

A Survey on the New Logo of Universiti Islam Selangor (UIS): Perceptions Among Staff and Students

Tinjauan Persepsi dalam kalangan Staf dan Pelajar terhadap Logo Baharu UIS

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the perceptions of Universiti Islam Selangor (UIS) staff and students towards the university's newly introduced logo. The research aims to evaluate (1) the recognizability and symbolic representation of the logo, (2) its reflection of Malay-Islamic identity and modern professionalism, and (3) the emotional and institutional pride it evokes among internal stakeholders. A total of 168 respondents participated in a mixed-method survey comprising both quantitative Likert-scale items and open-ended qualitative questions. The quantitative findings indicate a moderate level of acceptance, with the highest mean score for "reflecting Malay-Islamic identity" ($M = 2.70$) and the lowest for "appeal to younger generations" ($M = 2.21$). The qualitative thematic analysis reveals that respondents appreciate the logo's simplicity and symbolic meaning but recommend enhancing Islamic and cultural elements for stronger institutional identity. Overall, the findings highlight that while the new logo succeeds in maintaining UIS's Islamic identity, it requires strategic refinement to enhance visual impact, modern appeal, and emotional resonance among university members.

Keywords: Logo; Visual identity; Rebranding; Semiotics; Perception

ABSTRAK

Kajian ini meneliti persepsi staf dan pelajar Universiti Islam Selangor (UIS) terhadap logo baharu universiti yang diperkenalkan sebagai sebahagian daripada usaha penjenamaan semula institusi. Objektif kajian adalah untuk menilai (1) tahap pengenalan dan kefahaman simbolik terhadap logo, (2) sejauh mana logo mencerminkan identiti Melayu-Islam dan imej profesional moden, serta (3) tahap kebanggaan dan keterikatan emosi warga universiti terhadap logo tersebut. Seramai 168 responden terdiri daripada kalangan pelajar, alumni, & staf telah mengambil bahagian dalam tinjauan campuran yang melibatkan item kuantitatif berskala Likert dan soalan kualitatif terbuka. Analisis kuantitatif menunjukkan tahap penerimaan yang sederhana, dengan skor min tertinggi bagi perkara "mencerminkan identiti Melayu-Islam" (Min = 2.70) dan terendah bagi "daya tarikan terhadap generasi muda" (Min = 2.21). Dapatan kualitatif pula menunjukkan bahawa responden menghargai



kesederhanaan dan makna simbolik logo, namun mencadangkan penambahbaikan pada elemen yang lebih moden bagi mengukuhkan identiti korporat UIS. Secara keseluruhannya, dapatan ini menunjukkan bahawa walaupun logo baharu mengekalkan nilai Islam universiti, ia masih memerlukan pengukuhan strategi visual dan komunikasi bagi meningkatkan keterlihatan dan makna dalam kalangan warga universiti.

Kata kunci: Logo; Identiti Visual; Penjenamaan Semula; Semiotik; Persepsi

INTRODUCTION

Logos are critical visual assets in defining institutional identity and perception. Within the higher education context, university logos sum up not only academic authority but also philosophical, cultural, and spiritual dimensions of an institution's principles (Wu & Cheong, 2021). As competition among universities increases, visual branding has become a crucial differentiator for institutional recognition and public appeal (Siegel, 2017). The transition from the old to the new logo for Islamic universities particularly Universiti Islam Selangor (UIS) sparked a lot of conversation and conflicting responses on social media, especially among academics and alumni. This suggests underneath issues with acceptance and different understandings of the meaning of the logo. Despite the significance of such debate, there is still a lack of academic studies investigating the perceptions and understandings of Islamic university logos in Malaysia. Since they are the institution's internal stakeholders, UIS staff and students' perceptions are essential to understand because their sense of pride, identity, and belonging have a direct impact on the visual rebranding's success.

Rebranding in universities, including the redesign of institutional logos, serves multiple purposes. It reflects an evolution in vision, communicates modernization, and aligns institutional values with broader social and cultural narratives (Fitriani et al., 2025). In Malaysia, where Islamic heritage forms an essential part of national identity, universities constantly struggle to balance respect for tradition with the need to appear modern and globally relevant. Few studies have examined how such adjustments are received and understood, particularly within Islamic universities, even though many institutions have updated their visual identities and logos to reflect these goals. The introduction of Universiti Islam Selangor's (UIS) new logo therefore provides an important opportunity to explore how design, culture, and perception interact together in shaping an institution's identity from the perspective of its own community.

Prior studies underscore that logos serve as semiotic symbols through which audiences interpret meaning (Fatin & Zulfah, 2024; Nurfatwa et al., 2018). The integration of color, shape, and typography forms a visual language that communicates institutional values. However, the perception of such symbols is context-dependent, how students and staff interpret these visual cues ultimately determines the success of a logo's communicative function (Andrade Sanchez et al., 2022).

This study explores first at how staff, students and alumni, who serve as primary internal stakeholders for any institutional rebranding initiative, perceive Universiti Islam Selangor's (UIS) new logo. Besides simply describing their opinions, the research seeks to understand whether the logo effectively communicates UIS's Islamic and professional identity, and how these perceptions reveal issues of acceptance, cultural representation, and emotional connection within the university community.

OBJECTIVES

This study is guided by three primary objectives:

1. To evaluate staff and students' perceptions of the new UIS logo in terms of recognizability, Islamic-Malay identity, professionalism, modernity and emotional connection.
2. To analyze qualitative feedback regarding the elements participants like or their thoughts in the new logo.

METHODOLOGY

Using a mixed-methods research approach, the study combined qualitative thematic interpretation with descriptive quantitative analysis. This approach was chosen to make use of both the depth of qualitative data for studying the fundamental justifications and emotional reactions to the institution's new logo and the statistical value of the quantitative data for identifying general perception trends. Crucial integration was made achievable by the combination of gathering both data types, which resulted in a more reliable and comprehensive interpretation of the intricate brand perception results.

The sampling technique utilized was convenience sampling within Universiti Islam Selangor (UIS), which facilitated the efficient collection of responses from readily accessible participants across various faculties and departments. This non-probability method was deemed appropriate due to the exploratory and descriptive nature of the study, where the primary objective was to capture general, preliminary perceptions of the logo among key internal stakeholders, rather than to establish statistical generalizations to the entire population.

The target population included all UIS staff (academic and administrative) and students (degree and diploma), who were the internal stakeholders most directly affected by and exposed to the new institutional branding. However, the study population was limited to persons who were accessible and willing to participate throughout the four-week data collection period. While convenience sampling does not guarantee complete representativeness, its practical advantages namely, the simplicity and availability of reaching a wide variety of internal respondents within a short timeframe, made it appropriate for this early inquiry of stakeholder attitudes. This method is consistent with research that seeks to discover broad qualitative and quantitative patterns and attitudes rather than establish cause connections. A total of 168 participants, comprising academic staff, administrative staff, and students responded to the survey, providing a sufficient base for the subsequent descriptive and thematic analyses.

Theoretical Framework

The Customer-Based Brand Equity (CBBE) Model (2009) by Kevin Lane Keller served as the foundational theoretical framework for instrument development. As depicted in Figure 1 (CBBE Pyramid), this model establishes brand equity through four essential stages; Brand Identity, Brand Meaning, Brand Response, and Brand Resonance. The questionnaire was specifically designed to evaluate the respondents' views of the new university logo and its influence on the institutional identity and brand image, using these CBBE building blocks as a guide.

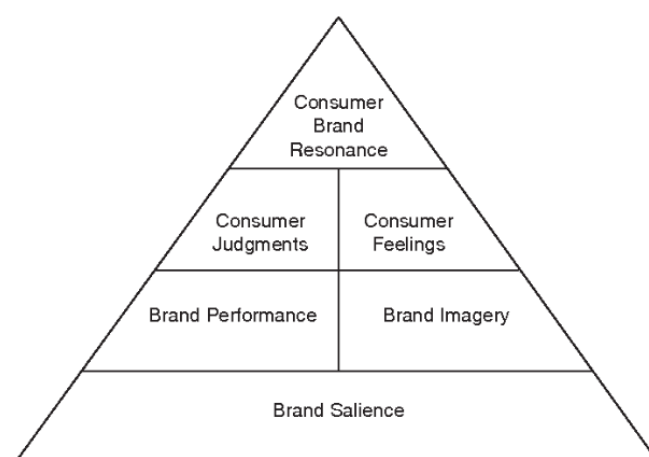


Figure 1

Survey Instrument Design

To assess the perception of the new UIS logo, a mixed-methods approach was adopted, combining five-point Likert-scale items with three essential open-ended questions. The quantitative items were meticulously mapped onto the relevant CBBE building blocks (see Table 1).

The evaluation began with the foundational layer, **Brand Salience**, by examining basic recognition (Q1: *Logo baharu UIS mudah dikenali*). The **Brand Meaning** dimension was addressed through **Brand Imagery**, focusing on the symbolic and associated meanings conveyed by the logo (Q2 and Q3), specifically its representation of institutional identity and modern professionalism. Furthermore, **Brand Response** was primarily measured via the **Consumer Feelings** dimension, evaluating the emotional connection and attitudinal reactions such as appeal to the youth (Q4) and institutional pride (Q5: *Saya berbangga logo ini mewakili UIS*).

Q	Item	CBBE Component	CBBE Level
Quantitative (Likert-Scale)			
Q1	Logo baharu UIS mudah dikenali.	Brand Salience (Recognition)	Brand Identity
Q2	Logo mencerminkan identiti Melayu-Islam universiti.	Brand Imagery	Brand Meaning
Q3	Logo memberikan imej profesional dan moden.	Brand Imagery	Brand Meaning
Q4	Logo menarik perhatian dan sesuai dengan generasi muda.	Brand Feelings (Excitement)	Brand Response
Q5	Saya berbangga logo ini mewakili UIS.	Brand Feelings (Self-Respect/Social Approval)	Brand Response
Qualitative (Open-Ended)			
Q6	Apakah yang anda suka tentang logo baharu UIS?	Imagery, Feelings	Meaning & Response
Q7	Apakah yang anda rasa boleh ditambah baik?	Imagery, Salience	Meaning & Identity
Q8	Bagaimana logo ini mempengaruhi pandangan anda terhadap UIS?	Judgments, Feelings	Response

Table 1

The inclusion of the three subjective questions (Q6, Q7, and Q8) was critical to the triangulation approach. This qualitative feature allows respondents to express positive and negative connections (Imagery, Feelings) as well as directly linking the logo to their overall institutional perception

(Consumer Judgments and Consumer Feelings). This offered the rich contextual data required for a thorough brand recognition assessment that went beyond simple quantitative scores.

Ethical Considerations and Data Collection

The study strictly followed established ethical research standards throughout data collection and analysis, ensuring compliance with institutional research ethics guidelines.

The questionnaire was distributed online mainly using social media applications such as WhatsApp or Telegram groups among lecturers or students or sharing QR code and hyperlinks to the survey to ensure broad departments were accessible. Participation was completely up to them, and respondents got a full understanding of the study's academic goal and their opportunity to withdraw at any time without obligation. Before accessing the survey questions, each respondent was asked to fill out an informed consent statement stating that their responses would be kept confidential and that the data would only be used for academic purposes.

The study utilized **convenience sampling** within Universiti Islam Selangor (UIS) to obtain responses efficiently from accessible participants across various faculties and departments. This sampling technique was selected due to the exploratory and descriptive nature of the study, which aimed to capture general perceptions rather than establish statistical generalizations. The target population comprised all UIS staff and students, representing internal stakeholders of the institution. However, the actual study population was limited to individuals available and willing to participate during the data collection period.

Although convenience sampling does not ensure full representativeness, it provided practical advantages in reaching a diverse range of respondents within a short time frame. This approach was deemed appropriate for preliminary investigation into stakeholder perceptions, where the primary objective was to identify overall trends and attitudes toward the university's new logo rather than to infer causal relationships.

The study adhered to established ethical research standards throughout the process of data collection and analysis. Participation was entirely voluntary, and respondents were informed of the study's purpose and their right to withdraw at any stage without consequence. The questionnaire was distributed online via official university communication channels, including faculty mailing lists and student platforms, to ensure accessibility across departments. Prior to participation, each respondent was required to acknowledge an informed consent statement outlining the confidentiality of their responses and the intended use of the data for academic purposes only.

No personal identifiers were collected, and all responses remained anonymous to protect participant's privacy. Data were stored securely in password-protected files accessible only to the research team. The ethical procedures and data handling practices were aligned with institutional research ethics guidelines to ensure transparency, voluntary participation, and respect for respondents' rights.

The following figures (Figure 1 and Figure 2) show both the old and new UIS logos.



Figure 1: Old UIS logo



Figure 2: New UIS logo

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

The following table summarizes the descriptive statistics for each item related to the perception of the UIS logo:

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Table 1: Perceptions of the UIS New Logo

CBBE Level	CBBE Building Block	Survey Statement (English)	Mean (M)	SD	Interpretation (Agreement Level)
Brand Identity	Salience	The new UIS logo is easily recognizable	2.61	0.87	Moderate Agreement
Brand Meaning	Imagery (Values)	The logo reflects the Malay-Islamic identity of the university.	2.70	0.81	Moderate Agreement
Brand Meaning	Imagery (Personality)	The logo gives a professional and modern image.	2.33	0.92	Low to Moderate Agreement
Brand Response	Feelings (Appeal)	The logo is appealing and suitable for the younger generation.	2.21	0.95	Low Agreement
Brand Response	Feelings (Pride)	I feel proud that this logo represents UIS.	2.30	0.89	Low to Moderate Agreement

Note. Scale: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Agree, 4 = Strongly Agree. Interpretation of mean adapted from Pallant (2020): 1.00–2.00 = Low, 2.01–3.00 = Moderate, 3.01–4.00 = High.

Data were collected from both UIS staff and students; however, since no significant difference was observed between the two groups, their responses were combined for overall analysis.

Interpretation of Quantitative Findings

The highest mean score ($M = 2.70$) pertains to the logo's reflection of Malay-Islamic identity, suggesting that the rebranding succeeded in preserving the institution's religious and cultural heritage. Respondents generally agreed that the logo embodies UIS's Islamic philosophy and local values, aligning with prior findings by Fatin and Zulfah (2024) emphasizing cultural-symbolic balance in Islamic university logos.

The recognizability of the logo ($M = 2.61$) also scored moderately high, indicating successful visual distinctiveness. However, dimensions tied to professionalism, modern aesthetics, and youth appeal scored lower ($M = 2.33$ and 2.21), implying that while the design conveys tradition, it may lack sufficient visual dynamism to engage younger audiences or position UIS as a contemporary institution.

Emotional attachment, measured through the “pride” variable ($M = 2.30$), showed a middling response. This suggests that the logo, although conceptually appreciated, does not yet elicit a strong emotional or symbolic connection among the UIS community.

Qualitative Thematic Analysis: Insights from Open-Ended Feedback

Three open-ended questions were added to the survey instrument in order to meet Research Objective 2, which focuses on assessing participants' qualitative input on the features they prefer and their ideas regarding the new UIS logo. These inquiries were created especially to obtain from respondent's in-depth opinions, preferences, and critical reflections:

1. *“What do you like about the new UIS logo?”*
2. *“What can be improved?”*
3. *“How does this logo influence your perception of UIS?”*

The study was able to look into underlying opinions, perceived strengths, and areas of visual or conceptual confusion associated to the new logo thanks to the extensive interpretive data offered by the responses to these items. Braun and Clarke's (2006) inductive method was then used to analyze the data thematically.

a) Appreciation of Simplicity and Symbolism

Many respondents praised the logo's simplicity, clean lines, and symbolic form, viewing it as visually balanced and aesthetically modern. Comments frequently highlighted how the logo embodies “clarity” and “minimalism,” reflecting professional qualities associated with institutional credibility. The color scheme—especially the combination of blue and gold—was seen as “calm yet dignified,” symbolizing intellectual integrity and spiritual excellence.

“The new logo looks neat and easy to recognize. It feels more modern without losing its Islamic essence.” – (Respondent #47)

“The color palette gives a sense of authority and elegance, suitable for an Islamic university.” – (Respondent #92)

This aligns with findings from Wu and Cheong (2021), who observed that simplicity in university visual identity enhances memorability and brand consistency. The appreciation of structured minimalism also suggests that UIS's design approach resonates with contemporary visual trends in higher education branding.

b) Recommendations for Strengthening Islamic and Local Identity

Despite general appreciation, recurring comments emphasized the logo's Islamic and cultural symbolism. Some respondents felt that the current design appears too old, classic or corporate, lacking distinct cues of modern Islamic education or Malay heritage.

“It could include more modern concepts or Islamic motifs, like geometric patterns or calligraphy.” (Respondent #108)

“The logo feels too ‘childish’ and looks like a ‘school logo’, there should be something uniquely UIS that distinguishes it from other institutions.” (Respondent #136)

This supports the findings by Fatin and Zulfah (2024), who noted that effective Islamic university logos should balance spiritual symbolism and cultural markers. The feedback indicates an opportunity for UIS to further embed semiotic depth—using color, motif, or typography—to visually communicate its educational philosophy and identity.

c) Perceived Impact on Institutional Image

Perceptions regarding how the logo influences UIS's institutional image were mixed but constructive. Many respondents believed the redesign was a necessary step toward modernization, projecting UIS as forward-thinking and relevant. However, there are others who expressed concern that the design's classic look might underplay the university's prestige or uniqueness.

"The new logo gives UIS a fresher look—it's more professional and global." – (Respondent #72)

"It looks classic but lacks identity; it could belong to any university." – (Respondent #119)

Particularly, this indicates a duality in perception: while modernization is valued, it must be accompanied by symbolic richness that sustains institutional authenticity. This finding reinforces Andrade Sanchez et al. (2022), who argue that visual minimalism, without supporting data contextually, can reduce institutional meaning.

LIMITATIONS

This study has several limitations that should be acknowledged in interpreting its findings. First, the research was limited to internal stakeholders of Universiti Islam Selangor (UIS), namely academic staff and current students. As such, the perceptions obtained may not fully represent the broader spectrum of stakeholders such as alumni, members of the public, or prospective students who may perceive the university's visual identity differently. The restricted population limits the generalizability of the results beyond the internal context of the institution.

Second, the sampling approach was based on voluntary participation within a specific time frame, which may have introduced elements of response bias. Participants who were more engaged with university activities may have been more likely to respond, potentially skewing perceptions toward more positive or institutionally aligned views.

Third, the study's use of a descriptive quantitative design with a structured questionnaire, while effective for capturing general trends and basic levels of agreement (e.g., Brand Salience), limits the depth of interpretation required for a thorough assessment of Keller's Customer-Based Brand Equity (CBBE) Model. Specifically, this approach limits the thorough evaluation of Brand Response (Judgments and Feelings) because the closed-ended format cannot fully capture the complex details or underlying causes for stakeholders' moderate-to-low sentiments toward the logo's pride or appealing qualities. Furthermore, the lack of triangulation with richer qualitative data sources such as interviews or focus groups, prevents an in-depth understanding of how stakeholders process, appreciate, and emotionally respond to the logo, all of which are essential factors for measuring the ultimate dimension of Brand Resonance (loyalty and attachment).

Finally, the data collection period was relatively short and confined to a specific academic semester. This temporal constraint means that respondents' perceptions were captured at a single point in time, without accounting for possible changes in attitudes following broader institutional campaigns, branding exposure, or the logo's integration into official materials over time.

Overall, these limitations suggest that while the study provides meaningful insights into internal perceptions of the UIS logo, its scope remains exploratory. A more comprehensive design incorporating diverse stakeholder groups, extended time frames, and mixed-method approaches would offer a richer

and more representative understanding of how university branding communicates cultural and institutional identity.

IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

From a theoretical standpoint, the findings contribute to a deeper understanding of how institutional identity and visual semiotics intersect within the context of higher education branding. The study demonstrates that logo perception is not merely a matter of aesthetic preference, but a reflection of cultural values and institutional philosophy. In the case of UIS, the moderate reception of the new logo indicates that while the visual design succeeds in communicating elements of Malay-Islamic identity, it still faces challenges in projecting a contemporary and emotionally resonant image among its stakeholders. This insight extends existing literature on cultural branding and semiotic interpretation, suggesting that logo design within higher education institutions should be analyzed not only as a marketing tool but also as a cultural artifact that embodies the values and aspirations of the university community.

From a practical perspective, several strategic directions can be derived to enhance the effectiveness of the UIS visual identity. First, the university could consider integrating deeper semiotic layers into its logo design by subtly embedding Islamic geometric patterns or traditional Malay art forms that align with the institution's heritage. Such integration would reinforce the symbolic representation of UIS's cultural and spiritual foundations. Second, efforts to strengthen youth appeal may be achieved through modern adaptations in digital media, such as animated versions of the logo or context-based visual applications that resonate with student audiences and online platforms.

Furthermore, the rebranding process can benefit from a participatory approach by involving students, academic staff, and alumni in design discussions or creative workshops. This inclusive process can foster a sense of ownership and emotional attachment toward the university's identity, leading to greater acceptance and pride. Finally, to maintain brand coherence, UIS should establish clear guidelines for consistent use of the logo across all communication materials—digital, print, and environmental. Uniform application of the visual identity would not only enhance recognizability but also convey professionalism and institutional unity.

Overall, this study contributes both theoretically and practically by illustrating that logo perception in a university context is a multidimensional construct, shaped by cultural symbolism, visual design and stakeholder engagement. The findings encourage institutions to view branding not as a static product, but as a dynamic process that evolves alongside their community and cultural environment.

CONCLUSION

The study reveals that the new Universiti Islam Selangor (UIS) logo successfully balances modernity and Islamic identity but still faces challenges in achieving full emotional and symbolic resonance among its stakeholders.

Quantitatively, the logo is viewed fairly positively, being perceived as reflective of Malay-Islamic values and easily recognizable. However, perceptions of modern professionalism, youth appeal and emotional pride scored lower, signaling that further refinement is needed to strengthen its communicative and affective impact. Qualitative feedback illuminated these nuances. Respondents valued the logo's simplicity and color symbolism but encouraged greater integration of Islamic motifs, traditional aesthetics, and distinctive institutional markers. They also emphasized that effective branding requires consistent visual communication, not merely design redesign.

Overall, the findings indicate that a university logo operates as a complex semiotic construct rather than a mere visual identifier. It embodies the intersection between institutional philosophy, cultural heritage, and audience perception. In the context of UIS, the results reveal that while the logo conveys certain aspects of Malay-Islamic identity and institutional symbolism, its ability to evoke strong emotional

resonance and a sense of pride among stakeholders remains moderate. This suggests a partial alignment between design intentions and stakeholder interpretations.

From an analytical perspective, the study highlights the importance of understanding logo design through both cultural and communicative dimensions. The visual elements of a university's identity must not only represent its philosophical roots but also function effectively within contemporary communication environments. A disconnect between these dimensions may weaken brand cohesion and stakeholder engagement.

For UIS, future branding strategies should therefore focus on refining the balance between symbolic representation and user perception. Instead of emphasizing aesthetic appeal alone, branding efforts could be informed by a deeper semiotic analysis and systematic audience feedback. This would allow the university to assess how effectively its visual identity conveys institutional meaning across different demographic and cultural groups. Additionally, an inclusive engagement framework, one that integrates staff, students and alumni perspectives. It could strengthen internal coherence while ensuring that the brand narrative resonates externally in a culturally authentic yet globally comprehensible manner.

By situating logo design within this analytical framework, the study contributes to a broader discourse on how institutional identity in higher education is visually negotiated and socially constructed. Rather than prescribing a singular design solution, it invites further inquiry into the dynamic relationship between symbolism, perception and institutional representation.

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