

Visual Syncretism Of Kufi Calligraphy In The Indonesian Halal Logo

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Abstract

This research investigates the phenomenon of linguistic-visual syncretism embodied in the redesigned Indonesian Halal logo, specifically examining the transformation of Arabic script into localized cultural iconography. As a prominent emblem of religious governance, the logo's design reflects a complex negotiation between classical calligraphic canons and Nusantara's aesthetic identity. Utilizing a qualitative framework anchored in Charles Sanders Peirce's triadic semiotics and the morphological tenets of *Khat Kufi*, this study scrutinizes the structural interplay between text and image. The findings indicate a deliberate morphological deconstruction of the Arabic characters *Ha*, *Lam*, *Alif*, and *Lam*, reconfiguring them to mirror the contours of the *wayang Gunungan* and the *Surjan* textile patterns. From a calligraphic perspective, the logo is identified as a contemporary *Kufi* hybrid that prioritizes aesthetic fluidity while maintaining the foundational readability of the sacred text. Semiotic analysis further demonstrates that the logo operates as a dual-functioning signifier: a cultural icon and a juridical symbol of *wasathiyah* (religious moderation). This integration projects an inclusive paradigm of Islam that harmonizes with indigenous wisdom, thereby enhancing the global brand equity of Indonesia's halal sector. Ultimately, this study posits that the transmutation of Arabic visual language into a national cultural artifact serves as a sophisticated communicative vehicle to solidify Indonesia's strategic influence within the global halal ecosystem.

Keywords: *Visual Syncretism, Kufi Calligraphy, Peircean Semiotics, Indonesian Halal Logo, Arabic Linguistics.*



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INTRODUCTION

The global expansion of the halal industry has compelled Muslim-majority nations to institutionalize more sophisticated product assurance standards, encompassing both legal substance and visual representation (Hakim & Sugianto, 2024). Within the increasingly competitive global halal market, clear visual communication and robust governance are critical to maintaining global halal integrity and consumer trust across international borders. In Indonesia, the regulatory transformation of halal products, mandated by Law No. 33 of 2014, is manifested not only in bureaucratic shifts but also in the construction of a new national identity through the redesign of the official halal logo (Pugersari, 2024). As a primary instrument of authority and quality assurance, the halal logo functions as a visual communication bridge connecting producers and consumers within the Sharia-compliant economic ecosystem (Ramadhan et al., 2024). However, the efficacy of this communication, particularly in meeting international market demands for unambiguous certification, depends heavily on the synergy between linguistic-semiotic elements and their ability to represent both universal Islamic values and specific national characteristics.

The textual representation in the Indonesian halal logo specifically adopts Arabic typography in the Khat Kufi style, which has undergone significant artistic modification (Mutmainnah, 2022). Linguistically, Kufi is recognized as one of the oldest calligraphic scripts, characterized by its geometric, rigid, and formal anatomy (Amrullah et al., 2021). The implementation of this script in a state-sanctioned logo is not merely an aesthetic preference but a visual-linguistic statement of theological weight. The integration of the letters Ha, Lam, Alif, and Lam into a unified structure necessitates a rigorous analysis of how Arabic morphology adapts to constrained visual spaces.

A critical phenomenon emerges as the Kufi structure is distorted to mirror the silhouette of the Gunung (wayang shadow puppet mountain) and the Surjan (traditional striped motif) (Muzzammil, 2023). This represents a process of linguistic-visual syncretism, where Arabic linguistic components intersect with Indonesian cultural symbolism (Lailiyah & Amelia, 2025). Such syncretism creates a visual paradox: it attempts to preserve the authenticity of the Arabic text as the foundation of Sharia law while simultaneously deconstructing its form to accommodate national identity. This adaptation serves as a discursive space for visual linguists to examine the extent to which the flexibility of Arabic script can be transformed without compromising its fundamental legibility.

Despite extensive literature on the cultural aesthetics (Pugersari, 2024) and philosophical-semiotic meanings of the logo (Muzzammil, 2023), a significant research gap remains regarding how localized graphic adaptations intersect with global halal integrity and international market recognition. While global consumers and trade ecosystems demand standardized, instantly recognizable markers to guarantee halal assurance, previous studies have largely remained descriptive or socio-cultural, neglecting the technical morphological distortions of Khat Kufi within Arabic visual linguistics. Crucially, there is a lack of inquiry into whether such radical anatomical changes compromise the script's linguistic functionality and legibility for a global market audience.

To bridge this void, this study sharply aims to evaluate the tension between localized cultural enculturation and the preservation of global halal integrity by analyzing the morphological distortion

and legibility of the modified Khat Kufi script in the Indonesian halal logo. Specifically, this research seeks to answer: (1) How does the morphological transformation of Kufi script facilitate the construction of a localized visual identity alongside traditional motifs like *Gunungan* and *Surjan*? and (2) To what extent does this structural distortion impact the legibility and functional integrity of the "Halal" text as an authoritative global linguistic sign?

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a qualitative descriptive approach using visual content analysis to systematically investigate the interplay between Arabic linguistic structures, cultural symbolism, and halal regulatory standards. The primary data source comprises the official vector layout files and high-resolution specifications of the Indonesian Halal Logo issued by the Ministry of Religious Affairs (BPJPH), selected via purposive sampling. To guarantee reproducibility, the research executes a standardized four-step analytical protocol: (1) *Grapheme Deconstruction*, isolating the letters *Ha*, *Lam*, *Alif*, and *Lam* using a structural geometric grid matrix; (2) *Morphological Comparison*, benchmarking the isolated graphemes against classical *Khat Kufi Murabba'* canons to quantify baseline shifts and stroke distortions; (3) *Halal Compliance Verification*, evaluating the modified signifiers against HAS 23000 (Halal Assurance System) standards regarding non-ambiguous visual identification and Sharia assurance; and (4) *Syncretic Synthesis*, mapping the visual-linguistic data onto the *Gunungan* and *Surjan* cultural silhouettes.

The researcher acts as the primary instrument utilizing a standardized visual observation rubric to evaluate how calligraphic modifications balance cultural expression against linguistic integrity. Data validity and reliability are secured through theoretical triangulation, cross-referencing visual measurements with calligraphic jurisprudence (*Qawaid al-Khatt*), visual communication principles, and HAS 23000 regulatory criteria. By detailing every spatial measurement coordinate and analytical phase, this methodological framework provides an objective, transparent, and fully replicable baseline for assessing how state-sanctioned religious iconography navigates localized identity without compromising global halal market compliance.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Characteristics and Evolution of Kufi Script

The morphological analysis of the Indonesian Halal logo reveals a radical departure from the rigid mathematical foundations that define classical *Khat Kufi*. While historically Kufi is characterized by a strict 90° angularity and a precise *miqyas* or dot-based measurement system (Putra & Novitasari, 2025), this logo employs an experimental Contemporary Kufi style that prioritizes visual elasticity. The transformation of the letters *Ha*, *Lam*, *Alif*, and *Lam* within this structure demonstrates a "functional redefinition" (Abdul Rahim & Hamidon, 2022), where the anatomical proportions of the letters are sacrificed to form the *Gunungan* silhouette. This phenomenon represents a significant visual-linguistic negotiation, where the sacred script is no longer a static transmitter of text but a dynamic design element that prioritizes cultural iconography over orthographic precision.

Unlike the findings of (Rahman, Aura Shifa Aprilyza, 2025), which emphasize Kufi's role in conveying "visual firmness" through horizontal and vertical balance, the adaptation in the Indonesian context suggests a shift toward visual fluidity. The strength of solid lines, traditionally used for architectural permanence (Shiddiq, 2021), is here re-engineered to facilitate cultural integration. By bending the traditionally rigid *Alif* and *Lam* to meet the apex of the *Gunungan*, the design performs a deliberate deconstruction of classical rules. This suggests that the theological authority of the script can effectively coexist with, and even be reinforced by, non-Arabic geometric motifs, reflecting a more flexible approach to religious representation.

Applying Charles Sanders Peirce's triadic model of semiosis, comprising the *Representamen*, *Object*, and *Interpretant*, the logo functions as a site of complex, layered meaning. The *Representamen*,

manifested in the purple graphic, operates simultaneously as an icon (resembling the wayang *Gunungan*), an index (pointing to religious authority via Arabic script), and a symbol (representing state-certified compliance). This research confirms the "visual syncretism" theory of (Lailiyah & Amelia, 2025) but provides deeper critical depth by identifying how the verticality of Kufi script acts as a visual bridge to the Javanese *Surjan* motif. This synthesis successfully challenges the monolithic visual dominance of Middle Eastern calligraphic styles often found in global halal branding.

From a visual-linguistic perspective, this adaptation creates what may be termed a "readability paradox." The findings indicate that the logo relies heavily on the reader's pragmatic competence, their prior knowledge of the word "halal", rather than the literal clarity of the graphemes themselves. This contradicts the traditional "Architecture-Decorative" paradigm, which views Kufi as an absolute balance of form and function. Instead, the Indonesian logo suggests that in modern branding, the "symbolic aura" of the script takes precedence over its immediate legibility. This discovery defines a "readability threshold" where Arabic script transforms into a localized cultural signifier that is interpreted through affective recognition rather than purely textual decoding.

The integration of the *Surjan* motif, symbolizing simplicity and light, alongside the *Gunungan*, representing the universe, serves as a contextualizer that shifts the audience's perception from an Arab-centric identity toward a *Wasathiyah* (moderate) Islamic identity. This confirms (Zomarshidi et al., 2022) view of Kufi as a dynamic design element but provides more specific socio-political implications: the use of local silhouettes acts as a visual bridge for a heterogeneous society. By framing the text within a local silhouette, the regulator successfully constructs a "hybrid sign" that carries dual connotations: universal Sharia values and national inclusivity, effectively nationalizing the religious symbol.

The final interpretation of the logo's "logic of signs" reveals that the choice of purple and the tapering upward layout are strategic choices for cultural diplomacy. In contrast to the generic green logos used globally, the use of purple, connoting nobility and professional wisdom (Ulusoy et al., 2020), positions Indonesia as a sophisticated leader in the global halal industry. The upward-pointing structure acts as a visual proposition of stability and transcendence, merging theocentric aspirations with anthropocentric cultural roots. This suggests that the "visual grammar" of the logo is intentionally designed to project an image of a progressive and moderate Islamic nation to the international community.

The significance of these findings lies in the discovery that morphological distortion does not equate to semantic loss. Rather, it creates an "aesthetic distance" that allows the religious message to undergo a successful process of nationalization. This contradicts (Bousselam, 2022) rigid adherence to classical anatomy as a prerequisite for analysis, suggesting instead that the efficacy of religious communication in a modern, multicultural state depends on its ability to negotiate form. Ultimately, the Indonesian halal logo is not merely a technical label but a multidimensional "cultural text" that reinforces Indonesia's unique position in the global halal ecosystem through the power of integrative symbolism.

Theoretical Framework and Discussion: Peircean Semiotics

In analyzing the syncretic nature of the Indonesian halal logo, Charles Sanders Peirce's triadic semiotics offers a superior analytical lens compared to traditional dichotomous structuralism. By defining a sign as a dynamic relationship between the *representamen*, *object*, and *interpretant* (Sa'adah & Sakinah, 2025), this framework allows for an investigation into how meaning is not merely stagnant but actively constructed through visual interaction. This study argues that the logo serves as a complex *representamen* where religious authority and national identity are synthesized, forcing the viewer to engage in a non-linear process of semiosis to internalize its philosophical value.

The core utility of Peirce's classification, icon, index, and symbol, lies in its ability to deconstruct the logo's layered communicative functions. The *iconic* element is manifest in the

silhouette's physical resemblance to the *wayang gunung*, while the *indexical* function is served by the Arabic script, which acts as a direct existential pointer to Islamic Sharia authority. Simultaneously, the logo operates as a *symbol* whose legitimacy is grounded in the socio-legal agreement of the Indonesian state (Hanifah et al., 2025). This triadic overlap ensures that the logo functions as a multi-vocal sign, addressing both the theological requirements of the global *ummah* and the cultural sensibilities of the local populace.

This research highlights that the *Khat Kufi* script undergoes a deliberate process of "iconic engineering," where textual characters are manipulated to form a specific cultural image. This process is critical for revealing how audiences navigate the "cognitive negotiation" required to reconcile two distinct visual identities: universal religious adherence and local cultural rootedness. Unlike prior descriptive studies, this analysis posits that the script does not merely signify the word "halal" but actively shapes a new visual discourse where Arabic calligraphy becomes a vessel for Nusantara symbolism.

Central to this analysis is Peirce's concept of the *ground*, which serves as the underlying basis upon which the sign is understood within Indonesia's heterogeneous society (Nellhaus, 2025). The dialogue between the rigid, geometric Kufi script and the organic, fluid forms of the *gunungan* bridges two disparate knowledge systems. By integrating these forms, the logo establishes a common *ground* that facilitates a shared understanding of "Indonesian Halal," effectively neutralizing the potential friction between foreign religious script and indigenous cultural aesthetics.

The concept of the *interpretant* is particularly instrumental in explaining how visual syncretism generates the specific understanding of *Wasathiyah* or religious moderation. This research confirms the findings of (Muzzammil, 2023) but extends the interpretation by suggesting that the generated meaning is a synthesis rather than a mere addition. For local citizens, the *gunungan* produces an *interpretant* of inclusivity and familiarity, whereas for the global community, the Kufi script ensures an *interpretant* of Sharia authenticity. This duality prevents the "semantic loss" that often occurs when religious symbols are localized, maintaining a balance between global standards and local wisdom.

Furthermore, viewing the logo as a "visual proposition" allows for an objective evaluation of the regulators' strategic intent. This study interrogates the "logic of signs" to determine whether the *gunungan* icon strengthens or obscures the symbolic identity of the word "halal." By applying Peirce's pragmatic framework, the analysis avoids subjective aesthetic judgments and instead focuses on the sign's functional efficacy in society. The findings suggest that the deconstruction of Arabic letters into cultural silhouettes acts as a strategic "visual grammar" designed to project Indonesia's progressive Islamic identity on the global stage.

The application of Peircean semiotics demonstrates that the Indonesian halal logo is a product of high-level strategic communication. By dissecting the mechanisms of iconicity, indexicality, and symbolism, this study reaches a deep philosophical level that exposes the logo as an integrative symbol. This approach reveals that the transformation of the logo is not a purely aesthetic endeavor but a calculated effort to reinforce the position of Indonesian Islam as a harmonious and essential component of the global halal ecosystem, providing an original contribution to the field of Arabic visual linguistics.

Analysis of Kufi Script Adaptation in Local Symbols in the Indonesian Halal Logo

Morphological Identification of Kufi Script in Logo Structure

The technical analysis of the Indonesian halal logo reveals a radical morphological deconstruction of the Arabic letters *Ha* (ح), *Lam* (ل), *Alif* (ا), and *Lam* (ل). Unlike traditional calligraphic applications where script serves as a secondary label, this research finds that the script functions as the primary architectural scaffolding for the logo's visual identity (Maysya Tri Putri, 2025). This study argues that the transformation represents a "linguistic-visual negotiation," where the phonetic essence of the letters is maintained even as their physical anatomy is subjected to extreme geometric distortion. This finding contradicts the static view of religious calligraphy, suggesting instead that Arabic script in

the Indonesian context operates as a fluid graphic medium capable of redefining its own structural boundaries.

In terms of calligraphic anatomy, the modification of the letter *Ha* into a vertical pattern resembling the *surjan* motif signifies a departure from the soft curves characteristic of classical scripts. While Sirojuddin (2016) emphasizes the rigid stability of Kufi, this study interprets the logo's verticality as a deliberate effort to synchronize religious text with local cultural symbols. This transformation demonstrates that the "visual recognition chain" of Arabic graphemes is surprisingly resilient; despite the transition from traditional curves to rigid, straight lines, the lexical identity of the word "halal" remains intact. This highlights the study's originality in identifying the threshold of abstraction where a letter remains recognizable even when its traditional anatomy is almost entirely erased.

A significant critical finding lies in the tension between the classical principle of *miqyas* (proportional measurement) and the logo's aesthetic objectives. Traditionally, Kufi script is governed by strict mathematical ratios based on the *nuqtah* or dot (Al-Khatthath, 1939). However, this research demonstrates that such principles are systematically set aside to accommodate the curved silhouette of the *gunungan*. This creates what may be termed "elastic distortion," sparking a necessary visual-linguistic discourse on the limits of deforming sacred text. By prioritizing the conical silhouette over proportional orthodoxy, the logo challenges the sacrosanct status of calligraphic rules, proposing that artistic enculturation can supersede traditional linguistic rigidity.

The sacrifice of the 90-degree right angle, the definitive hallmark of traditional Kufi, further illustrates the shift toward a localized visual grammar (Bousselam, 2022). The letters *Lam* and *Alif*, which canonically stand upright, are forced into a conical contour, increasing the cognitive processing time required for reader recognition. From a visual communication perspective, this study interprets this decrease in literal readability as a strategic trade-off. By sacrificing immediate textual clarity, the logo gains a unique iconic resonance that transforms it from a mere word into a national emblem. This suggests that in the context of Indonesian halal branding, the "symbolic aura" of the script is valued more highly than its functional legibility.

Regarding typology, this study categorizes the script as "Experimental Contemporary Kufi," distinguishing it from the purely geometric *Kufi Murabba'* or the historical *Fatimi* styles. This hybrid typology allows for a dialogue between the logic of geometric lines and the flexibility of free-hand forms (Bousselam, 2022). This finding supports the work of (Darwis et al., 2024), which posits that Arabic in Indonesia is an adaptive entity. However, this study adds critical depth by showing that this hybridity is not merely stylistic but ideological, representing a synthesis between theocentric (religious) script and anthropocentric (cultural) symbolism. This typology serves as a bridge, allowing the script to engage with modern expressions of identity without losing its theological foundation.

The morphological identification of the logo structure serves as evidence of a highly dynamic linguistic negotiation. The transition of the letters into geometric-organic forms marks a functional shift from a writing medium to a visual-architectural element. Although classical rules are deconstructed, the essence of the word "halal" is preserved as the core of the *gunungan* structure, ensuring that religious authenticity is not lost in the process of cultural adaptation. These findings establish a critical foundation for understanding how Arabic visual linguistics can be re-engineered to serve as a carrier for local wisdom, providing an original contribution to the discourse on religious moderation and visual semiotics in Southeast Asia. An explanation of the Morphological Identification of Kufi Script in Logo Structure can be seen in the Table.1 below

Table.1. Identification of Kufi Script in Logo Structure

Technical Elements	Classical Kufi Calligraphy Rules	Adaptation of the Indonesian Halal Logo
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Line Angle	Dominant 90° (perfect right angle)	Elastic/Curved at the top
Measurement System	Using standard Miqyas (points)	Following the visual proportions of Gunungan
Morphology	Rigid, Geometric, Static	Organic, Dynamic, Stylistic
Typology	Kufi Murabba' or Fatimi	Hybrid Contemporary Kufi

Analysis of Visual Syncretism: Integration of Local Elements (Gunungan and Surjan)

The analysis reveals that the Indonesian halal logo is not merely a decorative artifact but a profound manifestation of visual syncretism, representing a harmonious dialectic between Arabic theological identity and Javanese cultural entities (Azizah & Maulani, 2024). This study argues that the logo serves as a "negotiation space" where religious text is integrated into a local vessel, effectively merging cultural boundaries. This finding contradicts the traditional Arab-centric visual dominance often associated with halal certification, suggesting instead that religious symbols can achieve greater resonance when they are represented through a specific local framework that accommodates indigenous aesthetics.

A critical analytical finding is located at the base of the logo, where the vertical extensions of the letters *Lam* and *Alif* transform into a striped motif. This research identifies this motif as an intentional reference to the Javanese *Surjan*, which etymologically relates to *sirajan* or "light" (Septiningsih, 2017). This linguistic-visual metamorphosis demonstrates that the Arabic script is no longer an isolated religious signifier but has been re-engineered to embody Nusantara's philosophy of simplicity and resilience. These vertical lines function as "dual-signifiers," acting simultaneously as phonemes in the word "halal" and as visual markers of national identity, thereby bridging the gap between sacred text and local culture.

Furthermore, the utilization of the *Gunungan* silhouette as the primary frame provides a strong symbolic dimension that "nationalizes" the religious symbol. From a linguistic-visual perspective, the outer contours of the calligraphy are deliberately constrained by the *Gunungan* structure to foster a distinctive sense of "Indonesianness." As the *Gunungan* symbolizes the universe and the center of life in Javanese philosophy (Ubaidillah & Marpuah, 2021), placing the word "halal" at its core communicates a powerful message: that halal values are integrated into the very order of life within the Indonesian nation. This strategy ensures that the religious symbol is more readily accepted across a broad sociocultural spectrum.

This research posits that framing the Kufi script within the *Gunungan* creates a significant "aesthetic distance" (Pugersari, 2024). By deconstructing the rigidity of standard Arabic writing, the designer allows the script to follow local wisdom patterns more flexibly. Semiotically, the *Gunungan* serves as a "contextualizer" that shifts audience perception from a purely foreign religious script to a recognized national-religious identity. This syncretism serves as empirical evidence that religious symbols can undergo adaptive transformation without severing the traditional roots from which the religion originally developed, offering a unique model for inclusive branding.

In terms of composition, the study finds a deliberate effort to maintain a balance between theocentric and anthropocentric elements. The vertical placement of the Arabic text forming a peak, paired with the modern Latin text "Halal Indonesia" at the base, creates a "complementary duality of identity." This structure indicates that the recognition of Sharia aspects must be visually harmonized with the formal-administrative authority of the state. The balanced proportions between these two scripts ensure that the message of halal compliance is conveyed accurately to both the linguistically specialized and the general public, fulfilling a dual communicative function.

The upward-tapering layout of the logo provides a visual impression of stability and transcendence. The use of bold, modern Latin typography beneath the silhouette serves as a visual

foundation that reinforces institutional legitimacy and modern standardization. This duality acts as a communication bridge, representing Indonesia as a nation that maintains spiritual values while remaining adaptive to the contemporary developments of the global halal industry. The layout thus becomes a visual proposition of stability, merging the traditional mountain symbol with the administrative requirements of a modern regulatory body.

In conclusion, the integration of *Surjan* patterns, *Gunungan* silhouettes, and dual scripts demonstrates that the logo is a multidimensional "cultural text" rich in sociolinguistic content. The originality of this study lies in revealing that the integration of local elements is not a secondary addition but a primary instrument for redefining the character of halal in the public sphere. Through this well-crafted negotiation of forms, Arabic linguistics and Javanese culture are synthesized into a single organic unity that reflects religious moderation (*Wasathiyah*) and an inclusive national identity (Mahfud et al., 2021), providing a significant contribution to the study of visual semiotics and religious diplomacy. An explanation of Visual Syncretism: Integration of Local Elements (Gunungan and Surjan) can be seen in the following Table.2.

Table.2. Visual Metamorphosis: From Arab to Local

Logo Element	Linguistic/Theological Roots	Cultural/Local Roots	Syncretic Meaning
Bottom	The vertical line of the letter Ha (ح)	Surjan Pattern (Lurik)	Simplicity and Light (Sirajan) in obedience
Outer Form	Limitations of Kufi Script Rules	Wayang Gunungan Silhouette	Halal as the center of life (Universe) of the nation.
Design Direction	Transcendence (Towards God)	Tapering (Narrowing Upwards)	The stability of faith intertwined with the harmony of nature

Construction of Denotative and Connotative Meaning (Semiotic Synthesis)

The final stage of this study involves a semiotic synthesis to decode the multidimensional meanings embedded within the Indonesian halal logo, moving beyond surface-level aesthetics to explore its deeper philosophical underpinnings. This analysis utilizes the triadic semiotic model to dissect how the visual sign serves as a conduit for both religious authority and national identity. By integrating empirical findings on letter morphology with the broader concept of visual syncretism, this research reveals that the logo functions as a strategic "cultural text" designed for a globalized audience.

At the denotative level, the logo operates as a functional signifier of state-sanctioned halal status. The geometric lines literally transcribe the word "Halal" in Arabic script, referring to the permissible parameters of Islamic law (Munawwir, 2002). This study finds that the logo's primary denotation is intentionally direct to ensure consumer protection and legal compliance. Unlike the findings of earlier descriptive works, this analysis posits that the denotative clarity is a prerequisite for the logo's secondary, more complex symbolic functions within the Indonesian regulatory framework.

The presence of the Latin text "Halal Indonesia" serves as a semiotic reinforcement, effectively mitigating semantic ambiguity for audiences with limited Arabic literacy. This dual-script strategy functions as an index of institutional legitimacy, bridging the gap between sacred text and administrative law. This research argues that this redundancy is a deliberate design choice to ensure that the primary function of quality assurance is fulfilled across diverse linguistic demographics, thereby strengthening the logo's reliability as a legal instrument.

The analysis moves into connotative complexity by examining the "hidden meanings" generated through linguistic-visual syncretism. The integration of the theocentric *Khat Kufi* with the

anthropocentric *Gunungan* silhouette represents the values of *Wasathiyah* or religious moderation (Fuadi et al., 2024). This study interprets this synthesis as an image of an inclusive Islam that accommodates local wisdom without compromising Sharia principles. This discovery highlights the logo as a manifestation of a harmonious dialogue between religiosity and the longstanding traditions of the Nusantara.

Specifically, the use of the *Gunungan* symbol as a vessel for the Arabic script carries profound connotations of protection and cosmic balance. In Javanese philosophy, the *Gunungan* signifies the universe and the cycle of existence (Ian Perasutiyo et al., 2022). By placing the word "Halal" at its center, the logo suggests that halal principles are a noble, core value encompassing every facet of national life. This research confirms that this shift redefines "halal" from a mere technical procedure into a holistic lifestyle that is in harmony with both nature and culture.

The choice of purple provides further connotative layers regarding authority and professionalism. From the perspective of color psychology, purple is associated with wisdom, nobility, and elegant authority (Ulusoy et al., 2020). This study suggests that this color choice aims to project a governance model for halal certification that is professional and spiritually calming, rather than rigid or coercive. This finding contradicts the common use of green in global halal branding, marking a significant departure and a unique contribution to the visual identity of Islamic institutions.

In terms of communicative impact, the combination of Arabic linguistics and localized visuality is a strategic effort to differentiate Indonesian products on the global stage. Amidst a market filled with generic halal labels, Indonesia offers a distinct visual identity rooted in exotic Eastern culture. This research identifies this uniqueness as a form of "symbolic branding," allowing Indonesian products to be recognized instantly through their artistic characteristics, thereby increasing their competitive edge in the international halal economy.

This communicative strategy extends into the realm of cultural diplomacy through international trade. The logo conveys a message of Indonesia as a hub for a halal industry that values diversity and aesthetic depth. This study argues that the logo functions as a narrative of a moderate and progressive nation, highlighting added value through a strong cultural story. Consequently, the logo does more than certify product content; it acts as an ambassador for the nation's identity, bridging the gap between traditional values and modern industrial standards.

This semiotic synthesis ultimately demonstrates that the logo successfully bridges the sacredness of religion with the secularity of local cultural art. Through its layered construction of meaning, it functions simultaneously as a legal marker and a carrier of ideological messages. This study observes that the success of the design lies in its ability to unify diverse visual elements, *Surjan* patterns, *Kufi* script, and the *Gunungan*, into a coherent semiotic whole. This integrative power represents the originality of the Indonesian approach to religious branding.

The construction of denotative and connotative meanings reveals the logo as a manifestation of a transforming national identity. The visual tension between the script and the silhouette creates a strong distinction within the global halal ecosystem. This research proves that the aesthetics of the visual Arabic language, when integrated with local symbolism, is not merely an artistic endeavor but a sophisticated communication strategy. It reinforces Indonesia's position as a center of religious harmony and inclusive progress, providing a significant theoretical contribution to the fields of visual linguistics and religious semiotics.

Comparative Analysis and Sharia-Regulatory Implications

The empirical findings of this study offer a critical extension to the existing body of literature on halal iconography. While prior scholarship has predominantly treated the Indonesian halal logo through descriptive lenses of cultural aesthetics (Pugersari, 2024) or philosophical-semiotic narratives (Muzzammil, 2023), this research pinpoints the precise structural trade-off: cultural syncretism is

achieved at the expense of classical calligraphic anatomy. By demonstrating that the letters *Ha*, *Lam*, *Alif*, and *Lam* undergo elastic distortion to fit the *Gunungan* and *Surjan* contours, these findings challenge the traditional "Architecture-Decorative" paradigm (Bousselam, 2022) which demands strict adherence to the classical *miqyas* (proportional dot system). Instead, this study aligns with the adaptive visual framework of Darwis et al. (Darwis et al., 2024), proving that modern religious branding operates on a "readability threshold" where pragmatic consumer recognition takes precedence over literal orthographic precision.

This morphological distortion carries profound Sharia implications regarding visual legibility and legal clarity. Under Islamic jurisprudence (*Fiqh*), a halal signifier must function as an unambiguous guarantee of Sharia compliance to prevent consumer deception or religious uncertainty (*syubhat*). The findings indicate that the radical alteration of Khat Kufi relies heavily on the audience's prior contextual knowledge rather than the immediate legibility of the graphemes. From a Sharia perspective, this reliance on pragmatic decoding creates potential ambiguity for non-Indonesian Muslim consumers who lack familiarity with Nusantara cultural iconography. While the sacred aura of the text is preserved through the symbolic presence of Arabic script, the reduction in literal legibility tests the boundary between acceptable artistic enculturation and the Sharia requirement for absolute textual clarity in consumer assurance markers.

At the regulatory level, these visual-linguistic dynamics introduce significant operational implications for both national governance and international trade. Within Indonesia's regulatory framework, governed by BPJPH under Law No. 33 of 2014, the logo successfully projects a *Wasathiyah* (moderate) Islamic identity that reinforces state authority over religious certification. However, in the context of global halal supply chains, compliance with international standardization frameworks, such as HAS 23000 (Halal Assurance System), requires visual indicators to be universally recognizable across diverse linguistic demographics. The high degree of localized syncretism may complicate Mutual Recognition Agreements (MRAs) with foreign halal certification bodies that rely on standardized Arabic typography. Therefore, regulators face the dual challenge of protecting national identity while ensuring that state-sanctioned symbols satisfy global halal integrity and international market demand.

CONCLUSION

This study directly resolves its primary objective by demonstrating that the Indonesian halal logo operates through a controlled visual-linguistic syncretism, where the radical morphological transformation of Khat Kufi script successfully constructs a localized visual identity without causing semantic loss of the word "Halal." The technical deconstruction of the letters *Ha*, *Lam*, *Alif*, and *Lam* to mirror the Javanese *Gunungan* and *Surjan* motifs reaches a precise "readability threshold", sacrificing immediate orthographic legibility in favor of high iconic recognition and symbolic authority. This structural negotiation proves that state-sanctioned Arabic calligraphy can function as a dynamic architectural signifier that balances Nusantara cultural identity with universal Sharia assurance.

From a practical perspective, these findings offer crucial actionable insights for the global halal industry and regulatory bodies such as BPJPH. For policymakers and brand designers, this research provides a technical baseline for establishing visual standardization guidelines that ensure cultural adaptation does not compromise international market legibility or cross-border certification compliance under frameworks like HAS 23000. Furthermore, for industry practitioners and exporters, the logo's distinctive hybrid iconography serves as a strategic branding tool that elevates the marketability of Indonesian products by projecting a progressive, *Wasathiyah* (moderate) Islamic identity in the global halal economy.

Despite these insights, this study is limited by its exclusive focus on visual-structural analysis, without empirically measuring semiotic reception among diverse consumer demographics or international supply chain actors. Additionally, the analysis is confined to the official digital master file, which may not account for printing variabilities across different packaging materials. Future research

should employ experimental eye-tracking methods to test actual consumer decoding speeds in retail environments and conduct comparative studies on regional halal iconography across non-Arab Muslim-majority nations.

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