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Visual Communication and Public Rational Affinity to National Flags: Opinion Survey among Residents of African Countries

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Abstract

This is research on an opinion survey of residents of 54 African countries. The topic was on the significance of visual communication messages from national flags and the relationship of national identity consciousness among the residents in countries of Africa. The scope was limited to only rational opinions about the national flags of 4 countries. The objectives were to find out the most preferred primary colour and the symbols that appear widely acceptable on the flags of the affected countries, as well as the most thematic message most national flags communicate to residents of African countries. The cultural affinity and the bandwagon theories were applied. The population of the study was 518,562,352 residents of four purposively chosen countries: Nigeria, Egypt, Ethiopia, and Angola. Responses came from 588 persons out of the simple random size of 600 residents. Findings showed that the most preferred primary colour was red, which appeared on the flags of countries. The implication is that these countries have inter-country cultural ties in the expression of courage represented by the primary colour of red that dominates national identity flags. The red colours signify the vibrancy and courage of the respective countries, while the widely acceptable symbol of the star signifies the beacon of hope on sovereignty to the affected countries. It is recommended that African nations maintain national identity symbols and colours of flags meaningful to cultural and social ties for the encouraging of national affinity rather than intimidating or unfriendly colours and symbols based on biases.

Key words: Cultural Flag, Identity, National, Visual.

Introduction

Communication is a universal and intrinsic activity of human beings. It can be performed by everybody and everything. The result can be tangible and intangible. Communication can be deduced from the sight, feeling, mode, speech, taste, hearing, smelling, height, size, nature, format, or style of any action. Communication is irresistible and unrestricted. Communication breaks barriers, bounds, boundaries, and time. People communicate individually and collectively. Communities and companies communicate like countries and nations. It can be adduced that the success of governance in many countries cannot be untied from the values derived from communication (Akpan, 2024)[2]. Communication is bulky. It can manifest in verbal form, written style, signs, and symbols, and even

in unseen mundane situations.

Talking about symbols, as nations communicate, one particular symbol of communication is the national flag. It is difficult to say that there is a country or a nation on the global map without a flag. Flags of nations are so significant in many ways. That is the reason many nations cannot afford to adopt any instrument as its national flag. Many issues are usually considered by leaders of nations and countries before national flags are taken either through legislation or by decrees.

No matter the process of arriving at or choosing national flags by nations, one thing that has remained common is that national flags are part of visual symbols of communication (Duriel, 2024)[6]. In essence, as a visual instrument of communication, it has elements ranging from colour, size, inscription, designs, and graphics that are

not accidental but deliberate and can be subjected to interpretations. The representation of colours, objects, designs, and other elements is culturally and politically significant. It may even have economic significance associated with the country of usage (Erokhina & Soboleva, 2020)[8]. Certainly, elements of national flags are peculiar to nations. Some objects, colours or inscriptions on a particular nation's national flags make certain meanings of the connectivity of one nation to another nation or country. Therefore, the center point of this work is to content analyze the visual elements of national flags adopted by select North African countries and ascertain the use of similar elements in the flags of the United Kingdom countries.

Statement of the Problem

Currently, there are 54 national flags in Africa flown by sovereign countries that make up the African continent. Each of the country's national flags is adorned with symbols and different colours. There is yet an African country without a national flag with a single colour. There are also some countries with symbols directly attached to the colours of the national flags, while it can also be mentioned that the colours and symbols convey concealed political messages to the respective residents. In all these, the respective countries do not casually adopt any colour or symbol or can suddenly announce changes in the colours and symbols of national identity flags. Some African countries, ever since independence, have been maintaining national identity colours and symbols of their flags.

Perhaps, as generations have come gone and still are expected, certain African countries intend to use a particular flag perpetually. There are traditional political stories about certain colours and symbols of flags based on individual countries. Some flags feature colours and labels symbolizing religious backgrounds, symbols of heritage, and political or economic pride. It, therefore, means that there are cardinal reasons for the choice of colours and symbols of national flags of countries across the globe. The reasons for the choice of colours and symbols or sizes of national flags may not be far from the inclinations of preserving cultural identities, heritage, and pride of countries. On the other side, the choice of colours and symbols of national flags may also be unconnected with countries accepting to tow the path of others by joining the bandwagon of other countries with either red or white flags. It can be a matter of choice without a concrete reason.

It is globally known that colours and symbols speak volumes about the users. Colours and symbols can provoke positive or negative relationships. Colours and symbols can integrate people socially and economically. Since flags act as national identity symbols of countries, it, therefore, means that the progress or stagnation of countries can be the product of colours and symbols or concealed inference messages of flags. Generally, it cannot be said that the political alienation of the citizens is not connected to the adoption of national identity colours and symbols on the flags of countries. Therefore, the statement of the problem is what colours are mostly preferred by people of certain countries, what symbols on flags are widely acceptable, and what may be the inference messages flags may serve from the choice of colours or symbols of national flags by African countries.

Objectives of the study

- To find out the preferred primary colour of national identify flags among residents of African countries;
- To find out the most widely acceptable symbol on the national identify flags of African countries by residents of African countries;
- To find out the perceived inference political message from most of the national identify flags among residents of African countries.

Literature review

Flag: Definitions It's still uncertain where flags came from and when the first flag was hoisted. A flag is a piece of fabric used to symbolize

a nation, organization, or group. A flag is a rectangular piece of fabric with a unique pattern and colour scheme. It can be used as ornamentation, a signaling tool, or a symbol. (2012) Znamierowski[22]. The word "flag" can also refer to a broad instrument or graphic design used for basic identification and signaling, particularly in settings where speech is difficult. According to Brown (2022)[4], there are a few minor distinctions between a flag and a banner.

There are flags that represent armies or promote goods, as well as flags that are used for signaling aboard ships at sea and during competitions and sporting events. In terms of culture, a flag can be any piece of fabric, bunting, or comparable material that bears the emblem of a community, an organization, an armed force, an office, a person, or a sovereign state. A flag is typically, though not always, oblong in shape and fastened to a staff or halyard by one edge.

Elements of flags

The colours, standards, banners, ensigns, pendants (or pennants), pennons, guerdons, and burgees are some examples of the different types of flags and their functions. In the past, flags were primarily employed in combat, and they have continued to be utilized as rallying places and as leadership symbols to some degree. Additionally, they are often used for display, decoration, and signaling.

The ability of a flag to blow freely in the wind determines its utility for identification; light materials with the same design or pattern on both sides are typically favored. As a result, simpler patterns are preferred, and wording is typically left out. Although any colour or device can be utilized, European usage typically adheres to heraldry.

Forms and Functions of National Identify Flags

Flags are divided according to shape and purpose. There are standard flags, banners, guidons, pennons, and streamers. There are also many flags of personal, family, or local groups with significance that are different and usually more complex in pattern than the main types; the standard flag is the largest and is intended, from its size, to be stationary. It marks the position of an important battle, siege, ceremony, or tournament. It can mark a palace, castle, saluting base, tent, or ship. Standards are also used by nobles and are originally long. Square or oblong banner flags are carried in battle (unlike the standard) in front of knights and other royal and aristocratic warriors.

Similar to normal flags, the guidon (a word from the French *guy-homme*) has two rounded swallowtails or is rounded in the fly. Guidons were carried by combat leaders who were not allowed to fly a banner because they were only knights. Each knight carried the pennon, a tiny triangular flag, on his lance. The pennon's primary function was to prevent accidents, much like a red flag attached to a long pole or rod that protrudes past a truck's tailboard. However, the pennon was also used to indicate status and to terrorize the adversary.

At the hoist, the streamer, which is today called a pendant or pennant, is a long, tapering flag that is 60 to 18 feet (18 to 5.5 meters) long and roughly 24 feet (7 meters) wide, ending in two points. It was used almost exclusively at sea in the 15th century due to its length, first from a pole that rose above the fighting top and then from the yardarm or topmast. The distinction between a warship and a merchantman, and more precisely between a warship in commission and one anchored in harbor, was eventually made. When the captain takes command, the British Royal Navy's white pennant, which features a St. George's Cross close to the hoist, is raised to indicate a warship in commission.

Significance of flags

Flags are simply a pattern that is embroidered onto silk, as is customary. It's simple to consider them no more than a visual means of communication, a way to start a race, face paint for a sporting event, or holiday mementos. The usage of flags is far more complex, subtle, and intimate. What they stand for is far

more important. In some way, a flag is not merely a decoration or something to be revered in and of itself. Between honoring its message and wobbling somewhere in the middle. Many are so highly revered that disrespecting a flag, especially one that is enmeshed in a country's history, can have dire repercussions. This is less about the flag itself and more about how its history is being disregarded, the values that a nation and its citizens uphold, the sacrifices made by its citizens, or the price paid to obtain the freedom to just have your own (Nadler, 2016)[15].

Petrone (2022)[18] says that flags can unify us and generate loyalty. For governments, it is a great tool, which is why some countries require flags in schools. It is also a note that in more than 60 countries in the world, if the national flag is desecrated, people can face fines or even jail. In the Americas, this only happens in Argentina, Brazil, Cuba, Mexico, and Uruguay. There are also elaborate codes detailing how flags should be handled, with respect reserved for even religious sacraments. It is a type of consciousness because a vision of something is promoted. It must be understood that flags and social behavior provoke reactions in people. They are a barometer of where people are located or identified as a society. The flags are not silent fabrics or simple clothes since they reflect the values and aspirations of a country, as well as its history. The flag is a screen on which everyone can project ideals, hopes, and fears. Tasdemir (2019)[21] confirms that a national flag is a source of social self-esteem. Flag is a unit of social belonging.

A flag is something that distinguishes people from others and creates social distinctiveness. Flags cause social meanings and social identity. Schatz and Lavine (2007)[19] indicate that flags have symbolic and instrumental abstractions that are rooted in distinct motivational concerns related to identity expression and object appraisal, respectively. They also stated that the national symbolism of flags evokes psychological attachments to nations as an abstracted social entity, but not as a concrete functional system. Hence, national flags have independent and sovereign social efficacy.

An Emblem of Sovereignty and Independence

National flags are potent symbols of a nation's sovereignty and independence. The act of raising a flag signifies the establishment or recognition of a nation-state's autonomy. For countries that have fought for their independence, the flag often embodies the sacrifices and triumphs of their struggle. For instance, the Kenyan flag's colours symbolize the fight for independence, peace, and the country's natural resources. Thus, a flag is not just a decorative item but a declaration of a nation's right to self-governance and its place in the global community.

A Tool for Diplomacy

In international relations, flags play a crucial role in diplomacy and statecraft. The display of national flags during diplomatic meetings, at embassies, and in international forums signifies respect and recognition among nations. They are used in ceremonies and formal events to honor visiting dignitaries and to symbolize agreements and alliances. The protocol surrounding the use of flags in these contexts underscores their importance in maintaining international respect and order.

An Expression of National Values and Aspirations

The elements of a national flag often convey the core values and aspirations of a nation. For example, the Japanese flag, with its simple red circle on a white background, symbolizes the rising sun and purity. The South African flag, with its diverse colours, represents the unity of various racial groups and the country's journey toward democracy. By understanding the symbolism behind a flag's design, one can gain insight into the principles and dreams that drive a nation.

A Source of Inspiration and Patriotism

National flags inspire patriotism and a sense of duty among citizens. During times of national celebration, such as Independence Day or during the Olympics, flags are prominently displayed to inspire pride and joy. Conversely, in times of mourning, flags are flown at half-mast to honor the deceased and reflect the nation's collective sorrow. This dual capacity to evoke both joy and solemnity underscores the emotional depth that flags can tap into.

Common Aspects in Flags and Their Reflection on Culture and History

Flags represent a country's past. This is due to the fact that flags are potent symbols that stand for a country's history, culture, and identity. Some flags have flown for centuries, witnessing the formation of nations, the rise and fall of empires, and the course of global history. Flags are potent representations of a country's identity. The raising of a nation's flag inspires sentiments of pride, affection, and patriotism. It is frequently acknowledged that any nation's identity is rooted in a history of murder, sacrifice, and the fight for independence. One essential component of understanding a nation's core is its sense of patriotism. A history of conflicts, sacrifices, and valor that led to the nation's independence; the effort and perseverance required to achieve statehood; the recognition of a troubled past combined with optimism for a better future; a dedication to peace, unity, and state loyalty; and virtues like tolerance, patriotism, and pride in one's identity are some common features seen in national flags. These similarities show how nations, despite their varied cultural backgrounds, have a shared history of hardship and success. Flags are a sign of pride in one's country, a reminder of the past, and a symbol of unity. They capture the spirit of a country's history and cultural diversity. In conclusion, flags are more than just pieces of fabric; they are potent symbols that represent the history, ideals, and ambitions of a country[1].

- Flags express specific meanings that are firmly anchored in historical and cultural settings through their colours, designs, and symbolism. The semiotic examination of flags reveals that, despite possible differences, they all share the concepts of identification, togetherness, and the reflection of a country's past. Countries' backgrounds influence the colour, pattern, and theme of flags. Countries' histories and backgrounds have a significant impact on the colour schemes, design components, and overarching themes of their flags. These influences are profoundly ingrained in a country's art, architecture, fashion, and national emblems, among other facets of its culture. A nation's flag is greatly influenced by a number of important events, such as revolutions, conflicts for independence, and wars. Flags and other emblems frequently use event-related colours, such as red and black during revolutionary movements, to symbolize the nation's tenacity over the years.
- **Cultural Influences:** The colour schemes and design themes of flags are greatly influenced by cultural traditions and customs. A country's cultural legacy frequently has strong roots in its symbols and patterns. For instance, a flag's design components may incorporate religious symbolism, acting as a visual expression of a country's identity and beliefs.
- **Geography and Environment:** A nation's choice of colours and design aspects for its flag can be influenced by its natural surroundings, which include its landscapes, flora, fauna, and climate. While a country with a milder climate would prefer blue and white as lighter hues, a country with lush green forests might use green in its flag.
- **National Identity and Symbols:** Flags, emblems, and other national symbols are meant to represent a nation's ideals and goals. A country's culture and collective consciousness are directly reflected in these symbols.
- **Global Influences:** Global trends and influences can also impact a country's flag design. The prevailing colour styles and design trends in the global context may influence the choices made

when creating or modifying a flag.

- **Economic Factors:** The manufacture of flags may be influenced by economic concerns. The amount of money available for flag creation may have an impact on the selection of colours, materials, and design intricacy. More complex and contemporary flags can be produced by investing in branding and flag design.
- **Political and Social Factors:** A nation's flag's colour schemes, design components, and motifs can be influenced by social movements and political ideas. The symbolism of the flag may reflect the ideology of the dominant political party or the feelings of particular social movements. In conclusion, nations have diverse histories that include social movements, political beliefs, economic considerations, geographic location, historical occurrences, cultural influences, and worldwide trends. Together, these components influence the colours, patterns, and themes of a country's flag. Flags are more than just symbols; they are representations of the history, ideals, and shared identity of a country.

There is more to flags than just cloth. They are potent representations of tradition, identity, and belonging. Flags have been essential in forming and expressing cultural identity and legacy throughout history. They capture the spirit of countries and societies. They condense a culture's history, values, and goals into a single symbol. A flag's selection of colours, symbols, and patterns conveys a great deal about the cultural legacy it honors.

The Philosophical impact of flags

Grainger (2023)[9] states that there are profound impacts of flags as follows:

Preserving tradition and history

Flags have the ability to commemorate and preserve historical occurrences and cultural customs. To symbolize important events in a country's history, many flags use symbols and themes. For example, the Welsh dragon on the Welsh flag pays homage to the nation's medieval past and its association with Arthurian legend.

Diversity in unity

The flag serves as a unifying symbol in many culturally varied nations, bringing individuals from different backgrounds together. For instance, India's flag has several colours that symbolize the peaceful coexistence of various communities and religions across the country.

Expressions of independence and self-government

Flags frequently represent political autonomy and sovereignty. In areas aiming for autonomy or self-government, flags become powerful symbols of ambition. Catalonia's flag, for instance, features recognizable red and yellow stripes. These speak for the area's long-standing aspiration for independence within Spain.

Cultural values and beliefs

A culture's core values and beliefs can be symbolized on its flag. The flag of Saudi Arabia, with its Islamic inscription and sword, represents the nation's deep-rooted religious and cultural significance. Flags can also become cultural artifacts. They are displayed in museums, showcased during ceremonies, and featured in artworks. The intricately designed flags of Native American tribes, for example, showcase indigenous artistry and are significant representations of cultural heritage. Flags have a profound impact on shaping the identity of a nation or group of people. They are the essence of cultural heritage and display history and tradition in a way that nothing else can. They are certainly not just pieces of cloth. With their colours, symbols, and designs, they signify so much for so many.

Review of Related Literature

According to Kizelcauglo (2014)[13], in his article "Geographical elements in country flags," flags that are considered to be national symbols come in a variety of colours and symbols. Every colour, emblem, and coat of arms used on flags has a specific meaning. Examining the meanings of national flags, it has been shown that 86% of the world's nations have geographical aspects in their flags. The flags feature human or natural characteristics that are common or distinctive in the country's geographic location. It found that 65% of the flags stress human features, whereas 45% emphasise natural elements. Oceans, seas, rivers, lakes, sunlight, soil, mountains, islands, beaches, snow, ice, mining, plants, animals, agriculture, religion, ethnic structure, and management style are a few examples of these factors. In his article "Expressions of Nationhood: National Symbols and Ceremonies in Contemporary Europe," Elgenius (2005)[7] examined how national symbols and ceremonies contribute to the manifestations of nationhood and emphasised their significance in the building of nations and national identities.

The study was carried out by means of a methodical examination of national rites and symbols, which were analyzed as essential components of identity formation, preservation, and transformation. Conclusions about symbols and rituals were made with an emphasis on modern European countries. Three case studies—of Britain, France, and Norway—as well as an analytical counter-case of Germany, comprised the entire study. Evidence supporting the idea that national symbols and ceremonies serve as both unifying and dividing forces and convey deeper facets and meanings of the country was shown throughout this thesis. Furthermore, national ceremonies and symbols are an essential component of a "secular" religion that offers stability in a changing world. The community they represent is likewise impacted by national symbols and traditions; in other words, they increase awareness of "who we are" and "where we are from." Lastly, it made the case that countries cannot be precisely dated since they are created in phases, each of which is identified by the adoption of national symbols like the flag and national holiday. The implication is that the entire process of nation-building forms a complex that is constituted along a continuum of re-discovery and invention. These stages have been associated with three main symbolic regimes (referred to as "old," "modern," and "new") and understood as a function of national independence and continuity.

The Theoretical Framework

The Cultural Affinity Theory

The fact that people are drawn to, feel more connected to, and pull toward media that represents, showcases, or connects with the same culture is known as the "cultural affinity theory." Depending on how it is applied in public relations, cultural affinity theory focuses on the culture that is represented in the content and how that culture affects perception (Nes, Yelkur, & Silkoset, 2014)[16]. It may serve to solidify preconceived notions about a group or, conversely, give marginalized communities a platform to showcase their culture. When employing culture, it might be challenging to find a way to apply this notion without perpetuating discrimination. A person's thoughts, feelings, and actions are influenced by their social environment. People change who they are to fit the social cues of the setting they are in. The cultural affinity idea has been referred to by a variety of titles in marketing and management contexts over time. It influenced the communications sector to concentrate more on how people react to advertising efforts. When someone feels like they belong in a place, they are drawn to things that remind them of that. People choose the organizations and cultures they are associated with. Often viewed through the prism of "cultural liking," cultural affinity is a major factor in reported psychic abilities (Oberecker, Riefler, & Diamantopoulos, 2008)[17].

The bandwagon theory

The bandwagon effect is a psychological phenomenon in which

people do something primarily because other people are doing it, regardless of their own beliefs, which they may ignore or override. Cherry (2023)[5] says that the term "bandwagon effect" originates from politics but has wide implications commonly seen in consumer behavior, investment activities, and communications. This phenomenon can be seen when people start doing something because everybody else seems to be doing it. The bandwagon effect can be attributed to psychological, social, and economic factors. The bandwagon effect occurs in communication when people adopt certain styles of communication, either in words, symbols, or actions, because they have seen others adopting it and want to be part of the majority.

The bandwagon effect arises primarily from psychological and sociological factors. People are biologically programmed to be social and like to be part of a group. Behaving the same way a group does can lead to belonging and acceptance. People also like to be on the winning team and to signal their social identity. To do so, they adopt the behavior of the group around them, and that behavior begins to seem desirable or normal due to proximity and repetition.

Materials and Methods

The study adopted the online survey method since it provides a scientific approach to measuring the opinion and perception or attitude of people on the workability of a process or phenomenon. The web-based survey is an effective method of the survey in gathering information from populations that cannot easily be reached face-to-face. This is particularly useful in the period of digital communication. It is a collection of data through electronically selected questions, especially on emails.

Population of the study

The population of the study was 518,562,352 million persons in four African countries Nigeria at 232079478, Ethiopia at 132059767, Egypt at 116,538,258 and Angola at 37,884,849 (UNDESA,2024).

Sample and Sampling Procedure

In very large population research, it is advisable to restrict the sampling size to at least 600 persons while in a very small population, the number can be kept at not less than 50 for reliability and convenience of data collection (Akpan, 2020)[3]. Hence, the sample for the study was kept at 600 persons across African countries. The sample size was proportionately calculated and spread among the four countries based on population size such that Nigeria was allocated 268, Ethiopia 153, Egypt 135, and Angola 44.

Instrument and Method of Data Collection

The instrument of research adopted was a prepared online questionnaire with 10 separate close-ended questions derived from variables of the research questions and objectives. The questionnaires were by simple random sampling mailed out electronically to the number of sample sizes per each of the chosen countries. Each of the questions had options based on the objectives of the study. Respondents were asked to tick options of their choice as the most appropriate answers. The potential respondents were allowed 14 days to mail back responses. The emails of persons per country were derived from the online database of Telecommunication and Internet Service Providers directories. The reliability was achieved by mailing the questionnaire for pretesting among 60 residents of Edo state, Nigeria. At the retrieval of responses, 12 persons failed to return answers, hence the calculation of data was based on 588 or 98% of questionnaires mailed out.

Results and Discussions

Data analyses were carried out after the retrieval of responses by the computation of frequency tables and the calculation of percentages to answer the research questions earlier listed. Data analysis was done by counting the responses per each of the questions, which constituted the variables of the objectives. The variables are colours

Table 1. The most preferred primary colours in the national flags by residents of four African countries

Colours	Nigeria	Ethiopia	Egypt	Angola	Total	%
Red	181	99	75	32	387	66
Yellow	54	41	36	-	131	22
Blue	21	13	24	12	70	12
Total	256	153	135	44	588	100

Source: Online survey 224

of the national flags and the symbols which make the national flags of the respected countries under study. This was carried out through the respective tabulated tables, and the percentages were calculated per colour and symbol. This was also supported by the analysis of data using the histogram.

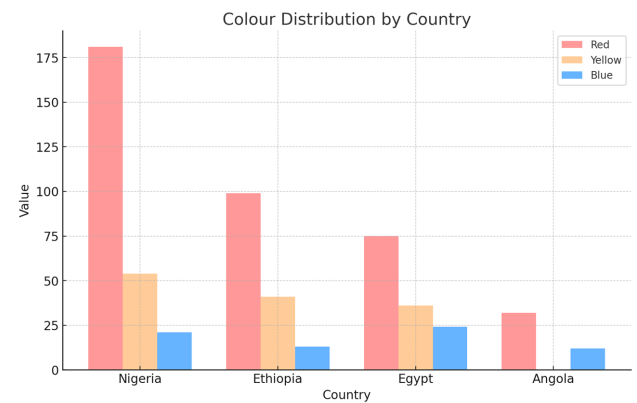


Figure 1. Colour Distribution by Country

Table 1 shows that in the colour variable, three basic or primary colours were identified in all the flags. The colours seen are red, yellow and blue. The blue colours had the least preference on flags with only 70 or 22% across responses in Nigeria, Egypt, Ethiopia and Angola, but the red colour dominated the responses of residents with 387 or 66% of 588 persons. This implication is that through visual communication, the residents like red colours instead of other primary colours on national identity flags of African countries.

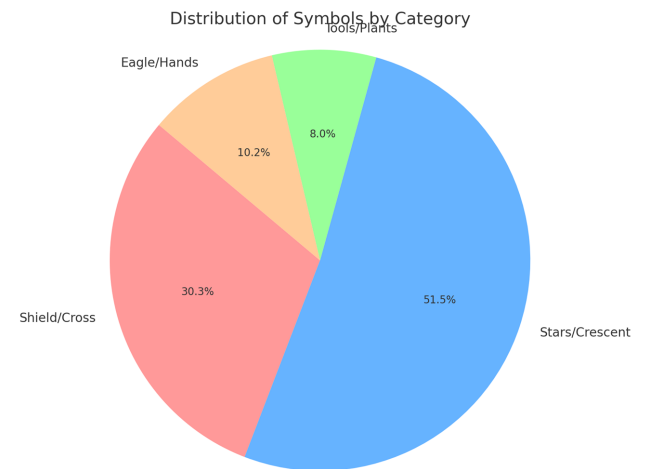


Figure 2. Distribution of Symbols by Category

Table 2 and histogram 2 show that 9 different symbols adorn the

Table 2. The most widely acceptable symbol on national identity flags of African countries

Symbols	Nigeria	Ethiopia	Egypt	Angola	Total	%
Shield/cross	51	54	41	32	178	30
Stars/crescent	161	74	56	12	303	52
Tools/plants	11	12	24	-	47	8
Eagle/Hands	33	13	14	-	60	10
Total	256	153	135	44	588	100

Source: Online Survey 224

Table 3. Inference Political Messages from Flags of African Countries

Messages	Nigeria	Ethiopia	Egypt	Angola	Total	%
Racism	23	21	15		59	10
Colonialism	21	12	26	23	82	14
Sovereignty	191	93	43		327	56
Neo- Colonialism	21	27	51	21	120	20
Total	256	153	135	44	578	100

Source: Online Survey 2024

flags of most African countries under study. The symbols are shields and cross, stars and crescents, Tools and Plants, Eagle and Hand. In the response of the 588 persons across African countries, it was noted that 303 or 52% top the answers for stars and crescents while tools and plants had the least answers from 47 or 8% persons. In

in only the flags of African countries but the Red colour dominated the flags with 387 or 66% in counting of 588 responses. This representation shows that of all the colours, on national identity flags, it is red that dominates the preference of residents. This position is in agreement with the work of Swanson (2016)[20] that red is the most popular colour and in uniqueness as a plurality of the world's flags are red. Red is commonly associated with blood, bravery and sacrifice quite often means peace or purity. Additionally, the outcome of responses agree with Kaye (2023)[12] that by practicality reason, red is the first among colours that make sense from a creation standpoint, being popular as the best and long lasting colours in history.

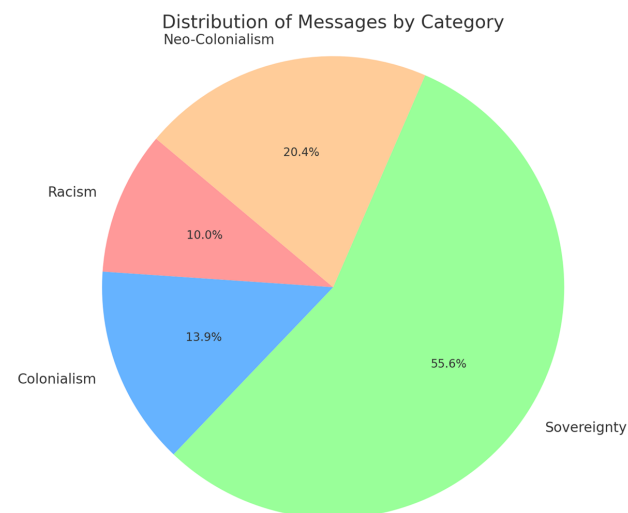
**Figure 3.** Distribution of Messages Category

Table 3, the data analysis shows that four aspects of messages were presented to the respondents who picked racism as the least from 59 persons which represented 10% while the message of sovereignty had 327 responses or 56% of the 588 residents across African countries. The implication shows that residents of African countries have confidence and faith in the use of their national identity flags in spite of political instabilities.

Discussion of Findings

The discussion of findings was carried out by attempting to offer answers to the objectives and research questions [RQs] of the study.

RQ 1. What is the most preferred outstanding primary colour of national identity flags among residents of African countries?

Table 1 and histogram show that in the colour variable, three basic colours were identified in all the flags. The colours seen are red, blue, and yellow. The blue colours had the least preference on flags

RQ 2. What is out the most widely acceptable symbol on national identity flags among residents of African Countries?

Table 2 and histogram 2 show that 9 different symbols adorn the flags of most African countries under study. The symbols are shields and cross, stars and crescents, Tools and Plants, Eagle and Hand. In the response of the 588 persons across African countries, it was noted that 3999993 or 52%, top the answers for stars and crescents, while tools and plants had the least answers from 47 or 8% persons. The result is that the stars and crescents are the most widely acceptable symbols on national identity flags by residents of African countries even though more than two-thirds of national identity flags of countries have symbols of shields, crosses, Suns and moons. This is in agreement with the position of Kalampokas, Mentizis, Vrochidou and Papakostas (2023)[10] that meaningful symbolisms and combinations of colours are used, for each flag to be either distinctive or intentionally related to another. Therefore, similarities are inevitable, due to national overlapping, meaning that several countries share the same history, culture, or religious ideals, or due to overlapping design principles, of shapes. It also supports Kariryaa, Rundé, Heuer, Jungherr, & Schöning, (2022)[11] statement that symbols develop seemingly stable meanings, but those meanings are contingent upon person and context. Different groups of people could develop different acceptance of a symbol, and the interpretations may change based on the specific context.

RQ3: What is the outstanding inference political message of national identity flags among residents of African countries?

In **Table 3**, the data analysis shows that four aspects of messages were presented to the respondents who picked racism as the least from 59 persons which represented 10% while the message of sovereignty had 327 responses or 56% of the 588 residents across African countries. The implication shows that residents of African countries have confidence and faith in the use of their national identity flags in spite of political instabilities. This a confirmation

of Martins (2024)[14] that generally speaking, the national flag is a symbol of national pride and identity. It remains a symbol of authority and an instrument of state power. Indeed, considering its importance, the national flag is the only National Symbol worth dying for. It tells the history of a people and their aspirations.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Every country imbues its flag with distinct meanings relating to identity, visibility, and recognition, according to a review of national flags. Religious convictions, cultural influences, historical occurrences, geographical and environmental conditions, as well as social, political, and economic forces, all have a role in shaping these interpretations. It is clear from the quantitative content analysis that each nation's flag has specific, planned, and intended meanings that are supposed to evoke sentiments of nationalism and patriotism as well as to communicate an identity message. Cultural identity theory is used to identify and decipher these complex meanings. There are similarities between the flags that stem from their shared histories, but there are also differences brought about by significant occasions like revolutions that have left a lasting impression on the flags. The symbolism and significance of flags are enhanced by the fact that these revolutions frequently mirror a country's fight for freedom and independence. National flags are essentially potent symbols of a nation's faith, values, and self-determination. They capture the nuanced idea of nationalism, which is woven into the fabric of a country's identity and is both straightforward and complex. Each flag is a distinctive and moving representation of a nation's history and goals because of these deeply ingrained cultural and historical values.

This work has made the following recommendations:

- African nations and countries can forge common ground for the use of single primary colour flags for regional or continental identity instead of diverse national flags per country.
- African nations and countries continue to adopt symbols of national identity flags that are friendly to the people and refrain from adopting intimidating symbols.
- Residents of African countries should continue to show faith in inference political messages of independence and sovereignty by frequently displaying the use of national identity flags.

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Conflict of Interest

The authors sincerely declare that there exists no conflict of interest in the process of working to arrive at the end of this study.

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