

Article

Logos of Selected Nigerian Pentecostal Churches: A Semiotic Study

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Abstract

This study conducts a semiotic analysis of selected logos of Nigerian Pentecostal churches with the aim of uncovering the visual elements that project Christian faith. Guided by Kress and van Leeuwen's (2006) Visual Grammar as the theoretical framework and employing a qualitative research design, twelve logos of Pentecostal churches affiliated with the Christian Association of Nigeria were purposively selected from their official websites. The analysis explores both the representational and compositional meanings embedded in the logos. Findings revealed that Pentecostal church logos incorporate visual elements symbolizing strength, wisdom, power, purity, holiness, love, communion, crucifixion, and the propagation of the gospel. These semiotic resources function not merely as decorative features but as communicative instruments that articulate the churches' doctrinal commitments and spiritual identity. The study concluded that the use of faith-based visual elements in Pentecostal church logos demonstrates thematic prominence, symbolic relevance, and cultural significance within the Nigerian religious context. Based on these findings, the research recommends the intentional incorporation of faith-based semiotic resources in church logos as a vital instrument for projecting the mandate, doctrines, principles, and practices of the church.

Keywords: Logos, Christian Association of Nigeria, Visual elements, Visual grammar

Introduction

Signs and symbols function as potent instruments of non-verbal communication, enabling members of a community to exchange ideas without reliance on spoken language. Through the deployment of visual cues, individuals within a speech community can immediately convey aspects of their identity or articulate the values embedded by the image-maker. These symbolic forms serve as communicative devices that encapsulate complex meanings, which are readily interpretable by participants in the group. In this way, symbols operate as a shared semiotic system that facilitates collective understanding and reinforces social cohesion. Sprague (2022) opines that "Visuals assist in memory retention. This elucidates why every company has a little graphic, called a logo, to represent their brand" (p. 67).

Logos are composed of carefully arranged visual symbols that serve to communicate a distinct concept. Functioning as a form of visual handshake, a logo operates as a unique emblem strategically designed to remain in the memory of its viewer. To achieve this, it integrates a range of visual elements including graphics, photographs, symbols, geometric forms, typography, and color schemes into a cohesive design. This deliberate combination of elements is intended to capture attention and facilitate recognition, thereby reinforcing the communicative and mnemonic power of the logo within visual culture. Onipede (2018) explains that "Logo comprises signs which can be a word and an imprint; a graphic mark or

symbol used by any designer to aid or promote instant public recognition" (p. 61). Ekhareafor and Oluwaseyi (2019) explain that "logos have distinct communicative elements. Their uses in social interactions communicate meanings to the recipients" (p. 9). In Nigeria, a logo is much more than just a brand mark; it is a vital tool that projects an organization's official image and commitment to its mandate. These designs act as semiotic resources that communicate deep meanings about healthcare, religious values, business goals, or national identity without needing many words.

Logos function as deliberately crafted trademarks designed to enhance public recognition and establish distinctiveness. They provide businesses, religious institutions, and agencies with a unique identity that differentiates them from other producers within similar domains. As a powerful form of non-verbal communication, logos convey meaning without reliance on extensive verbal explanation. Within specific communities, these visual forms are essential for transmitting complex ideas instantaneously, bridging the space between simple imagery and deeper cultural significance. By employing a logo, an organization can project its identity and articulate its core values to members and audiences alike. In this sense, logos operate as a shared semiotic language that fosters trust, recognition, and cohesion. Far beyond aesthetic design, they serve as communicative tools for human connection, visualizing narratives that resonate with and are relatable to members of a speech community.

According to Onipede (2018), "Logos comprise signs, which can be a word or an imprint; a graphic mark or symbol used by any designer to aid or promote instant public recognition" (p. 15). Logos operate as coordinated visual elements that render a brand or institution immediately recognizable. As trademarks or corporate marks, their primary function is to project the organizational image in visual form. They constitute the visual identity that enables businesses, religious entities, or agencies to establish a distinct presence within society. Onipede (2019) asserts that "logos are designed to persuade and influence people" (p. 61). Symbols function as semiotic devices that transmit meaning more rapidly and effectively than extended textual discourse.

A well-designed logo enables viewers to comprehend its intended message without reliance on verbal explanation. Yet interpretation is mediated by social, cultural, and religious frameworks, which may lead to divergent readings. Such variability underscores the potential for misinterpretation or contested meaning within symbolic communication. Consequently, examining the logos of Pentecostal churches requires a semiotic lens to decode their layered significance. This approach situates logos as cultural texts that embody identity, values, and narratives within specific communities. This study examines how Pentecostal churches in Nigeria employ symbolic representations within their logos to project core denominational values. It investigates the semiotic processes through which visual symbolism constructs and communicates religious identity in the Pentecostal context. By analyzing visual elements, the research explores how denominations encode doctrinal beliefs and theological principles into logo design. The study addresses a gap in scholarship concerning the role of iconography in shaping spiritual engagement among congregants.

Previous semiotic studies (Adeboye, 2021; Akinmusuyi & Oladipo, 2023; Kamalu & Ojatula, 2019; Muhammed, 2023; Obasi, 2023; Suku, 2019; Taiwo & Oamen, 2018) have predominantly examined advertising, media, political discourse, and literature. However,

limited scholarly attention has been directed toward the logos of Pentecostal churches operating within Nigeria. This study addresses that gap by analyzing how symbolic and communicative elements function in the logos of selected Nigerian Pentecostal churches.

Establishing a strong visual identity for an institution requires intentionality and systematic design. A logo is strategically crafted to capture attention and render a brand instantly recognizable to the public. In Nigeria, where faith occupies a central role in social life, such symbols serve as badges of identity for adherents of Islam, Christianity, and Traditional religions. Within Christian communities, these emblems are often custom-designed to foster a sense of belonging among congregants. Through their simplicity and memorability, logos transform complex organizational structures into accessible visual representations. Thus, they function not merely as aesthetic artifacts but as enduring markers of identity and communal affiliation. According to Onipede (2018), a logo is "a graphic mark or symbol used by Christians or individuals to aid or promote instant public recognition. The selected Nigerian churches have their logos specially designed to make people recognise them" (p. 15).

The logo, as a visual or graphical representation of a church, serves as a deliberate semiotic device that projects the institution's image, nature, commitment, and mandate. It functions as a symbolic marker through which the church communicates its identity and theological orientation to both members and the wider public. Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) maintain that "the visual structures point to particular interpretations of experience and forms of social interaction" (p. 6). This implies that the visual elements in logos symbolize a broader concept. For instance, Nigerian churches hold diverse perceptions and interpretations of Christian concepts such as holiness, prosperity, prayer, healthcare, and heaven. The creation of a church logo emerges as a product of social interaction, lived experiences, and the interpretive frameworks of its producers, particularly within Pentecostal traditions. Accordingly, this study investigates the logos of selected Nigerian Pentecostal churches with emphasis on the symbolic power embedded in their visual elements.

Empirical Review

The exploration of logos as visual languages has long engaged scholars, as these symbols transcend decorative aesthetics to embody communicative depth. Through semiotic analysis, researchers decode how a seemingly simple mark evolves into a powerful trademark or enduring identity. Scholars across Africa and globally investigate the structural and communicative potency of these designs, situating them within cultural discourse. Attention is given to how elements such as shape and color function as silent messengers, encapsulating collective missions and values. This line of inquiry highlights the visual codes that enable images to operate as communicative texts. Logos serve as semiotic instruments through which entire speech communities interpret and negotiate meaning.

Many pioneer researchers and authors of semiotic theory, including Barthes (1964), Bourdieu (1991), Chandler (2000, 2007), Eco (1979), Leeds-Hurwitz (1993), Peirce (1965), and Saussure (1974), have broadly defined semiotics as the study of everything that can be seen or interpreted as a sign. For instance, Eco (1979), in *A Theory of Semiotics*, advanced a foundational framework for semiotic inquiry. Chandler (2007), in *The Basics of Semiotics*, outlined approaches to human semiotic processes and their communicative functions.

Bourdieu (1991) further examined the symbolic dimensions of power, situating semiotics within broader sociocultural structures.

Oladumiye (2018), in "Cultural Symbols and African Symbolism: The Efficacy in Product Advertisement," examined the use of African cultural symbols in advertising. Drawing on 137 products randomly selected from Lagos State, Nigeria, the study employed both survey and descriptive methods. The analysis revealed that cultural objects such as kola nuts, crowns, calabashes, and beads are heavily utilized in Nigerian product advertisements. These symbols proved effective because they resonate with audiences who can easily relate to or infer meaning from them. A limitation of the study, however, is its lack of theoretical grounding within a linguistic framework.

Adeniji (2016), in "A Semiotic Analysis of Selected British American Tobacco Print Advertisements in Nigeria," examined the cultural values reflected in six Nigerian print advertisements. Using a semiological framework, the study revealed the underlying messages in the advertisements and how they promoted Nigerian culture. According to Adeniji, the cultural values identified included love for fashion, education, promotion of locally made products, and cultural development through drama and agriculture. The paper concluded that culture operates as a driving force behind successful multinational advertising. However, the study's reliance on a relatively small dataset – only six advertisements – limits the generalizability of its findings.

Olurotimi (2021), in "Semiotics: A Transdisciplinary Quest for Meaning," primarily investigates the nature of semiotics and its multidisciplinary tenor. The paper argues that semiotics has long been a tradition within communication studies and remains one of the broadest tools for deconstructing textual and non-textual signs and symbols. The study further explains that the interpretation of signs is multimodal and can only be adequately explored through transdisciplinary approaches. However, a notable gap exists, as the research does not extend semiotic analysis to linguistic or real-life data.

Addressing these gaps, the current study applies semiotic analysis to the logos of selected Nigerian Pentecostal churches under the Christian Association of Nigeria, uncovering the semiotic resources inherent in their visual representations. It addresses the limitations identified in prior work by (i) applying a linguistically grounded theoretical framework, (ii) working with a larger and more focused dataset, and (iii) grounding the analysis in real, publicly available institutional artifacts.

Theoretical Framework

Just as textual linguistics employs grammar to combine words into coherent sentences, visual language possesses its own structured grammar for meaning-making. In spoken discourse, rules guide the transformation of individual words into intelligible phrases and clauses. Similarly, visual grammar provides a framework for arranging people, places, objects, and text within an image. This visual syntax ensures that diverse elements interact cohesively to produce a coherent narrative. By recognizing these parallels, researchers can systematically decode logos as semiotic texts. Thus, a logo may be interpreted much like a linguist parses a sentence, revealing its embedded communicative structures.

For this study, the theoretical framework is drawn from Kress and van Leeuwen's (2006) approach to social interaction, commonly referred to as Visual Grammar. Visual grammar provides a comprehensive lens for understanding how meaning is constructed through images. The theory emphasizes the presentation of texts, images, colors, graphics, and other semiotic resources as communicative tools. These resources are systematically studied, discussed, and analyzed in relation to the specific messages they convey to audiences.

Modu and Aliyu (2023) reveal that "Analysing and explicating of visual communication or elements is an important aspect of visual grammar as well as general linguistic discourses" (p. 17). In this theory, visual components are conceptualized as participants, encompassing all elements that constitute visual discourse. These participants form the basis of meaning-making within multimodal communication. Kress and van Leeuwen's (2006) approach to multimodality is rooted in Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics. For Halliday, language functions as a semiotic mode that realizes three communicative metafunctions: ideational, interpersonal, and textual. Within visual grammar, these metafunctions are reframed as representational, interactive, and compositional. Representational concerns the depiction of people and objects in images; interactive addresses the social dimensions of viewer engagement; and compositional examines the arrangement of elements to generate meaning. The theory of social semiotics extends this framework by demonstrating how Halliday's metafunctions decisively shape Kress and van Leeuwen's model of visual communication grammar.

Royce (2013) submits that "Visual elements are visual features with semantic properties. The visual designers can utilize a range of visual strategies to achieve these semantic attributes or meanings" (p. 50). This implies that the purpose of incorporating visual elements into visual discourse is to convey specific messages. For this research, the pertinent components of visual grammar employed are representational meaning and compositional meaning. According to Moerdisuroso (2014), "Visual elements are called the participants. Every visual text includes two main participants: drawn-participants (all humans, events, objects, and other forms appearing in the image)" (p. 87). Participants refer to the totality of visual elements present in an image or pictorial text. These participants may consist of human figures, objects, or symbolic representations. Representation in visual grammar depicts the relationship between an image and specific concepts in the contemporary world.

Beyond other models of linguistic semiotics, such as the Saussurean model and Peircean semiotics, the visual grammar framework serves as a vital instrument of social semiotic analysis. The significance of this study is to extend semiotic inquiry to Christian icons in logos through the lens of visual grammar. Specifically, the visual elements in the logos of selected Pentecostal churches are subjected to systematic analysis using visual grammar.

Research Methodology

This study adopts a descriptive qualitative research design, employing a purposive sampling technique. It incorporates a linguistic semiotic approach to guide the analysis.

Population and sample. The population comprises the logos of all churches operating under the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN). The sample consists of twelve logos purposively selected from the official websites of CAN-affiliated Pentecostal churches. The choice of

twelve church logos was informed by the need to conduct a detailed, systematic, and theoretically grounded analysis: twelve logos allow sufficient breadth to observe recurring symbolic patterns while remaining tractable for the close interpretative reading required by Visual Grammar.

Sampling criteria. Logos were selected according to four inclusion criteria: (i) the church must be a Pentecostal denomination affiliated with CAN; (ii) the logo must be officially accessible on the church's website during the data-collection period; (iii) the logo must contain identifiable visual (non-textual) elements amenable to semiotic analysis; and (iv) the churches collectively must represent variation in size, geography, and theological emphasis so that the findings are not idiosyncratic to a single tradition. The denominations selected include, among others, Christ Apostolic Church, Redeemed Christian Church of God, Foursquare Gospel Church, Deeper Life Bible Church, Dunamis International Gospel Centre, and The Apostolic Church.

Analytical procedure. The analysis proceeded in three stages. First, each logo's visual participants (objects, figures, symbols, typography, and colors) were inventoried. Second, each logo was examined for representational meaning, identifying what the participants depict and the conceptual relationships among them. Third, each logo was examined for compositional meaning, attending to salience (relative prominence), information value (placement within the frame), and framing. Throughout the analysis, the distinction was maintained between well-established, conventional symbolic associations (e.g., the dove generally signifying the Holy Spirit in Christian iconography) and the analyst's own interpretive inferences, the latter being offered with appropriate hedging. Each selected logo is labeled Palette I–XII for analytical clarity, and reproduced in the Appendix.

Trustworthiness. As a single-analyst, interpretative study, the analysis is inherently reflexive. To enhance credibility, interpretive claims were cross-checked against the documented doctrinal positions of each denomination as presented on their official websites, and conventional symbolic meanings were referenced against established Christian iconography. No inter-coder reliability check was performed; the study's contribution is therefore an interpretative reading rather than a measure of consensus among viewers. This limitation is acknowledged in Section 8.

Data Analysis

Note on figures: Reproductions of the twelve logos (Palette I–XII) analyzed below are provided in Figure 1 through Figure 12 in the Appendix. Readers are encouraged to refer to these images alongside the analysis.

Palette I – Christ Apostolic Church

Theme: Salvation **Participants:** Male figure, flock of sheep, lamb, rod, grasses/pasture, river, trees, rocks, and text.

Representational meaning. As postulated by visual grammar, all visual elements – the man, the sheep, and the rod – constitute the participants of the logo. These elements collectively suggest a setting rooted in livestock agriculture, particularly the practice of open

grazing. The male figure symbolizes the shepherd, representing Christ. Within Nigerian agricultural culture, a young man is entrusted with nurturing, feeding, and protecting livestock; thus, the man in the image may be read as signifying Christ's personality in terms of passion, care, love, and commitment to His flock. The rod conveys leadership, protection, and guidance. The flock of sheep represents the saints (Christians), who are saved, submissive to God's will, and committed to propagating the gospel. The pastures, grasses, vegetation, and water symbolize the eternal tranquility of paradise awaiting believers; their presence creates a serene environment conducive to the spread of the gospel. The green pasture signifies freshness, fertility, and growth, reflecting an environment suitable for agricultural activity. The white color of the sheep denotes purity, flawlessness, and transparency, while the blue color symbolizes humility and peace.

Compositional meaning. The deliberate arrangement of participants within the logo generates visual appeal for viewers. Positioning the human figure in front of a flock of white sheep and rocks grants the image salience: the shepherd standing before the sheep establishes visual dominance and becomes the focal point of attraction for the audience.

Palette II – The Sword of the Spirit Ministries

Theme: Faith **Participants:** White dove, globe, book-like figure, sword, and text.

Representational meaning. The image under consideration contains four major visual elements, all drawn from established Christian iconography. The whiteness of the dove signifies purity, transparency, and the beauty of the Holy Spirit, conveying that the church is centered on the peaceful presence of the Almighty. The globe symbolizes international recognition, projecting the church's local and global impact across borders; it further reflects inclusivity, suggesting that the church transcends ethnicity, race, gender, and class. The book-like figure beneath the globe represents the Bible, the authoritative documentation of Christian practice, indicating that all insights and practices are derived from scripture. Culturally, the sword functions as a symbol of authority, leadership, protection, and defense; here it implies that scriptural knowledge serves as a weapon against spiritual threats and oppression. Additionally, the sword represents law, signifying the commandments and beatitudes that believers must follow. Neglecting or perverting justice may thus be read as invoking the wrath of divine law.

Compositional meaning. Compositionally, the logo distributes its four symbolic participants so that the globe and dove occupy the upper register, establishing them as the most salient (from top to bottom), while the book forms the base upon which the emblems rest. The presence of the sword alongside these elements frames the whole as a declaration of spiritual authority. The vertical stacking produces a stable, hierarchical composition in which the divine (dove, globe) is elevated above the scriptural (book) and instrumental (sword) elements.

Palette III – The Redeemed Christian Church of God

Theme: Salvation/redemption **Participants:** Bird symbol, textual inscription.

Representational meaning. Examining this logo, a dominant participant is immediately visible to viewers. The white bird symbolizes transparency, purity, and meekness. Within the Christian faith, the dove signifies revelation from the Holy Spirit, representing the church's foundation in salvation. The textual inscription, rendered in green font, is the name of the church. Green is commonly associated with reproduction and growth, while the red color connotes the vitality in Christ's blood. This interpretation suggests that the Nigerian-based church embraces expansion and the propagation of the gospel. The choice of a blue background is significant, as blue is often linked to trust and reliability.

Compositional meaning. Placing a white dove at the center of the circular shape establishes it as the focal point of the composition. All elements within this palette are arranged in a ring-like structure, enhancing visual clarity. The circumference functions as a foundational frame that accommodates and organizes all visual components, drawing the viewer's eye inward to the dove as the central sign of divine presence.

Palette IV – Foursquare Gospel Church

Theme: Total faith **Participants:** Cross, cup, bird, and crown.

Representational meaning. The participants of this logo reflect the practice and doctrine of the church. The cross is the first notable participant, symbolizing crucifixion and affirming belief in the death and resurrection of Christ. While a cup is generally a container for water, in this palette it signifies anointing oil and may also represent communion wine, reflecting the church's practice of anointing and Eucharistic service. The dove positioned beneath the cross symbolizes the Holy Spirit, serving as a sign of divine approval. The crown beneath the cup represents royalty, presupposing the church's belief in the Messiah as the coming King. The image-maker presents all participants – the cross, cup, dove, and crown – in white, signifying purity. This uniform use of color also imparts a celebratory and cohesive composition to the logo.

Compositional meaning. The compositional meaning lies in the deliberate vertical ordering of the semiotic participants. The cross occupies the uppermost and most salient position, anchoring the viewer's attention, while the dove, cup, and crown descend beneath it. This arrangement constructs a hierarchy in which the crucifixion is foregrounded as the doctrinal foundation, with the Holy Spirit, communion, and the promised kingdom arrayed beneath. Such a configuration is designed to capture attention, evoke positive emotions, and align with the mandate of the church.

Palette V – The Redeemed Evangelical Mission (TREM)

Theme: Evangelism **Participants:** Bird-like figure, book-symbol.

Representational meaning. In this logo, the book symbolizes the Bible, which serves as the foundation of faith-based practice and doctrinal teaching of the church. Its lower positioning implies that Scripture is the base upon which the church is established. The book-symbol is depicted as open, signifying open-mindedness and the expectation that members approach the Word of God with receptivity. The bird positioned above the book represents the Holy Spirit, a common Christian symbol of divine presence and approval, echoing Palettes II and

III. The whiteness of the bird conveys purity, while the red background signifies strength, courage, and power; this combination suggests that the church is empowered by the Word of God. The choice of red is significant, as it is culturally associated with passion, vitality, and authority. Gold within the palette connotes opulence, wealth, and the eternal richness available through salvation in Christ.

Compositional meaning. Compositionally, placing the bird at the center and above the book makes it the focal point, ensuring that a viewer's attention is drawn to the uniqueness of the church as a Spirit-led institution. The book beneath functions as a stable base, conveying that the Holy Spirit's presence is grounded in Scripture. The contrast between the white bird and the red background heightens the salience of the central symbol.

Palette VI – Deeper Life Bible Church

Theme: Salvation **Participants:** White cross and book.

Representational meaning. Prominently, two objects constitute this logo: the white cross and the book. The white cross symbolizes the crucifixion, death, resurrection, and ascension of Christ, affirming the church's doctrinal belief. The book represents the Bible, indicating that the church is firmly centered on the Word of God. The placement of the white cross at the center emphasizes purity and peacefulness as core values. The choice of red and blue backgrounds is significant, with red denoting power and strength, while blue conveys trust and reliability.

Compositional meaning. This further explains the central positioning of the white cross. The image-maker strategically places the cross in the middle and above the book to signify purity, prominence, and clarity. The cross's central, elevated placement makes it the dominant element, establishing the crucifixion as the doctrinal heart of the church while the book beneath grounds that doctrine in Scripture.

Palette VII – Dunamis International Gospel Centre

Theme: Evangelism **Participants:** Globe, book, flame, and text.

Representational meaning. The participants in this palette embody a representational concept. The most prominent object in the logo is the globe. Incorporating this globe-symbol connotes that Dunamis is not restricted to Nigerians but is a globally recognized denomination, open to all people regardless of tribe, race, region, language, ethnicity, sex, age, or nationality. In general, fire illuminates a space; here, the flame symbolizes light, wisdom, and the propagation of the gospel. As an untamed fire spreads widely, so also the gospel burns continuously across the world. As presented in Palettes II, V, and VI, the book symbolizes the Bible, the foundational principle, practice, and doctrine of the church, affirming that it is a Bible-believing institution. The choice of gold is significant, as it connotes generosity, wealth, prowess, and success within the salvation offered by Christ.

Compositional meaning. The arrangement of participants in this logo is deliberate. The image-maker establishes visual balance by positioning the book as the base, inscribing the fire within the globe, and presenting the church's name in blue to enhance its prominence

as a name tag. This configuration creates a dynamic tension between the global reach of the globe and the inward, energizing force of the flame contained within it.

Palette VIII – Livingspring Chapel International

Theme: Fellowship **Participants:** Human figures, love symbol, and text.

Representational meaning. The participants in this logo represent believers joyfully engaged in worship. The human figures with outstretched arms signify that the church is open to all members, regardless of gender, age, ethnicity, tribe, class, or social status. These human-like figures are inscribed within a love symbol. The love symbol serves as the base and background of the logo, indicating that the church is founded on love. Universally, love unites and connects members of the church across all contexts.

Compositional meaning. Compositionally, the background color of the logo is orange, symbolizing optimism, happiness, and youthful connection. All participants (human figures, love symbol, and text) are arranged centrally within the circle, projecting the church as an original, perfect, and unified entity. The church's name is inscribed around the circle in blue font, signifying trust and reliability. The deliberate arrangement of the human figures and the love symbol within the orange circle communicates that love and unity form the foundation of the church.

Palette IX – Gospel Faith Mission

Theme: Faith **Participants:** White dove, circle, and flames.

Representational meaning. The white dove symbolizes divine presence and signifies that the church is centered on the Holy Spirit, echoing the dove symbolism of Palettes II, III, and V. The circle in which the bird is positioned represents unity and the Christian bond shared among members. The fire surrounding the circumference conveys power and protection; this further implies that members of the church are empowered and strengthened through their faith in the Holy Spirit.

Compositional meaning. The blue background, which serves as the denomination's trademark, enhances the salience of the white dove. The large white dove functions as the dominant element of the logo: its whiteness establishes the dove as the focal point, drawing viewers' attention and symbolizing the church being represented. The red flames around the circumference create a striking contrast with the blue background, making the composition visually appealing and reinforcing the theme of spiritual power.

Palette X – The Apostolic Church

Theme: Salvation **Participants:** Human figure, flock of sheep, lamb, rod, and text.

Representational meaning. All the visual elements – the man, the sheep, and the rod – constitute the participants of the logo. The man depicted symbolizes a shepherd, representing Christ, and conveys His passion, care, love, and commitment to His flock, closely paralleling the shepherd imagery of Palette I. In this composition, the man functions as the actor, while the flock of sheep serves as the goal. According to Kress and van Leeuwen

(2006), the connection of participants through a vector indicates that they are engaged in actions directed toward one another. The rod is emblematic of livestock farming and connotes leadership, protection, and guidance. The flock of sheep symbolizes the saints (Christians), who are fully saved by God, willing to submit to His will, follow His lead, and propagate the gospel.

Compositional meaning. The deliberate arrangement of participants creates visual appeal for viewers. The placement of the human figure in front of a flock of white sheep and rocks enhances the salience of the image: the shepherd standing before the sheep establishes dominance and serves as a focal point of attraction. The circular arrangement of the text provides the logo with a distinct identity, differentiating it from Palette I.

Palette XI – Gospel Apostolic Church

Theme: The Word of God **Participants:** Bible and texts.

Representational meaning. The book, identified as the Holy Bible and depicted in white, signifies that this church is a Bible-believing institution. It conveys that all principles, messages, and practices are firmly grounded in Biblical stipulations. The image functions as an attention-grabbing device to promote the reading, understanding, study, and application of the Word of God, reinforcing the scriptural emphasis already identified in Palettes II, V, VI, and VII.

Compositional meaning. The positioning of the Bible at the center of the logo establishes it as the focal point. Its central placement highlights the predominant target audience and reinforces the church's doctrinal emphasis. The use of a blue background conveys trust and reliability, while the red circumference introduces visual interest. The circular arrangement of the church's name provides the logo with a branded identity, enabling instant recognition among other denominations.

Palette XII – Mispem Bible Church International

Theme: Christian faith **Participants:** Book, hands, globe, white bird, and texts.

Representational meaning. Palette XII contains a considerable number of participants, with five distinct elements jointly conveying multiple meanings. This aligns with the conception of visual grammar, which posits that images encapsulate ideas that might otherwise require extended verbal expression. The image signifies the act of studying and drawing insights from the Bible. One level of interpretation suggests that members of this church regard the things of God as delicate, requiring careful handling and diligent attention. Another interpretation is that the hands symbolize the outstretched hands of God, reflecting the belief that divine grace can save even the vilest offender who repents and engages with Scripture. The globe signifies that the church is a global worship center, open to all individuals regardless of age, gender, status, background, or race, and its presence suggests openness to expansion beyond Nigeria, echoing the globe symbolism of Palettes II and VII. As seen in Palettes II, III, IV, V, and IX, the white dove represents openness, purity, and the abiding presence of the Holy Spirit in this denomination. The use of blue and white

throughout the logo enhances visual appeal and reinforces themes of trust, reliability, peace, purity, and transparency.

Compositional meaning. Regarding compositional meaning, the arrangement of visual elements in this logo conveys significant messages. The circular inscription of text around the logo directs viewers to the central message, which is the name of the church. These compositional choices are designed to capture attention, evoke positive emotions, and highlight the church's commitment to spreading the gospel globally, while the central positioning of the book and hands establishes the study of Scripture as the organizing principle of the design.

Findings

This study examined twelve logos of selected Nigerian Pentecostal churches using Kress and van Leeuwen's (2006) Visual Grammar analytical framework to explore how visual elements enhance audience perception. The analysis revealed recurring components that foreground the messages communicated to the public about Christian faith.

For example, the repeated use of a white bird (dove) functions as a prominent Christian symbol. The dove universally represents purity and the presence of the Holy Spirit. Palettes II, III, IV, V, IX, and XII all employ the dove symbol, reinforcing its association with divine guidance in Christianity. Its symbolic representation suggests that these churches are subject to the leading, control, and administration of the Holy Spirit.

Another recurring symbol is the book, which appears in Palettes II, V, VI, VII, XI, and XII. Globally, a book symbolizes education, knowledge, and literacy. Within these logos, the book specifically represents the Holy Bible, emphasizing that doctrinal teachings, life principles, and spiritual knowledge derive from Scripture. This implies that the churches are Bible-believing institutions, rejecting practices outside Biblical authority.

The globe is another significant visual element, appearing in Palettes II, VII, and XII. It signifies that the church is not restricted to Nigeria but is open to worshippers worldwide, and it projects members' commitment to spreading the gospel across the globe.

The cross symbol, used in Palettes IV and VI, highlights belief in the crucifixion of Christ. Its inclusion reaffirms the churches' commitment to the crucifixion, death, and resurrection of Christ. Similarly, flames in Palettes II, VII, and IX symbolize protection, power, strength, and the presence of God; the analysis suggests that members who surrender their lives to Christ derive strength and security from Him.

Conclusions

This paper examined the logos of churches affiliated with the Christian Association of Nigeria, employing Kress and van Leeuwen's (2006) Visual Grammar theory as the analytical framework. The semiotic resources identified in these church logos function as instruments for the propagation of Christian faith. It revealed that visual elements such as colors, symbols, shapes, and texts play a crucial role in enhancing public recognition.

Church logos incorporate powerful religious symbols to establish deep connections with their audiences.

Familiar symbols such as the cross, dove, and crown are not mere decorative features; they embody profound spiritual meanings rooted in Christian tradition. Through the deliberate arrangement of these symbols, designers construct a visual narrative that conveys the church's mission. The specific choice of colors reinforces the overall message conveyed. This combination transforms the logo into a meaningful tool for communication. Ultimately, these elements collectively reflect the church's core identity and values, which transform a simple image into a sacred declaration of faith. Thus, each Pentecostal church strategically selects semiotic resources to project a positive representation of itself within the religious context of Nigerian society. Collectively, the visual elements of Christian faith convey the church's mandate and practices to its target audiences. The findings contribute to a deeper understanding of how visual and textual elements collaborate to construct and convey meaning in visual communication.

Recommendations

For churches. The study recommends that Pentecostal churches continue to incorporate faith-based semiotic resources in their logos, as these elements enhance a clearer and broader understanding of Christian concepts among believers from diverse linguistic backgrounds. Furthermore, the consistent presentation of faith-based logos will serve as a visual reminder of the church's mandate, principles, practices, and doctrines.

For logo designers and church communication officers. Practitioners should treat logo design as a deliberate theological-act rather than a purely aesthetic exercise. Designers are encouraged to select symbols (dove, cross, book, globe) whose meanings are both widely legible within the Nigerian Christian public and consistent with the church's specific doctrinal emphasis, and to ensure coherence between color choices and the message being projected.

For future research. Given the single-analyst, interpretative character of this study, future work could (i) investigate viewer reception empirically — surveying how congregants actually interpret their church's logo, to test congruence with designer intention; (ii) extend the analysis to a comparative design contrasting Pentecostal logos with those of other Christian traditions (e.g., Catholic, Anglican) or with Islamic and Traditional religious emblems; and (iii) apply the interactive metafunction of Visual Grammar (viewer engagement) in addition to the representational and compositional dimensions used here.

Appendix: Logo Images

Palette I



CHRIST APOSTOLIC CHURCH

Palette II



THE SWORD OF THE SPIRIT MINISTRIES

Palette III



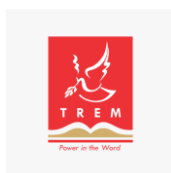
THE REDEEMED CHRISTIAN CHURCH OF GOD

Palette IV



FOURSQUARE GOSPEL CHURCH

Palette V



THE REDEEMED EVANGELICAL MISSION (TREM)

Palette VI



DEEPER LIFE BIBLE CHURCH

Palette VII



DUNAMIS INTERNATIONAL GOSPEL CENTRE

Palette VIII



LIVINGSRING CHAPEL INTERNATIONAL

Palette IX



GOSPEL FAITH MISSION

Palette X



THE APOSTOLIC CHURCH

Palette XI



GOSPEL APOSTOLIC CHURCH

Palette XII



MISPEM BIBLE CHURCH INTERNATIONAL

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