



## A Semiotic Analysis of Educational Symbols and School Identity in Selected Public Secondary Schools in Oyo East Local Government Area, Oyo State, Nigeria

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**Abstract.** Signs and symbols are fundamental to human communication. They are regarded as the means through which meaning is constructed, negotiated and transmitted. Educational symbolic elements contribute to the creation of school identity. The issue of identity construction in schools have gained relevance in recent research; but there is still limited gap given to semiotic functions in meaning making as it relates to educational symbols. This study carries out a semiotic analysis of educational symbols in selected public secondary schools in Oyo East Local Government Area of Oyo State. The study is anchored on the integration of Social Semiotics Theory by Kress and Van Leeuwen and Peircean Semiotic theory by Charles Sanderson Peirce. This integration is adopted to ensure an in-depth framework for the analysis of the educational symbols in a bid to provide analytical precision. The study adopted a qualitative research design. The population of the study is made up of all secondary schools in Oyo East Local Government Area. Three schools were selected through purposive sampling. Data for the study were gotten from the visual and textual elements namely school logos and uniform colours. The findings of the study reveals that the logo and uniform of the selected schools function as complementary semiotic resources in the construction of institutional identity. Drawing on Peircean Semiotics, the visual elements of the logo—such as the shield, crossed tools, circular frame, and textual inscriptions operate predominantly as symbols, relying on shared cultural values. From a Social Semiotics perspective, the meaning potential of these elements is realised through multimodality, where visual, linguistic, and colour modes interact to produce a unified message. The symbols help in the construction of institutional identity among the educational edifices. The study concludes that school visual identities are not merely decorative, but are loaded with ideological depth and create a system of communication that actively shape how

institutions are perceived and understood within their social contexts

**Keywords:** Semiotics, Educational Symbols, Identity Construction

### 1. Introduction

Signs and symbols are vital to human communication. They function as elements through which meaning is constructed, negotiated, transmitted and shared within cultural context. In Semiotics, signs and symbols extends beyond their physical or literal representation to reflect deeper meaning that is framed by social and cultural codes (Chandler, 2022; Danesi, 2021). In educational set up, meanings and interpretation from signs and symbols undergoes continuous interpretation through linguistic and visual forms. They are not just for beautification but they encode institutional identity and value, philosophy and aspirations. Educational symbolic elements contribute to the craft and creation of school identity which encompasses distinct features and values that defines the institution (Olins,2020).

The issue of identity construction in schools has gained relevance in recent research; particularly in institutional branding and representation. Educational institutions like other establishments strategically employ symbols to create recognisable and differentiated identity within educational environment (Hemsley-Brown & Oplatka, 2022). This reveals the importance of semiotic analysis in uncovering how meaning is created, establish and embedded in educational symbols. Akinrinola (2021) stated that symbols in educational institutions are firmly grounded in culture, religion and socio-political realities showing a broader society where value is appreciated. In Nigeria, secondary schools employ the use of symbolic elements that depicts a combination of both local and colonial as wells as contemporary ideals.

In educational institutions, particularly in secondary schools, symbols constitute an important aspect of institutional communication and identity formation. Schools employ variety of symbolic elements such as logos, crests, mottos, uniforms, and colour to depict their values, traditions, and aspirations. These elements function as semiotic vehicles through which schools craft a recognisable identity and transmit it to their audiences. According to Kress and van Leeuwen (2021), meaning in this kind of contexts is often multimodal, emerging from the interaction of visual and linguistic elements. This indicates that school symbols should be understood not as isolated unit but as part of a broader system of meaning-making.

The increasing research on institutional identity in educational setting has further highlighted the impact of symbolic representation. Symbols act not only as communicative devices but also as ideological units, they depict the values and beliefs that institutions seek to promote. In the Nigerian context, the use of symbols in educational institutions reveals an interrelation between cultural, historical, and socio-religious influences. Uniforms often show discipline and unity, while colour and emblems may evoke cultural identity or institutional heritage (Odebunmi, 2020; Igwedibia, 2021).

However, despite the visible significance of these symbols, limited attention has been given to their semiotic functions in meaning making. Existing research in Nigeria has focused on language use, discourse analysis, and educational outcomes, with little emphasis on visual and symbolic communication (Adegoju, 2022). Where symbols are considered, they are often described rather than systematically and strategically analysed as a structured sign system. This creates a visible gap in understanding how school symbols function as meaning-making devices and how they contribute to the creation of institutional identity.

Furthermore, the multidimensional nature of school symbols requires analytical frameworks that can account for both their structural, implied and contextual meanings. This study therefore investigates educational symbols in selected secondary schools, with a view to analysing how these symbols function as sign systems and how they contribute to the construction of identity.

### 1.1 Statement of the Problem

Educational signs and symbols are not just aesthetic elements, they are tools through which values, beliefs, and identities are expressed. In secondary schools, visual elements such as logos and uniform colours function as semiotic constructs that communicate institutional identity. These symbols operate not only at a literal or neutral level but also

at deeper levels of meaning. Despite their importance, limited scholarly attention has been given to the systematic analysis of educational symbols, particularly at the secondary school level. Existing studies in Nigeria emphasised language use, classroom interaction, and discourse practices with minimal focus on visual and symbolic communication.

Furthermore, the complexity of educational symbols requires analytical frameworks that can account for both their structural, systematic and contextual meanings. While Peircean semiotics provides a basis for classifying signs into icons, indexes, and symbols, it does not fully explain how these signs function within specific socio-cultural contexts. While Social Semiotic Theory emphasises meaning-making in context, it does not explicitly classify sign types. The lack of integration between these approaches has limited comprehensive understanding of how school symbols operate.

This study therefore addresses this problem by integrating Social Semiotic and Peircean frameworks to provide a systematic analysis of educational symbols and their role in the construction of identity in selected public secondary schools in Oyo East Local Government Area.

### 1.2 Aim and objectives of the study

The aim of this study is to analyse educational symbols in selected secondary schools in Oyo East Local Government Area while the specific objectives are:

- To identify and classify the visual elements in school logos and uniform colours into Peircean categories of icon, index, and symbol.
- To analyse the meanings of these symbols using a social semiotic approach, with emphasis on their multimodal and socio-cultural significance.
- To examine how the identified symbols contribute to the construction and communication of school identity in the selected secondary schools.

### 1.3 Research Questions

This study is guided by the following research questions:

- What visual elements are present in the logos and uniform colours of the selected secondary schools, and how can they be classified as icon, index, or symbol?
- What meanings do these symbols convey within their social and cultural contexts when analysed from a social semiotic perspective?

- How do these symbols contribute to the construction and communication of school identity in the selected secondary schools?

## 2. Review of Related Literature

Semiotics is the study of signs and processes dealing with how meaning is constructed and interpreted. It is a step above the study of linguistic signs that is concerned with just the literal meaning to include visual, cultural and institutional symbols as a structured and structural system of signification. Signs derive their meaning not as isolated units, but as interactional elements within a broader semiotic system (Chandler, 2022). Danesi (2021) similarly, emphasised that meaning is not inherent just in the sign but it is socially constructed through interpretation.

In contemporary research, semiotics as evolved in to an interdisciplinary framework that is applied to education, media and culture. Churvonny (2022) argues that educational environment is filled with Semiotic spaces where meaning is created through interaction with signs and symbols. This reinforces the idea that school environment is strategically structured by symbolic systems that influences perception, cognition and identity formation. Educational symbols such as logos, mottos, uniforms and colours are semiotic constructs that depicts institutional values and ideals. These elements operate at multiple levels of meaning making (Chandler,2022).

Previous empirical studies reflect that symbols carry communicative ability revealing that visual and textual elements in educational institutions are systematically and strategically designed to persuade and create the image of the institution. Okadigwe(2024) opined that visual elements (colour, texture and design) acts as communicative elements that convey deeper meanings. Symbolic communication is deeply rooted in cultural practices. Igwedibia(2021) demonstrates that signs functions as carriers of cultural meanings. This indicates that educational symbols should be analyse as sign systems that are wrapped in culture rather than neutral representation.

Institutional identity encompasses values, beliefs and characteristics that defines an organisation.in educational scene, identity is created through symbolic elements and discursive tools that reflect and communicate the ethos of the organisation (Olins,2020). Helmsley - Brown and Oplatika (2022) stated that educational institutions adopt branding strategies, employing the use of symbols to reveal their distinct identity from others. Adegoju (2021) demonstrates that institutional discourse in Nigeria is structurally connected to shape identity

and perception. Adesanmi et al (2025) demonstrated that African symbolic systems are encoded in indigenous knowledge. Adeyemo et al (2025) also notes that educational institutions acts as symbolic avenue that shapes identity construction and attributes.

Similarly, Itanghi et al. (2023) investigated educational billboards in Cameroon and shows how visual and textual elements are strategically combined to create persuasive messages and shape institutional identity. Their findings highlight the role of multimodality in meaning-making. Additionally, Kress and van Leeuwen (2021) demonstrate how visual grammar operates in institutional contexts, showing that elements such as colour, composition, and spatial arrangement carry significant meanings. Their work reveals the importance of analysing visual design as part of semiotic interpretation. Also, Jewitt et al. (2021) further argue that educational communication is basically multimodal, involving the integration of visual, textual, and spatial elements Their study reveals that meaning comes through the interaction of these modes, which is particularly relevant for analysing complex symbols.

In the area of institutional identity, Hemsley-Brown and Oplatka (2022) studied how educational institutions use branding strategies to create identity and attract stakeholders. Their findings reflect that symbols play a central role in shaping institutional image and perception, establishing the idea that school symbols are not merely aesthetic but strategic. Furthermore, Aiello (2020) carried out a study on visual identity in organisations demonstrating that logos and other symbolic elements function as carriers of organisational values and ideals

Within Nigeria, several scholars have explored the role of symbols in communication and identity construction. Igwedibia (2021) investigates Nigerian cultural signs and symbols and discovered that their meanings are largely dependent on context shaped by cultural knowledge and social practices. The study demonstrates that symbols often carry implicit meanings that go beyond their surface representation, thereby reinforcing the need for interpretive frameworks in semiotic analysis. In another study, Odebunmi (2020) analyses identity construction in Nigerian institutional discourse and opined that both linguistic and non-linguistic resources contribute to meaning-making. His findings indicate that institutional identity is often communicated through subtle symbolic elements embedded in discourse practices. This affirms the idea that school symbols can function as part of a broader semiotic system of institutional representation.

Despite the richness of these studies, several gaps remain evident. Most studies focus on higher education, media, or cultural symbols, with little attention to secondary school environments (Hemsley-Brown & Oplatka, 2022; Adegoju, 2022). Few studies combine structural (Peircean) and contextual (social semiotic) approaches in analysing symbols. While Nigerian studies address cultural and political symbols, there is limited research on school-based symbolic systems. Many studies describe symbols without engaging deeply with their semiotic processes and implications (Chandler, 2022). This study therefore addresses the gap by paying attention specifically on secondary school symbols, applying a combined Social Semiotic and Peircean framework and providing a context-sensitive analysis within Nigeria educational system.

### 3. Theoretical Framework

This study is firmly grounded and anchored in Social Semiotics Theory and Peircean Semiotics Theory. This integrated approach was adopted in order to provide an in-depth framework for analysing educational symbols and identity. Together, these theories provide both interpretive depth and analytical precision to examine symbolic representation and institutional identity in educational setting.

#### 3.1 Social Semiotics Theory

Social Semiotic Theory emerged from Halliday's functional linguistic tradition in the 1970s and was further developed in the 1990s by Kress and van Leeuwen, particularly through their seminal work *Reading Images: The Grammar of Visual Design* (1996). It is an extension of traditional semiotics. The theory demonstrates that meaning making is not fixed or static but it is socially constructed and shaped by cultural, historical and institutional factors. This view is relevant to educational context where Signs and symbols are intentionally designed to transmit institutional values, identity and ideals.

One of the core concepts in Social Semiotics Theory is multimodality which refers to the use of multiple semiotics modes such as visual, linguistic and spatial elements in the construction of meaning. (Hewitt et al, 2021). Furthermore, Social Semiotics Theory lay emphasis on the fact that signs are motivated socially by factors that reflects values, interest and identities.

#### 3.2 Peircean Semiotics Theory

Peircean Semiotic Theory was developed in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries by Charles

Sanders Peirce, with its foundational concepts emerging from his writings between the 1860s and early 1900s. Peircean Semiotic Theory offers a foundational model for understanding the structure and classification of signs. The theory describes a sign as having a triadic relationship involving the representamen (the form of the sign), the object (what the sign refers to), and the interpretant (the meaning derived by the interpreter) (Danesi, 2021).

One of the key aspects of Peirce's theory is the classification of signs into icons, indexes, and symbols. Icons resemble their objects, indexes have a direct or causal connection to their objects, and symbols are based on social convention and learned associations (Chandler, 2022). This classification provides a systematic approach to identifying and analysing the types of signs embedded in educational symbols.

#### 3.3 Integration of Social Semiotic and Peircean Theories

The integration of Social Semiotic Theory and Peircean Semiotic Theory provides a rich analytical framework for this study. While Peirce's framework provides a structured classification of signs and reveals the mechanics of signification, Social Semiotic Theory situates these signs within their broader social and cultural contexts. Through the combination of these frameworks, this study moves beyond neutral description of symbols to a deeper interpretation of their meanings, functions, and ideological implications. This integration is particularly suitable for analysing school symbols, which operate as multimodal and culturally situated sign systems.

### 4. Research Methodology

A qualitative approach was adopted for this study because focused on the interpretation of meanings in educational symbols. The study employs a semiotic approach to examine how school logos and uniform colours act as signs system in constructing institutional identity. This design is considered appropriate because it gives room for an In-depth investigation of symbolic meaning within Socio-cultural context (Cresswell & Cresswell, 2018). The study was conducted in Oyo East Local Government Area located in Oyo State, Nigeria. The area is made up of several public and private schools with distinct institutional identities. The area was chosen because it is a rich landscape characterised by cultural diversity which is considered appropriate Sources of Data for Semiotic analysis.

#### 4.1 Population and Sampling

The population of the study is made up of all secondary schools in Oyo East Local Government

Area. From this population, three public secondary schools were selected based on the visibility of their symbolic elements particularly logos and colours of school uniforms. Purposive sampling was adopted because it gave the researcher the opportunity to select cases that are information rich and relevant to the study.

#### 4.2 Sources of Data

Data for the study was gotten from the visual and textual elements namely school logos, uniform colours. Data was obtained by direct observation, photographic document action and school records.

#### 4.3 Method of Data Analysis

### 5. Data Analysis and Discussion of Findings

**Name of School:** Oliver Baptist High school, Oyo.



*Logo as Semiotic Resources*

#### 5.1 Description

The logo of Olivet Baptist High School is a circular emblem enclosed in a shield that contains symbolic elements such as a book, stars, and a plant motif. It has a banner positioned beneath. These elements act as semiotic resources that communicate layered meanings.

From a Peircean semiotic perspective, the logo reveals a triadic structure of meaning. The iconic signs are evident in the pictorial presentation of the book, stars, and plant. The book visually looks like an actual text, thereby depicting knowledge and formal education. Similarly, the plant signifies growth through its image of a natural vegetation while the stars visually denote celestial bodies related with brilliance and intelligence.

At the indexical level, these elements point to deeper institutional meanings. The book represents the Bible indicating that the school is built on Christian foundation pointing to the school's Christian (Baptist) foundation, thereby linking education with religious instruction. The plant indexes growth and nurturing, a reflection of the fact that the development of students both intellectually and morally is one of the core values of the school. The circular structure of the logo further indexes unity, continuity, and institutional agreement.

At the symbolic level, meaning is derived through cultural ideals and orientation. The inscription "Baptist" symbolically gives the school a Christian identity, situating the school as a faith-based ideological institution. The star depicts excellence and high achievement, while blue as the dominant colour connotes discipline, trust, and stability. The green colour signifies life, nourishment and growth, whereas the red flower indicates love, sacrifice and devotion which are ideals and values often associated with the Christian faith.

Using social semiotics, the Logos made up of multiple modes

Visual mode (shield, stars and plants)

Linguistic mode (the school's name and logo)

Colour mode (blue, green, red and white)

Data was analysed using a combined Social Semiotics Theory and Peircean Analytical Framework. Visual elements were first analysed using Peircean Triadic categories of signs (Icon, Index and Symbols). This involves the identification and classification of signs in the logos.

#### 4.4 Social Semiotics Analysis (Contextual Analysis)

The symbols are also analysed focusing on multimodal analysis involving the interpretation of the visual elements, linguistic and spatial resources and its socio-cultural implications.

Spatial mode (circular arrangement and central placement)

## 5.2 Uniform as a Semiotic Resource

The school uniform, composed of ash (grey) and white, also serves as a significant semiotic ground through which identity and values are communicated.

Within the Peircean framework, the uniform operates iconically by visually giving identity to the students as members of the institution. Indexically, it points to a sense of belonging, unity, and togetherness, as wearing the uniform establishes a direct connection between the student and the school. Symbolically, the colours carry culturally encoded meanings: white represents purity, innocence, and moral uprightness, while ash depicts humility, discipline, and modesty.

From a social semiotic viewpoint, the interrelation of these colours creates an image of the student body. The white component agrees with ideology of moral cleanliness and spiritual integrity, especially within a Christian educational context. The ash colour aligns with indication of seriousness and restraint, suggesting that students are expected to imbibe discipline and focus. Together, these colours reflect an identity where students as morally guided and self-controlled.

### Logo 2



**Name of School:** Saint Bernardine's Girls Grammar School, Oyo.

## 5.3 Description

The logo contains a shield-shaped emblem with a prominent cross at the center, a star at the upper right corner with the abbreviation "SBGGS". The logo also has a natural/leaf-like background all in a banner with the inscription: "St. Bernardine's Girls Grammar School, Oyo – Founded 1956 A.D."

## 5.4 Peircean Semiotic Analysis

### 5.4.1 Iconic Signs

These are semiotic elements that look like what they represent:

**Leaf/Vegetation Motif** which functions as an icon because it visually resembles natural plants. It depicts growth, life, and development of students in all aspects.

**Star Shape:** The star visually mirrors celestial bodies suggesting brightness, excellence, and distinction. The iconic elements in the logo create an ideal image of development and success, making the school appears as a place where students "grow" and "shine."

### 5.4.2 Indexical Signs

These are symbols that points to something with which they have a direct link or evidence. Somd of the indexical signs in the logo are:

**"Founded 1956 A.D.":** This is an index sign pointing to the school's historical existence. it presents continuity and longevity, tradition and institutional credibility.

**Shield Structure:** This performs a dual function. While symbolic, it also functions indexically by pointing to protection and institutional authority, suggesting a structured environment.

The indexical elements establish the school as real, enduring, and authoritative, an institution that enforces trust.  
Symbolic Signs (Conventional Meaning)

These as re Semiotic construct that rely on shared cultural or religious knowledge:

Cross: This is a symbolic sign that reflect strong symbol of Christianity, revealing that faith, morality, sacrifice, and spiritual discipline are important ideals in the school.

**Uniform Colour Analysis**

Pink Colour (Uniform)

Pink is a colour that is culturally accepted as a symbol of femininity. It denotes gentleness, care, and female identity

White Colour (Uniform)

A symbol of purity and cleanliness indicating moral uprightness and discipline

**SBGGS (Acronym)**

The acronym is a linguistic symbol representing the school’s identity.

**Table 1:** Peircean Analyse in SBGSS Logo

Elements	Icon	Index	Symbol
Leaf background	✓		
Cross		✓	✓
Star		✓	✓
Shield			✓
SBGGS			✓
Banner text		✓	✓

**6. Social Semiotic Analysis (Multimodality and Socio-Cultural Meaning)**

Using Social Semiotics, the logo is treated as a multimodal ensemble, where meaning is derived from the interaction of symbols, layout, and implied colour.

**a. Composition and Salience**

The placement of the cross at the centre gives a maximum salience showing that religion is the ideological foundation of the school.

The star at the upper right agrees with Kress & van Leeuwen’s concept of “ideal” placement, reflecting aspiration and future excellence.

The shield structure frames all elements highlighting unity and institutional authority.

**b. Framing and Information Value**

The banner inscription provides real information (name, location, founding date). The integration of image and text shows multimodality, where visual and linguistic elements create meaning.

**c. Colour and Cultural Codes (Implied):** The background colour suggests growth, vitality, moral development. The cross signifies strong socio-cultural meaning in the Nigerian context. It is an indication of Christianity and a marker of discipline and morality

**d. Modality and Credibility**

The statement “Founded 1956 A.D.” Depicts credibility positioning the school as historically grounded and reputable the logo also contains

Visual mode: Cross, star, shield, leaves.

Linguistic mode includes the school’s name, abbreviation, founding date

**7. Construction of School Identity.**

The logo constructs school identity in several ways. Through the use of the cross, the idea of the school Christian foundation is communicated, placing the school as morally upright and value-driven. Also, the star stands for achievement, brilliance, and guidance demonstrating that the school builds high-performing students. Additionally, the shield, banner, founding date transmits tradition, authority, and longevity reinforcing trust and legitimacy.

*Logo 3*



**7.1 Description**

The logo is a circular emblem for Anglican Methodist Secondary School, Oyo. It is made up of an inner with shield letters "A M S" on it. It also carries two crossed items, likely tools or similar, within the shield. The school motto "Unity is Strength" is inscribed on a banner below the shield. The full name "Anglican Methodist Secondary School" is written around the top half of the circle. "Oyo" is written at the bottom of the circle.

**7.2 Peircean Semiotic Analysis**

The logo is made up of the three Triadic sign types but it is dominated by symbols, revealing the dependence on shared cultural knowledge. The circular emblem, inner shield, abbreviation are all symbolic elements representing unity and completeness, protecting and school identity respectively. The crossed tools perform the dual function of being an icon and an indexical sign pointing to learning activity that the school is known for. The motto 'strength is unity' is both an indexical sign and a symbol pointing to the ideological foundation of collective value. The school name is an iconic sign reflecting the institutional identity. 'Oyo' is a location marker and Indexical sign pointing to the location of the school.

**7.3 Uniform colours: Green and yellow**

Both colours operate at a multidimensional level. Iconically, they mirror nature and sunlight, indexically, the colours points to life and energy. Symbolically, they depict culturally shared meaning.

**Table 2**

Visual elements	Description	Icon	Index	Symbol
Circular emblem	The shape of the logo			✓
Inner shield	Central structure			✓
AMS	Initial on shield			✓
Crossed tools	Object inside the shield	✓	✓	✓
Motto:'Unity is strength'	Text on banner		✓	✓
School name around circle	Institutional label		✓	✓
Oyo	location identity		✓	

#### 7.4 Social Semiotics Analysis

The logo is a multimodal configuration where meaning is derived from the integration of visual, linguistic and textual elements.

From the angle of compositional salience, the inner shield is positioned as a core identity marker. The crossed tools within the shield draw attention to the major functions of the institution which is education. The circular frame or emblem encloses all the elements connoting unity, togetherness and cohesion.

At the spatial and information level, the top of the logo shows the name of the school an indication of institutional authority and identity. At the centre is the shield, tools like object and the abbreviation AMS depicting the core values of discipline and training.

At the bottom level, there is the motto 'strength is unity' in the logo which reveals a practical foundation for value and geographical context or location.

The logo is made up of three different modes namely:

Visual modes- shield, tool like object, circular frame  
Linguistic modes-school name, motto, initials, location

Spatial mode-top, center and bottom arrangement  
The school identity reveals a strong heritage of missionary education aligning with communal values prominent in most African society.

#### 7.5 Construction of School Identity

Institutional Identity - AMS and the full name of the school

Ideological identity - 'strength is unity' showing education ideals and values.

Educational identity- crossed tools which depicts skill and practical learning.

Cultural and geographical identity -'Oyo' pointing to the school's location. For the analysis of the uniform colour, 'green' stands for growth, life and renewal. 'yellow' on the other hand depicts energy, brightness, visibility, excellence and achievement.

### 8. Discussion of Findings

The findings of the study reveals that both the logo and uniform of Oliver Baptist High School are not merely aesthetic features but strategic semiotic devices used to construct and communicate institutional identity. A key finding is the strong presence of religious signification. The reference to

“Baptist” and the image of the Bible in the logo indicate that the school’s identity is deeply grounded in Christian ideology. This is in agreement with the broader pattern observed in faith-based educational institutions, where visual symbols are used to imbibe moral and spiritual values. Another important finding is the emphasis on thorough development. The fusion of symbols such as the book and the plant suggests that the school positions itself as a site for both intellectual and character formation. This dual purpose reflects contemporary educational ideals that prioritise not only academic success but also moral and personal development. Furthermore, the use of colour in both the logo and uniform highlights the role of visual semiotics in encoding discipline and purity. The dominance of blue in the logo and the combination of ash and white in the uniform collectively construct a sense of orderliness, trust, and moral integrity. These visual choices are consistent with the expectations of a structured and value-oriented learning environment.

Similarly, the analysis of the logo and uniform of Saint Bernardine’s Girls Grammar School operates through multiple layers of meaning. At the Peircean level, icons (leaf, star), indices (founding date, shield), and symbols (cross, colours) interact to produce a coherent semiotic system. At the social semiotic level, the salience and arrangement of these elements prioritize religious values, institutional authority, and gendered identity. This supports the opinion of Gunther Kress and Theo van Leeuwen (2021) that visual design is a structured resource for meaning-making, while also aligning with Charles Sanders Peirce’s view that meaning emerges through different sign relations.

The findings reveal that the logo and uniform of Anglican Methodist Secondary School, Oyo function as complementary semiotic resources in the construction of institutional identity. Using Peircean Semiotics, the visual elements of the logo such as the shield, crossed tools, circular frame, and textual inscriptions operate as symbols, relying on shared cultural beliefs while the tools and colours exhibit iconic and indexical properties through resemblance and contextual association. From a Social Semiotics perspective, the meaning potential of these elements is realized through multimodality, where visual, linguistic, and colour modes interact to produce a unified message. The central placement of the shield foregrounds discipline and institutional authority, while the motto “Unity is Strength” reinforces a collectivist ideology. The uniform colours further extend this meaning: green signifies growth and nurturing, whereas yellow conveys vitality and excellence within the Nigerian socio-cultural context. Together, the integration of these semiotic features constructs a coherent school identity that

emphasizes unity, moral discipline, practical development, and aspirational achievement.

## 9. Recommendations

The study recommends that:

- Stakeholders in education should consciously design and review logos and uniforms as intentional semiotic resources
- Educational institutions should adopt a multimodal approach, to ensure that visual, linguistic, and colour elements work together harmoniously to communicate meaning effectively.
- Schools' logos and uniform should be periodically evaluated to ensure relevance in contemporary times.
- Curriculum planners and policy makers should incorporate basic semiotic awareness into subjects like language and visual arts

## 10. Conclusion

This study has demonstrated that school logos, uniforms, and associated visual elements serve as powerful semiotic resources in the construction of institutional identity. Through the integrative lens of Peircean Semiotics and Social Semiotics, the analysis shows that colours, symbols, gestures, and inscriptions operate as icons, indexes, and symbols together encode meanings of morality, academic excellence, discipline, and religious ideology. Across the selected schools, these semiotic resources tremendously reflect education as both an intellectual and socio-cultural process shaped by shared values and institutional beliefs. The study therefore concludes that school visual identities are not merely decorative, but ideologically loaded systems of communication that actively shape how institutions are perceived and understood within their social contexts

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