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**Revitalizing 'Kita Selangor':  
Exploration of Dynamic Branding to Bridge Government-Public Connections.**

***Revitalisasi 'Kita Selangor': Satu Eksplorasi Penjenamaan Dinamik Menghubungi  
antara Kerajaan dan Masyarakat.***

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**ABSTRACT**

This article critically examines the visual identity of "Kita Selangor", a branding initiative by the Selangor State Government in Malaysia, to assess its effectiveness in fostering meaningful connections between the government and the public. The research aims to design and propose a revitalized branding framework characterized by greater energy, dynamism, and inclusivity. Utilizing a qualitative visual analysis methodology, the study deconstructs the semiotic elements of the current "Kita Selangor" identity, analyzing the embedded signs and meanings within its design. Insights gathered through discussions with key stakeholders, including state government officials and the Menteri Besar of Selangor, provide valuable context. The findings culminate in a conceptualized branding redesign that highlights the distinctiveness of Selangor through its nine districts and integrates the vibrant yellow and red hues of the state flag. This proposed framework enhances the symbolic resonance and visibility of Selangor's identity, strengthening public engagement and fostering a deeper connection between the government and its citizens. By emphasizing visual and cultural elements, this research underscores the pivotal role of dynamic branding in cultivating robust government-public relationships.

**Keywords:** Branding Initiative; Visual Identity; Brand Identity

**ABSTRAK**

*Artikel ini meneliti secara kritikal identiti visual "Kita Selangor", sebuah inisiatif penjenamaan oleh Kerajaan Negeri Selangor, Malaysia, bagi menilai keberkesanannya dalam memupuk hubungan yang bermakna antara kerajaan dan masyarakat. Penyelidikan ini bertujuan mereka bentuk serta mencadangkan satu kerangka penjenamaan yang diperkasa semula, dengan penekanan kepada elemen tenaga, dinamik, dan keterangkuman. Menggunakan metodologi analisis visual secara kualitatif, kajian ini mendekonstruksi elemen semiotik dalam identiti "Kita Selangor" sedia ada, dengan menganalisis tanda dan makna yang terkandung dalam reka bentuknya. Dapatan kajian turut disokong melalui*

*perbincangan bersama pihak berkepentingan utama termasuk pegawai kerajaan negeri dan YAB Dato' Menteri Besar Selangor, yang memberikan konteks penting. Hasil kajian ini menghasilkan satu reka bentuk semula konsep penjenamaan yang menonjolkan keunikan Selangor melalui sembilan daerahnya serta mengintegrasikan rona warna kuning dan merah bendera negeri Selangor. Kerangka penjenamaan yang dicadangkan ini secara simbolik memperkukuh penampilan identiti Selangor, seterusnya mempertingkatkan penglibatan masyarakat dan menjalin hubungan yang lebih erat antara kerajaan negeri. Dengan menekankan elemen visual dan budaya, kajian ini turut menggariskan peranan penting penjenamaan dinamik dalam menyemai hubungan yang kukuh antara kerajaan dan masyarakat.*

*Kata kunci: Inisiatif Penjenamaan; Identiti Visual; Identiti Jenama*

## 1. Introduction

Branding, long regarded as a strategic asset in the business sector (Aaker & Keller, 1990; He & Calder, 2020), has increasingly expanded its relevance beyond commercial applications. Today, branding plays a pivotal role in the identity formation of non-profit organizations, events, individuals, ideas, and even government institutions. Across the globe, numerous governments have embraced brand management to enhance public communication, streamline administrative processes, and foster citizen engagement (Downer, 2015; Eshuis & Klijn, 2012). The integration of branding into public governance is exemplified by initiatives such as the United Kingdom's centralized digital identity under the gov.uk platform (Marland et al., 2017), which signals a broader shift toward unified and accessible state communication. Furthermore, branding has become instrumental in promoting policy agendas and shaping public behaviour through social marketing strategies (Sahadev et al., 2020; Reichenberg, 2002).

In Malaysia, the state of Selangor occupies a central role as the nation's most industrialized and economically advanced region. As Selangor positions itself not only as a dynamic economic powerhouse but also as a model for progressive governance, effective public branding has become increasingly critical. The state's "Kita Selangor" initiative represents a contemporary effort to establish a cohesive, inclusive, and resonant brand identity that bridges the gap between government and citizens. However, the effectiveness of such branding strategies remains underexplored, particularly in terms of their capacity to reflect Selangor's socioeconomic ambitions and cultural diversity.

This study makes a preliminary attempt to analyse the existing branding strategies employed by the Selangor State Government, with specific focus on their visual identity and communicative impact. It seeks to evaluate both the potential and limitations of these practices in advancing public understanding, inclusivity, and engagement. By positioning Selangor as a case study within the broader discourse of public sector branding in emerging economies, this paper aims to contribute to the growing literature on governance communication. The remainder of the paper is structured as follows: it begins with a review of the relevant literature on branding within the public sector, followed by an analysis of the current challenges and opportunities in Selangor's branding efforts. The paper concludes with a discussion on the limitations of this research and directions for future inquiry.

## 2. Literature Review

The Selangor State Government has adopted a distinctive branding strategy as part of its effort to enhance public engagement and foster state identity. In 2021, the Chief Minister of Selangor, Dato' Seri Amirudin Shari, introduced the “*Kita Selangor*” logo as a unifying symbol in response to the challenges brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic. This initiative marked the beginning of a visual communication effort aimed at reinforcing solidarity among Selangor’s diverse population. In 2024, the logo was revised with minor design modifications to revitalize its appearance and maintain public relevance. A subsequent rebranding exercise was undertaken in 2025, resulting in a newly redesigned logo that incorporated updated visual elements and reflected a renewed strategic direction. The official launch of this rebranded identity took place on 27 January 2025 during the Chief Minister’s New Year Address to the Selangor civil service. Accompanying the new logo was the introduction of a refreshed slogan, “*Maju Bersama*” (“Progressing Together”), which encapsulates the state’s aspiration for inclusive growth and collective advancement.

### 2.1 Branding Through Logo Design

In the domain of visual branding, logos serve not merely as aesthetic identifiers but as strategic instruments that encapsulate organizational values, cultural symbolism, and communicative intent. Scholars and practitioners generally categorize logo design into seven primary typologies, each offering distinct semiotic and strategic functions within a brand ecosystem. The monogram or letter mark comprising stylized initials, prioritizes minimalism and recognizability, especially for entities with lengthy or complex names. While its visual economy ensures clarity and recall, its effectiveness is often contingent upon prior public familiarity with the organization’s full name, potentially limiting its communicative power in emerging or unfamiliar contexts.

Wordmarks or logotypes, on the other hand, emphasize the brand name itself using distinctive typographic treatments. This form of branding relies heavily on linguistic recognition and typographic nuance, offering high clarity but demanding a name that is both memorable and phonetically accessible. Pictorial marks or logo symbols employ representational imagery, often chosen for their metaphorical or associative value. These logos can achieve immediate recognition yet risk cultural misinterpretation if not contextually grounded. Closely related are abstract logo marks, which employ geometric or symbolic forms detached from literal representation. While they offer creative flexibility and can evoke broad conceptual themes, their ambiguity may hinder interpretability without sufficient branding support. The mascot logo introduces a character-based visual identity, typically aimed at humanizing the brand and enhancing emotional engagement. Though effective in fostering relatability, mascots are often context-sensitive and may be perceived as overly informal or reductive in institutional or governmental settings.

Combination marks integrate textual and visual elements, providing the dual advantage of verbal clarity and visual symbolism. This hybrid approach supports versatility across media and enhances brand adaptability, though it requires careful balance to avoid visual clutter or conceptual dissonance. Lastly, emblem logos characterized by text enclosed within a symbol or badge are traditionally associated with heritage, formality, and institutional authority. While they project credibility and permanence, they may lack the contemporary appeal or scalability

demanded by modern digital platforms. The emblem logo typically featuring text enclosed within badges, seals, or crests carries profound semiotic weight, symbolizing tradition, authority, and institutional legitimacy. Such logos are not just decorative but serve as multifaceted visual artifacts that integrate historical, cultural, and ideological elements into a coherent, elegant identity (Yongjian, Wei & Linda, 2022)

### 3. Research Methodology

This research employs a qualitative research strategy, purposely selected to examine the intersectional symbolic, ideological, and communicative aspects embedded in the visual identity of the “*Kita Selangor*” brand movement. Qualitative methodologies are most appropriate for research inquiries requiring interpretive analysis and the examination of socially constructed meaning, particularly in the domains of semiotics and visual rhetoric. Since this study concentrates on the development and implications of state branding through visual means, the qualitative approach enables close analysis of design decisions, symbolism, and the sociopolitical narratives they represent.

The qualitative method employed herein emphasizes a case-specific examination, content analysis, and interpretative engagement with primary sources. At the core of this study is the branding creation of the “*Kita Selangor*” brand an initiative representing state-driven action and distilling both governance philosophy and cultural identity. To examine the conceptual creation and semiotic function of the brand, data were gathered via a purposive sampling approach, focusing on materials sourced directly from the Pejabat Menteri Besar Selangor (Incorporated). Materials included historical and current official logos, brand guidelines, communication artifacts, and planning blueprints from the *Rancangan Selangor Pertama (RS-1)*.

A significant body of data was collected through a sequence of discussions with key stakeholders involved in the development and production of the new “*Kita Selangor*” brand identity. These discussions were conducted across multiple session, involving participants from the communication and branding department. The purpose of these sessions was to refine the thematic messaging and value propositions embedded in the visual narrative of the logo.

As for data collection techniques, this study made extensive use of document analysis, focusing on prior iterations of the “*Kita Selangor*” logo. This included assessment of design elements, colour schemes, iconography, and typographic styles. The materials were thematically coded and analysed for recurring visual motifs and symbolic messaging. Particular attention was paid to the shifts across branding versions (2022 and 2024), assessing how each version reflects changes in policy agendas and social contexts especially in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, and the emerging emphasis on digital governance and inclusive economic growth.

Figure 1. Previous Logo of “*Kita Selangor*”

# #KitaSelangor

The analytical framework was drawn from visual semiotics and multimodal discourse analysis, notably using the theoretical model proposed by Kress and van Leeuwen (2006). Their concept of visual grammar comprising elements such as salience, framing, modality, and information value served as the basis for interpreting how the compositional features of the logo generate meaning and reinforce ideological intent.

In terms of sampling methodology, this study adopted a purposive and expert sampling strategy to identify relevant materials and select participants based on their expertise in branding, policy-making, and public communication. Rather than aiming for generalizability, the research prioritized depth, contextual precision, and internal validity of the findings.

By focusing on a single case, the rebranding of the “*Kita Selangor*” logo this research constructed a comprehensive narrative that positions branding not merely as a design exercise, but as an instrument of governance and a mechanism of citizen engagement. Despite its strengths, the methodology employed in this research presents certain limitations. The interpretative nature of semiotic analysis inevitably involves a degree of subjectivity a characteristic intrinsic to qualitative research.

Although triangulation and participant validation were employed to enhance credibility, the analysis remains context dependent and should not be generalized beyond the studied case. Furthermore, the focus on a single case study limits the comparative potential across other Malaysian states, a limitation acknowledged as a basis for future research. Nevertheless, the chosen methodology enabled a nuanced exploration of the visual and symbolic dimensions of state branding in Selangor.

## 4. Discussion

Figure 2. Symbol (Red, Gold and Yellow)



As illustrated in Figure 2, the concentric ring composed of nine bands in Golden Yellow, Selangor Red, and Selangor Yellow serves as a deliberate visual representation of both the Selangor Royal Institution and the Selangor's flag. These colours are not arbitrary design choices; rather, they are culturally and politically charged signifiers that function within a semiotic system of meaning-making. In line with Barthes' (1967) theory of mythologies, such visual elements operate at the connotative level communicating ideological values beyond their literal representation.

The colour red, in the context of Selangor's flag and broader Malay cultural tradition, signifies bravery, strength, and sovereignty. It reflects the enduring resilience of the Selangor state in maintaining stability and asserting its administrative leadership. Yellow, particularly in the form of royal yellow (*kuning diraja*), is deeply tied to the Malay monarchy and symbolizes nobility, sacredness, and constitutional legitimacy. As noted by Kress and van Leeuwen (2002), colour in visual communication carries specific cultural and contextual meanings that influence interpretation. In the case of Selangor, yellow is emblematic of royal dignity and state authority especially significant given the constitutional role of the Sultan in governance.

The chromatic choices within the "*Kita Selangor*" branding also resonate with the aspirational values outlined in the *Rancangan Selangor Pertama* (RS1) the state's strategic development plan which envisions Selangor as a smart, livable, and prosperous state.

The golden hue adds a layer of modernity and prosperity to the traditional palette, signalling both continuity and progress. Thus, the use of red and yellow is not simply aesthetic but deeply semiotic, encoding messages of heritage, power, and visionary governance. Through this integration of colour symbolism and regional iconography, the "*Kita Selangor*" visual identity bridges the traditional foundations of statehood with the contemporary goals of inclusive development and public engagement.

Figure 3. Symbol (Red and Yellow)



In Figure 3, the 56 alternating red and yellow circles within the "*Kita Selangor*" logo represent the total number of seats in the Selangor State Legislative Assembly (*Dewan Undangan Negeri Selangor*). Each circle is a pictorial representation of an elected member, highlighting the democratic form of government where the members of the assembly are elected by a legitimate electoral mandate. The employment of representative count in the visual identity is a deliberate use of iconography to convey institutional openness and inclusivity.

For the visual political communication school of thought, these features are Edelman's (1988) "symbolic representations of authority," where the elements of design are employed not only for information but also for legitimizing institutional authority in the public eye. The employment of bold, culturally significant colours such as red and yellow not only conforms to the state's official colour scheme but also reinforces the bond between civic identity and visual representation.

Furthermore, through the open display of each elected official, the branding effectively communicates that government is characterized by involvement and sharing, as opposed to being opaque and centralized. This approach enhances a rhetorical framework that places the state government in the position of listening to its citizens' voices, thereby enhancing the legitimacy of public institutions. Grabe and Bucy (2009) maintain that, during a period characterized by visibility as a prominent modality of political communication, inclusiveness and representativeness-based design features can play an important role in shaping public trust and civic participation. In that case, the "*Kita Selangor*" brand identity serves not only as a state symbol but also as a communicative interface that brings about public alignment with democratic operations.

Figure 4. Symbol (Gold)



In Figure 4, the 22 golden circles embedded in the logo design signify the total number of parliamentary constituencies located within the state of Selangor. This numerical representation extends the logo's symbolic function by integrating the structure of federal representation into its visual narrative. As of the current political composition, 15 of these constituencies are held by members of the ruling coalition, while the remaining 7 are represented by members of the opposition.

This visual distinction not only portrays Selangor's political dynamics at the national level but also delivers a nuanced commentary on democratic pluralism. By incorporating both government and opposition representations into the design paradigm, the branding subtly acknowledges the multiparty character of Malaysian parliamentary democracy. This depiction aligns with contemporary frameworks of political communication, in which state symbols are increasingly used as devices for reinforcing institutional legitimacy and securing public accountability (Street, 2011).

In addition, the use of the golden colour in this context functions as a semiotic signifier of prestige, national significance, and institutional durability. Kress and van Leeuwen (2002) argue that colour in visual discourse serves an ideological function, shaping meaning and conveying power relations. The golden circles here emphasize the concept of parliamentary representation as central to Selangor's identity within the Malaysian federation, thereby reinforcing the state's dual role as both a regional authority and a national contributor.

Figure 5. Full Logo



As illustrated in Figure 5, the “*Kita Selangor*” rebranding centres on the stylization of the letters “A” and “O”. The letter “A” is deliberately configured to symbolise the strength of Selangor’s human and material resources, projecting the state's capacity to propel sustainable economic growth. Its sharp geometry evokes notions of dynamism, structural resilience, and advancement traits closely tied to Selangor’s positioning as a leading economic hub in Malaysia.

Figure 5. Full Icon



The letter “O” is redesigned to incorporate the crescent and star motifs drawn from the Selangor State Flag, reinforcing cultural and constitutional identity. Its expressive form, segmented to represent the nine districts of Selangor consist of Gombak, Hulu Langat, Hulu Selangor, Klang, Kuala Langat, Kuala Selangor, Petaling, Sabak Bernam and Sepang, performs a dual semiotic function: it embeds regional diversity within the logo while aligning with state iconography. This approach resonates with typographic branding theory, where letterforms serve not only communicative but also symbolic roles; as Kotler et al. (2009) explain, brand identity encompasses attributes, values, and personality all conveyed through visual and typographic elements.

Encircling this central motif are five concentric bands in red, white, yellow, white, and red chromatic tokens that reference the five guiding principles of the *Rukun Negara* and the

values encapsulated in *EHSAN* (compassion and benevolence). Concurrently, the palette reflects the five core pillars outlined in the Selangor State Government's annual budget. Together, these semiotic interventions compose a cohesive, visually articulate identity that weaves together cultural heritage, strategic governance, and economic aspiration.

## 5. Conclusion

This research provides an in-depth explanation and critical examination of the conceptualization, planning, and symbolic production of the 2025 “*Kita Selangor*” branding project. Based on qualitative research grounded in semiotic analysis, stakeholder engagement, and document content analysis, the study reveals the creative and strategic processes involved in the development of a visual identity that not only symbolizes the Selangor State Government but also seeks to establish a meaningful connection with public.

The overarching aim of the rebranding exercise to reconnect the government with the public has been approached with a concerted emphasis on inclusivity, cultural resonance, and institutional representation. The visual narrative (Figure 5) is centred on the bold use of red and yellow, the official colours of the Selangor state flag, which evoke a shared sense of heritage, unity, and state pride. These colours are more than aesthetic choices; they carry ideological and emotional significance, reinforcing the principles of leadership, compassion, and communal progress.

Finally, this research contributes to the scholarly discourse on public sector branding by documenting an experiential case of strategic visual governance. It demonstrates that branding, when executed with cultural sensitivity and intentionality, can serve as a vital communicative bridge between government and public mediating visual representation, democratic values, and developmental aspirations. “*Kita Selangor*” is more than a slogan or a symbol. It is an active articulation of shared identity and an invitation to unity in diversity.

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