Developing A Significant Visual Identity for Malaysia through an E-Book

Nor Syahidatul Amira Dzulkepli[1], Nur Aniza Mohd Lazim[2]
{amiradzulkepli@gmail.com[1], aniza32@uitm.edu.my[2]}

Faculty of Art & Design, Universiti Teknologi MARA, Shah Alam, Malaysia[1,2],

Abstract. A great visual identity represent Malaysia is a great way for a tourist or foreigner to recognise our national identity. This includes elements such as landmarks, images or logo designs. A logo is an important visual communication resource for promotional operations, brand awareness and campaigns in particular, and constitutes an excellent way of ensuring that information or awareness of a brand is stuck into public consciousness. As such, a logo is most widely used to build and reflect the brand identity for an event or organisation. This research is made to develop a significant visual identity in order to promote Malaysia through an e-book. This e-book will help designers understand more about Malaysia's identity of Malaysia while promoting and representing Malaysia. A significant amount of visual identity to promote Malaysia is analysed according to a visual analysis survey. The research is also based on a mixed method research. A total 20 visual stimuli were tested through a survey questionnaire across 120 respondents. The findings of the research showed that visuals from four categories - performing arts, festival, flora and fauna – rated the highest percentile. Suggestions for further improvements on the visual identity guidelines and the findings from the research eventually will allow researchers investigate visual types based on the stimuli that have been evaluated.

Keywords: Visual identity, logo, promote Malaysia, e-book.

1   Introduction

As reported by the New Straits Times, Malaysia appears to be facing an identity crisis for several years now [19]. The recent unveiling of the new Visit Malaysia 2020 logo caused quite a stir online, both from industry professionals and netizens. Some responded positively while others said the logo was not memorable. Allegations were also made about logo plagiarism, which were quickly shut down. Others like Simon Bell, Managing Director, Southeast Asia, FITCH (2019). pointed out that "the supporting marketing [collaterals] will have to work super hard to support this identity".

A nation's brand refers to a network of meanings in the minds of people based on their visual, verbal, and behavioural expressions. Although a brand involves of both tangible and intangible assets, numerous brand interpretations marry brands with visual elements of graphic design and brand identity respectively with visual identity [17]. The American Marketing

Association (2004) defines the brand as "a name, term, design, symbol, or any other feature identifying the good or service of one seller as distinct from other sellers". After all, visual identity is part of branding, and branding is not only making a logo for the company.

A logo is an important visual communication resource for promotional operation, brand awareness and campaigns. This also excellent way of ensuring that information or awareness of a brand is stuck into public consciousness. Therefore, researchers decided to use a significant visual identity that represents the country as an alternative to improving the identification of domestic products. The objectives are the same; to build the best potential brand by optimising key value dimensions [1]. It is clear that developing a strong visual identity in nation branding can help promote the country. Promotions can be done through different platform especially in reading materials. An e-book guideline is a way to establish a visual identity and promote the country. The main objective of this research is to study the current visual identity of Malaysia and develop an e-book guideline for visual identity in order to promote Malaysia.

A corporate identity as a visual identity is perhaps the most well-known and covers a wide range of media. A visual identity includes the following elements such as logo design [14]. It is important because it is a physical representation of business and brand identity.

1.1 Visual Identity

A logo is a pervasive visual cue and one of the most essential aspects of the company. The most common application of a logo is used to represent the brand identity of an event or organisation [12]. In promotional operations, awareness of the brand, and campaigns in particular, a logo is a significant visual communication medium. It is well known in marketing literature that logos are influential visual indicators that can, boost brand perception and contribute to more favourable brand attitudes [16].

In addition to that, visual identity includes the following elements such as logo design [14]. Visual identification is a tangible manifestation of corporate and brand identity that makes it an important subject in the field of design and branding. The method of developing a visual identity method starts with a visual audit - an overview of how a company physically projects itself to its different audiences [17]. Hence, as reported by brand recognition hypothesis, visual identity is closely linked to the level of familiarisation of target markets [10]. Thus, giving nation an identity of a brand is linked to organisational operations that are carried out on a nation level. As such, the idea of creating a brand name identity must ensure a multifaceted dimension. By exploring the construct of a national identity, researchers must look into sum of all perceptions of a nation in the mind of their stakeholders, which may contain some of the following elements: belief system, psychological, people, place, common myths and historical, culture, language, history, food, fashion, famous faces (celebrities), global brands, etc [5].

1.2 Promoting Malaysia

Promoting an organisation or a nation is very essential to the growth of an economy. This strategy is compulsory in every process of development. As an example, an increasing body of branding strategy literature indicates that brands are essential tools for generating superior

market results. Most studies highlight brand nation as part of the national strategy to build positive image and reputation [2], [3], [8] & [9]. Building a brand can create engagement with people, consumers, or audience. Therefore, Malaysia needs to establish a visual identity to represent the country so that it can promote itself internationally. A good visual identity is a marker to represent Malaysia so that the tourist or foreigner can recognise Malaysia's identity easily. Many studies have shown a positive impact on product use of national identity in order to promote their products in the market [11] & [15]. Therefore, promoting Malaysia through tourism involves putting the country's culture and tradition at the forefront.

1.3 E-book

An e-book refers to a book that has been converted into a digital format [18]. However, the definitions of the e-book are continuously changing, with new interpretations emerging in tandem with technological advancements in digital media. An organisation must create a graphic guideline in order to provide a harmonised visual identity and communication. This part illustrates and shows the relationship between each aspect of the visual identity. This guideline affects the production of commercial products of a brand. The concept encompasses the overall marketing methods used by the organisation to support the brand's visual identity. Commercial materials must be produced in compliance with some of the rules laid out in the organisation's graphic guidelines. Each brand document or contact tool must have the same or identical visual identification of the brand. It is very essential for an organisation to have a distinctive and homogeneous visual identity across its platforms in order for its viewers to remember the brand's identity [4].

Good outcomes are obtained only by those businesses that are capable of maintaining their image, expressing their brand, and deciding its characteristics, individuality and equity. Thereafter, guidance on e-books is one of the tools used to create visual identity and support Malaysia. As reported, 339 academic libraries surveyed, 95 percent reported providing e-books as part of their daily collection. The vast majority of users that chose to read e-books in PDF format at 92 percent, 12 percent preferred the html format while 8 percent preferred an e-book [13]. E-books are a perfect way to appreciate literature when they are cheaper than paper books leading to a lack of printing and production expenses [7].

2   Methodology

Methodology and procedures play an important role in this research. Mixed methodology was chosen and conduct in the research included quantitative and qualitative methods. Qualitative approaches were used to define unknown causes and perspectives for a deeper in- depth explanation of such topics or issues. Then, archival data of former studies in the topic of crisis visual identity in Malaysia. The literature review aims to provide the context and rationale for the study being conducted. This method was chosen to collect information and data that already exists in Malaysia about the concussion of visual identity. Also, the researchers relied on a few qualitative approaches, such as archival data, visual analysis, and open-ended surveys, which help to achieve the research objectives of the research. Further to this, the researchers made an observation on the previous Malaysian logo. The purpose of this observation was to

gather the data on visual identity that has been used on the previous design or logo. After that, visual analysis was made for set of guidelines of visual identity to promote Malaysia through an e-book. In this part, the visual aspect that represents and symbolises Malaysia was analysed to identify the significance of visual identity of Malaysia. Visual analysis on the four categories are festival, traditional dance, flora and fauna in Malaysia. These are the top four highest scores chosen for visual stimuli. Next, interviewing was the most popular format for data gathering in qualitative analysis. The interview session gathers three experts in different backgrounds such as academic, graphic designer and freelancedesigner in the research.

Quantitative analysis which also used surveys, with a fixed number of data collection response options, and is preferably used where the issue of analysis is very large. The research approach in this section was a set of questionnaires developed as closed ended questionnaires. The planned methodology was to determine effective procedures for achieving research goals and to help researcher find answers toward investigations. Thus, the mix-method was conducted to help the researchers to gather the data & information and developing the visual identities of Malaysia to promote Malaysia through an e-book.
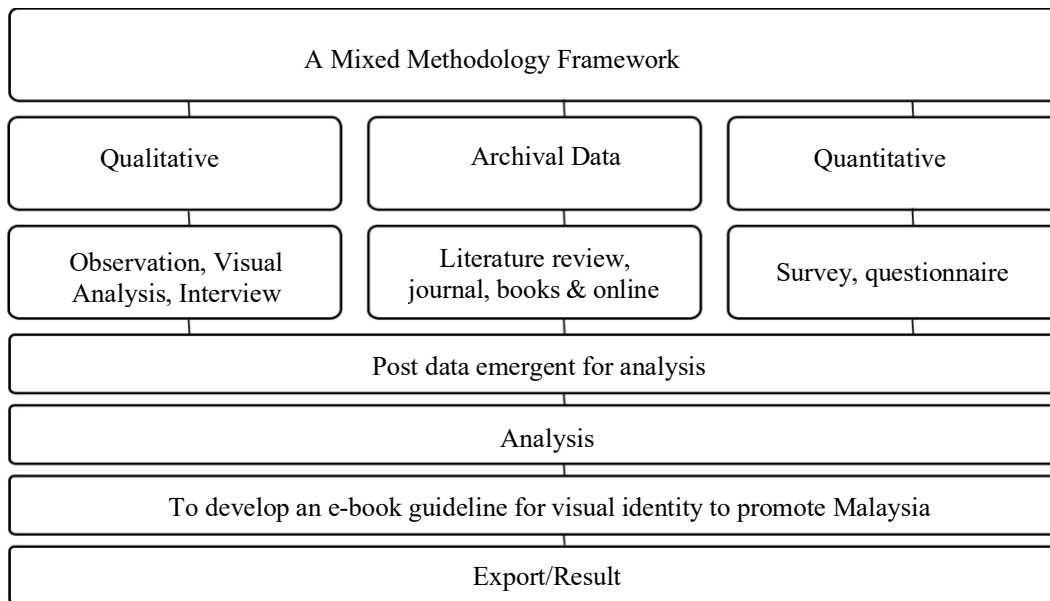

Fig. 1. Methodology

2.1 Sample

Sampling is a statistical technique that concerns the collection of individual observations where it allows one to draw statistical inferences about the population. In sampling, it is presumed that samples are collected from the population and the sampling means and population means are equal. A population may be described as a whole, which includes all the elements and characteristics of the research carried out in the sample. However, processing all

this material is time intensive and expensive. Therefore, with the aid of samples, we can draw conclusions about the characteristics. In this research, 120 respondents were selected to participate in the research. The sample of respondents are people between the age of 15-45 years old.

2.2 Instruments

The research approach in this section is a set of questionnaires developed and divided into two parts: demographics and four categories of visual stimuli. The categories chosen for visual identity in are associated with Tourism. The types of visual stimuli used in the research are shown on figure 2 & 3 below. The total visual stimulus is 20 visuals that reflect the Malaysian identity and were evaluated by open and closed-ended questionnaires. IBM Statistical Software for Social Science (SPSS) was utilised for the frequencies and percentages were used to calculate the items.

Fig. 2. Category of visual stimuli

Fig. 3. Sample of visual stimuli

3 Results & Discussion

This are the results of the research. A questionnaire was administered to 120 respondents which details the respondent's gender, age and occupation. Table 1 provides a summary of the participants' gender, age and occupation which involved 94 female (78.3%) and 26 male respondents (31.2%). In this study, 26.7% of respondents are aged between 15 to 25 years old, 66.7% are aged between 26 to 35 years old, 4.4% are aged between 36 to 45 years old and 2.2% are over the age of 46 years old. The respondents' occupation ranges from Academics or Teachers (2.2%), Government Sectors (17.8%), Self-employed or own their own companies (8.9%), and Students (33.3%).

Table 1. Profile of respondents

Gender	Percentage (%)	Age	Percentage (%)	Occupation	Percentage (%)
Female	78.3	15-25 years old	26.7	Academic/Teacher	2.2
Male	31.2	26-35 years old	66.7	Government Sector	17.8
		36-45 years old	4.4	Self-employed/ Own Company	8.9
		46 and above	2.2	Student	33.3

The next stage of the analysis tested for differences in visual categories. According to the results, Table 2 survey on category of visual, as respondent needs to choose four categories for the visual stimuli. The result showed that the top four highest scores were Festival at 30%, Performing Arts with 29% and Flora and Fauna each at 100%.

Table 2. Categories of visual stimuli

Categories of visual stimuli	Percentage %
Historic Building	1
Traditional Games	2
Festivals	30
Performing arts	29
Musical Instruments	1
Landmarks	4
Flora	100
Fauna	100

Table 3 presents the average for the respondents' results conducted of visual categories. The highest scores for the Flora category are the Hibiscus (4.73) and Rafflesia (4.76). Meanwhile, Fauna category showed the following; Hornbill (4.31), Malayan Tiger (4.53) Lesser Mouse Deer (4.20) and Leatherback Turtle (M=4.56) as the highest scores. Festival category showed Eid/Hari Raya Aidilfitri (4.71), Chinese New Year (4.13) scored the highest and Thaipusam (3.44) and Harvest Festival (3.44). Performing arts category included the Zapin dance (3.58) while the highest score is Odissi dance (4.02) and Lion/Dragon dance (4.18).

Table 3. Results of visual stimuli

No	Category	Average	Classification
1.	Hibiscus	4.73	Strongly agree
2.	Ixora	2.24	Disagree
3.	Bougainvillea	2.82	Disagree
4.	Orchid	2.96	Disagree
5.	Rafflesia	4.76	Strongly agree
6.	Malayan Tiger	4.53	Strongly agree
7.	Lesser Mouse Deer	4.20	Strongly agree
8.	Leatherback Sea Turtle	4.56	Strongly agree
9.	Rhinoceros Hornbill	4.31	Strongly agree
10.	Malayan Tapir	2.80	Disagree
11.	Eid/Hari Raya Aidilfitri	4.71	Strongly agree
12.	Chinese New Year	4.13	Strongly agree
13.	Thaipusam	3.44	Agree
14.	Harvest Festival	3.44	Agree
15.	Zapin dance	3.58	Agree
16.	Odissi dance	4.02	Strongly agree
17.	Lion/Dragon dance	4.18	Strongly agree

4 Conclusion

This research sought to unravel the best method before starting to develop a visual identity to represent and promote Malaysia for future research. The study focuses primarily on creating a significant visual identity using e-books as guidelines in promoting Malaysia. The results revolved around the development of the graphic design itself, using Malaysia's significant visual identity as a basis. The findings of the research showed that visual from four categories of festival, performing arts, flora and fauna have the highest percentage. In this context, it is possible to include advanced knowledge on e-book guidance. Suggestions for further improvements on the visual identity guidelines and the findings from the research eventually will endorse researchers investigate visual types based on the stimuli that have been evaluated. Also, future research may expand on findings obtained on visual types such as painting, doodles and other illustrations using a range of mediums and methods.

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