbal and visual reinforcers used in strengthening the need to adhere to all Covid-19 prevention directives. The collective function idealizes the notion that the

containment of Covid-19 in Nigeria is a collective responsibility.

The results above have thus confirmed Kress and van Leeuwen's (2006) view that image elements 'combine in "visual statements" of greater or lesser complexity and extension' for meaning representation, 'interpretations of experience and forms of social interaction' (pp. 1-2). Also, as revealed in Oyebode and Unuabonah's (2013, p. 811) study that HIV/AIDS public health campaign posters rely heavily on semiotic resources to 'signal the intended meaning of the producers of the posters', so also the results in this study demonstrate the NCDC's complete reliance on visual structures in its public health campaign on Covid-19 prevention. Also, the image elements in the NCDC's Covid-19 campaign advertisements are simple and comprehensible to the general public as opposed to the sophistication of the multimodal design of the loveLife HIV/AIDS prevention campaign in South Africa pointed out by Bok (2008). This study thus expands the literature on Covid-19 public health campaign by complementing the works of Nasambu, Khasanda and Nyandoro (2020), Guo and Li (2020), Yusuf, Gusau and Maiyaki (2020) as well as Khadohi and Odhiambo (2020).

In sum, this study has explored the realization of the ideational, interpersonal and textual resources deployed by the NCDC in some of its *#TakeResponsibility* online advertising campaign on Covid-19 prevention. The results reveal the realization of the narrative, transactive, action, offer, and the frontal resources, among others, in the adverts. These resources interactively perform the directive, informative, reinforcing, preventive, cautionary and collective functions which demonstrate that the representational, interactive and compositional resources deployed in the campaign relate to each other harmoniously. Therefore, the informational values of these composite visuals integrate meaningfully into a unified whole; and thus, serve their public relations advertisement purpose. The intersemiosis of the multimodal resources of the NCDC's Covid-19 campaign tools such as banners and handbills could be explored by future researchers to further widen the scope of the literature.

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