



PMB PTKIN : Branding Strategy Analysis on Social Media from 2021 to 2024

Nyayu Khodijah

nyayukhodijah_uin@radenfatah.ac.id

Universitas Islam Negeri Raden Fatah Palembang

M. Syendi Apriko

syendi_uin@radenfatah.ac.id

Universitas Islam Negeri Raden Fatah Palembang

Anita Trisiah

anitatrisiah_uin@radenfatah.ac.id

Universitas Islam Negeri Raden Fatah Palembang

Abstract : *The competition among universities to attract prospective students requires each institution to develop a competitive strategy, i.e., branding strategies, such as those implemented by State Islamic Higher Education Institutions (PTKIN). Each year, the branding strategy for new student admissions at PTKIN differs. This study implements a descriptive qualitative approach to analyze the branding strategies employed by the national committee for PMB PTKIN from 2021 to 2024. The focus of this study encompasses branding elements within the scope of brand design, the effectiveness of communication strategies in terms of supporting facilities and resources, and perceptions involving key stakeholders related to branding. The researchers analyzed the branding strategies utilized during 2021-2024 through observation, document analysis, and unstructured interviews as data complement. The findings indicate that effective branding elements include using relevant narratives, particularly those rooted in religious values, using digital media to target prospective students, and collaborating with Islamic higher education institutions under the Ministry of Religious Affairs. However, the study also identified several challenges, such as the suboptimal use of digital platforms and the gap between the projected brand image and public perception. Based on these findings, this study recommends strengthening the branding strategy by developing a consistent visual identity, increasing digital-based promotional activities, and aligning branding messages with the needs and preferences of the target audience. These findings are expected to assist PTKIN in building a stronger brand to attract prospective students to enroll in state Islamic higher education.*

Keywords: *New Student Admissions, Branding strategy, PTKIN*

Abstrak : *Persaingan antar Perguruan Tinggi untuk menarik perhatian calon mahasiswa menuntut tiap institusi pendidikan memiliki strategi yang kompetitif. Salah satu cara yang dilakukan adalah dengan mengoptimalkan strategi branding, termasuk yang dilakukan oleh Perguruan Tinggi Keagamaan Islam Negeri (PTKIN). Setiap tahun, strategi branding yang berbeda diterapkan di Penerimaan Mahasiswa Baru (PMB) PTKIN. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis strategi branding yang dilakukan panitia nasional PMB PTKIN sejak tahun 2021-2024 dengan menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif deskriptif. Fokus penelitian ini adalah elemen branding dalam cakupan brand design, efektivitas*



strategi komunikasi dalam cakupan fasilitas dan kelengkapan yang menunjang, serta persepsi dalam cakupan aktor terkait branding. Peneliti melakukan analisis terhadap strategi branding yang digunakan oleh Panitia PMB PTKIN periode tahun 2021-2024 melalui teknik observasi dan dokumentasi. Sebagai pelengkap data, peneliti juga melakukan wawancara tidak terstruktur dengan aktor yang terlibat dalam proses branding yang dimaksud. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa elemen branding yang efektif meliputi narasi yang relevan terutama dari nilai-nilai keagamaan, penggunaan media digital untuk menyasar target calon mahasiswa, serta kolaborasi perguruan tinggi keagamaan dibawah naungan Kementerian Agama. Namun, penelitian ini juga menemukan tantangan seperti kurang optimalnya pemanfaatan platform digital dan kesenjangan antara citra yang diproyeksikan dengan persepsi publik. Rekomendasi dari penelitian ini adalah penguatan strategi branding melalui pengembangan identitas visual yang konsisten, peningkatan aktivitas promosi berbasis digital, dan penyelarasan pesan branding dengan kebutuhan target audiens. Temuan ini diharapkan dapat membantu PTKIN dalam membangun brand yang lebih kuat agar menarik bagi calon mahasiswa untuk masuk ke Perguruan Tinggi Keagamaan negeri.

Kata Kunci: *Penerimaan mahasiswa baru, strategi branding, PTKIN*

Introduction

Competition between universities in Indonesia for admission requires branding strategies to attract prospective students' attention¹. Both state and private universities are increasingly improving their strategy in developing a strong branding identity to become a distinguishing feature between universities.

In Indonesia, higher education is not only divided into state and private. It is further managed through several Ministries; for example, public universities are under the Ministry of Higher Education, Science, and Technology, Health Polytechnics are under the Ministry of Health, and State Islamic Religious Higher Education Institutions (PTKIN) and private Islamic Religious Higher Education Institutions (PTKIS) are under the auspices of the Ministry of Religious Affairs². PTKIN in Indonesia consists of 58 Institutions, both at the University (UIN), Institute (IAIN), and College (STAIN) levels. In line with the student's admission

¹ Firda Octa Vidyawati and Elok Rosyidah, "Strategi Promosi Melalui Digital Marketing Di Era Pandemi Terhadap Keputusan Mahasiswa Dalam Memilih Perguruan Tinggi Swasta Pada Universitas 17 Agustus 1945 Banyuwangi," *JEKOBIS: Jurnal Ekonomi dan Bisnis* 1, no. 1 (2022): 39–44, http://ejournal.ubibanyuwangi.ac.id/index.php/jurnal_jekobis.

² "Daftar Perguruan Tinggi Di Indonesia," *Ensiklopedia Dunia*, last modified 2024, accessed September 10, 2024, [https://p2k.stekom.ac.id/ensiklopedia/Daftar_perguruan_tinggi_negeri_di_Indonesia#:~:text=Daftar perguruan tinggi negeri di Indonesia&text=Untuk perguruan tinggi Islam%2C swasta,Tinggi%2C Politeknik%2C atau Akademi](https://p2k.stekom.ac.id/ensiklopedia/Daftar_perguruan_tinggi_negeri_di_Indonesia#:~:text=Daftar%20perguruan%20tinggi%20negeri%20di%20Indonesia&text=Untuk%20perguruan%20tinggi%20Islam%20swasta,Tinggi%20Politeknik%20atau%20Akademi).



process at State Universities (PTN), which uses the National Selection based Achievement (SNBP), National Selection based Tests (SNBT), and independent selection, the student's admission process in PTKIN also has a similar format.

Referring to Law Number 12 of 2012 related to Higher Education and Government Regulation of the Republic of Indonesia Number 4 of 2014 related to the Implementation of Education and Management of Higher Education Institutions, it is stipulated that the format of new students admission at UIN/IAIN/STAIN or PTN with Religious Study Programs is held nationally and in other format. The national university selection format is the National Selection for Academic Achievement of State Islamic Higher Education Institutions (SPAN-PTKIN). This selection is based on the student's final academic report and other non-academic achievement portfolios to determine the eligibility of the prospective students. This program provides opportunities for students from various educational backgrounds, such as MA, MAK, SMA, SMK, and other religious educational high schools admitted by the government. This program aims to invite students with high achievement who are interested in continuing their education at State Islamic Religious Higher Education Institutions (PTKIN) in Indonesia, where the schools handle the registration process online. Another selection format is the State Islamic Religious Higher Education Admission Test (UM-PTKIN)³. Unlike the SPAN-PTKIN, the UM-PTKIN is one of the national selections for joining Indonesia's state Islamic religious-based universities. The selection process is performed through the Electronic Selection System (SSE), which measures academic ability, mathematical reasoning, reading literacy, and Islamic teaching literacy. This test is open to high school, MA, or equivalent graduates interested in continuing their education at PTKIN.

As an institution integrating Islamic values with science, PTKIN is challenged to attract prospective students to study at PTKIN using various strategies⁴. Branding is one of the key strategies for building a positive image of a university. Moreover, in the advanced digital era, creativity and innovation in the branding strategy of higher education institutions are a must; for example, intensifying the use of websites and social media as channels for branding higher

³ SPAN-PTKIN, "Informasi SPAN-PTKIN," last modified 2024, <https://span.ptkin.ac.id/page>.

⁴Rita Ambarwati and Dewi Komala Sari, "Experiential Marketing and Islamic Branding: A New Perspective on College Decision in Islamic Higher Education," *Journal of Islamic Marketing* 15, no. 3 (February 19, 2024): 745–776.



education institutions can attract prospective students.⁵ Branding is giving a name, term, sign, symbol design, or a combination of those to identify and differentiate it from the competitors⁶. A branding strategy aims to create a brand that is differentiated from competitors, thereby reducing the number of competitors in the market.

In higher education, branding helps universities generate a distinct identity, which is important to attract prospective students' attention and enhance the organization's reputation⁷. One of the essential tangible factors of branding higher education institutions is brand design, supporting facilities and equipment, and the actors behind the branding process⁸. This is in line with what was conveyed by Paul Herr, a marketing expert from the University of Colorado, "In today's higher education landscape, college and university leaders may well consider principles of brand management to assure their positions vis-à-vis their competitors. Although considerable differences between higher education and product brand exist, sufficient similarities warrant a foray into brand management issues"⁹. Meanwhile, some experts define strategy as an important company tool that integrates company goals and policies as a whole unit to achieve goals¹⁰. The objectives to be achieved through strategy are to maintain interests, provide an overview of objectives as a means of evaluation, and update previous strategies.

⁵ Fitriani Fitriani, Nina Lelawati, and Sri Retnaning Rahayu, "Strategi Promosi Penerimaan Mahasiswa Baru (Penmaru) Um Metro," *Jurnal Lentera Pendidikan Pusat Penelitian Lppm Um Metro* 6, no. 2 (2021): 155.

⁶ Philip Kotler, *Marketing Management* (India: Pearson Education, 2009).

⁷ Arild Wæraas and Marianne N. Solbakk, "Defining the Essence of a University: Lessons from Higher Education Branding," *Higher Education* 57, no. 4 (2009): 449–462; M. Joseph, D.F. Spake, and C.L. Albrecht, "Branding Universities: An Updated View of Factors Underlying College Choice," in *He Customer Is NOT Always Right? Marketing Orientations in a Dynamic Business World. Developments in Marketing Science: Proceedings of the Academy of Marketing Science*, ed. C.L. Campbell (Springer, Cham, 2017).

⁸ Nguyen Thi Huyena, Hoang Van Haib, and Hoang Khac Licha, "The Antecedents and Consequences of University Brand: A Systematic Review," *Multidisciplinary Reviews* 7, no. 7 (2024): 2024141–2024141.

⁹ Pragya P Harsha and Smita Shah, "Creating Brand Value of Higher Education Institution," *Ijmt* 19, no. 2 (2011): 152–158.

¹⁰ Afrianti Wijaya and Serafica Gischa, "Strategi: Pengertian, Tujuan, Jenis, Dan Contohnya," *Kompas.Com*, last modified 2023, <https://www.kompas.com/skola/read/2023/09/17/100000069/strategi--pengertian-tujuan-jenis-dan-contohnya?page=all>.



The branding strategy of higher education institutions is dynamic and follows various developments and changes¹¹. For example, from 2021 to 2024, various significant changes have occurred, especially the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, which has driven digitalization in multiple aspects of life, including the promotion system and registration of new students. PTKIN, in particular, needs to adapt to technology, strengthen its branding identity, and present relevant narratives for prospective students through digital channels.

This branding effort includes various strategies, ranging from social media digital content to partnership programs with the community and other institutions.¹² which is still under the auspices of the Ministry of Religion. The rapid flow of globalization has opened up a new understanding of the management of the world of education, one of which is building a global brand that can reach the desired target. Universities compete to make their campuses have a quality that, although not yet equal to IIM, IMT, Harvard, Stanford, Yale, or others, at least has a strong brand power¹³.

Previous studies allow us to understand a college's promotional strategy better. Abdullah and Lubis conducted research entitled "Promotion Strategy in Increasing the Number of New Students at the Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, University of Muhammadiyah Mataram." The results of their study showed the use of the 4P + S promotional method, namely product, price, place, promotion, and satisfaction, which showed positive and significant results in increasing the number of new students, especially at the Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, University of Muhammadiyah Mataram¹⁴. The branding strategy developed by universities as providers of educational services must convey information about the campus's excellent programs, student achievements, campus

¹¹ Diana Novita et al., "Personal Branding Strategi Untuk Memenangkan Pasar," *Journal of Innovation Research and Knowledge* 4, no. 2 (2024): 953–960.

¹² Nur Laili and Dina Hafni, "Peran Public Relation Dalam Pembentukan Branding Institution Perguruan Tinggi Keagamaan Islam Swasta: Studi Kasus STIT Makhdum Ibrahim Tuban," *Tadris* 13, no. 1 (2019): 67–77.

¹³ Siti Ma'rifatul Hasanah, "Strategi Membangun Global Brand Perguruan Tinggi Keagamaan Islam Negeri (Ptkin) Menuju World Class University," *J-Mpi* 2, no. 2 (2017): 128–141.

¹⁴ Ibrahim Abdullah and Lubis Lubis, "Strategi Promosi Dalam Peningkatan Jumlah Mahasiswa Baru Fakultas Ilmu Sosial Dan Ilmu Politik Universitas Muhammadiyah Mataram," *Jurnal Ulul Albab* 22, no. 2 (2018): 82–88.



achievements, and facilities and infrastructure so that they can attract the interest of prospective students¹⁵.

This research focuses on branding strategies emphasizing tangible elements, namely brand design, supporting facilities and equipment, and the actors behind the branding process. In presenting the research results, the researcher will also refer to the communication process proposed by Laswell, considering that the branding process of PMB PTKIN, which is the focus of this research, cannot be separated from the communicator who delivers the message; the message to be delivered, the communication channel used, and the recipient of the message¹⁶. These two theories and several expert references that have been discussed previously are the research framework used to answer the formulation of the research problem, namely: What is the branding strategy of PMB PTKIN in various communication channels, including social media, in the period 2021-2024?

Methods

This study uses a qualitative descriptive approach. The descriptive qualitative method is one research approach that aims to understand and describe phenomena in depth and systematically. This approach is carried out naturally, where the researcher is the main instrument in collecting rich and meaningful data. This research is oriented towards extracting meaning from the experiences or perspectives of informants, thus producing a comprehensive narrative description of a particular phenomenon¹⁷.

Other experts added that this qualitative descriptive method is very flexible because it allows researchers to adjust research questions or approaches based on findings in the field. The advantage of the descriptive qualitative method is its ability to provide a holistic picture of complex phenomena, such as human

¹⁵ Tara Elimar et al., "Strategi Promosi Penerimaan Mahasiswa Baru Di Lingkungan Perguruan Tinggi Keagamaan Islam Negeri," *Leader: Jurnal Manajemen Pendidikan Islam* 2, no. 1 (2024): 176–185.

¹⁶ Emma Christensen and Lars Thøger Christensen, "The Saying and the Doing: When Communication Is Strategic," in *Research Handbook on Strategic Communication*, ed. Jesper Falkheimer and Mats Heide (Edward Elgar Publishing, 2022).

¹⁷ Lexy J. Moleong, *Metode Penelitian Kualitatif* (Bandung: PT. Remaja Rosdakarya, 2017).



behavior, social interactions, or cultural practices. This research not only reveals facts but also explores the context and meaning behind the phenomenon¹⁸.

To understand the branding strategy used by State Islamic Religious Colleges (PTKIN) in attracting prospective new students, which is the focus of this study, the researcher describes branding elements in the scope of brand design, the effectiveness of communication strategies in the scope of supporting facilities and equipment, and perceptions in the scope of actors related to branding. The researcher analyzed the branding strategy used by the PTKIN Committee for the 2021-2024 period through observation and documentation techniques. The researcher also conducted unstructured interviews with actors involved in the branding process to complement the data.

The data obtained during the data collection process was analyzed inductively to identify main patterns and themes. The data presentation process in this study was carried out through three main stages¹⁹, they are:

1. Data Reduction: Filtering and selecting data relevant to the research focus.
2. Data Presentation: Organizing data into narrative form to facilitate interpretation.
3. Drawing Conclusions: Identifying significant relationships, patterns, or meanings from the data that has been analyzed.

Results and Discussion

The Admission of New Students of State Islamic Religious Colleges (PMB PTKIN), which is carried out periodically every year, is national, which means it involves all PTKIN throughout Indonesia. Therefore, a large-scale committee and an organized structure are needed to ensure the implementation runs smoothly. The Ministry of Religious Affairs selects the national committee from one of the

¹⁸ Greg Guest, Emily E. Namey, and Marilyn L. Mitchell, *Collecting Qualitative Data: A Field Manual for Applied Research* (California, CA: Sage Publications, Inc., 2013), https://books.google.nl/books?hl=en&lr=&id=--3rmWYKtloC&oi=fnd&pg=PP1&ots=FZVig8pmW-&sig=rtVextYoTh4uMaPrJPh5Xdsjqho&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q&f=false.

¹⁹ Matthew B. Miles, Michael A. Huberman, and Johnny Saldana, *Qualitative Data Analysis: A Method Sourcebook*, ed. Helen Salmon, *Arizona State University*, 3rd ed. (Arizona: SAGE Publications, Inc., 2014), http://scioteca.caf.com/bitstream/handle/123456789/1091/RED2017-Eng-8ene.pdf?sequence=12&isAllowed=y%0Ahttp://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.regsciurbeco.2008.06.005%0Ahttps://www.researchgate.net/publication/305320484_SISTEM_PEMBETUNGAN_TERPUSAT_STRATEGI_MELESTARI.



Universities through the recommendation of the PTKIN Rector Forum. The decision is made through a Decree (SK) signed by the Minister of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia for two consecutive years. The national committee consists of the Chairperson, Secretary, and Members. Additionally, the national committee consists of all the Rectors/Chairpersons of PTKIN throughout Indonesia and several representatives of Vice Rector I/Vice Chairperson I, who are in charge of academic affairs. In this case, the national committee's chairman has the main task of thoroughly organizing, supervising, and implementing the entire agenda of new student admission selection activities at PTKIN effectively and efficiently.

Besides, the national committee chairperson formed a working group/task force consisting of those from PTKIN representatives. They are lecturers and staff with diverse backgrounds and expertise, so they can contribute to formulating strategic steps while implementing activities for one year. This Pokja functions as a technical implementer who helps ensure the success of every aspect of selecting new student admissions. The division of tasks in this Pokja is based on the expertise of each member so that each field can be managed professionally. These task forces include:

1. **Question Preparation Taskforce:** Responsible for compiling and managing exam questions by considering the quality standards and relevance;
2. **Electronic Selection System Taskforce:** Develops and manages an electronic-based selection system to ensure the selection process is transparent and accountable;
3. **Information and Communication Technology (TIK) Task force:** Provides technical support and technology infrastructure during activities;
4. **Secretariat Taskforce:** Responsible for general administration and operational coordination of activities;
5. **Quality Assurance Taskforce:** Ensures that each stage of the selection process meets the established quality standards;
6. **Public Relations Taskforce:** Manages communication and branding strategies to support new student admissions promotions.

Among the taskforce, the Public Relations taskforce has a strategic role in building the image of PMB PTKIN through a branding strategy and promotional strategy. This task force is authorized to design and decide on a branding concept that reflects the national identity of PTKIN. In addition, they are responsible for developing an effective promotional strategy so that information about PMB PTKIN can be appropriately conveyed to prospective students throughout Indonesia. With this strategy, the Public Relations taskforce ensures that PMB PTKIN's branding strategy will attract the Z Generation and strengthen PTKIN's positive image.



Strategy Branding

The aesthetic elements in the promotional media for new student admissions at PTKIN include logos, illustrations, typography, colors, and layouts. These components are used to strengthen brand identity. The use of these aesthetic elements started in 2020. However, that year, all promotional media published by PTKIN still used diverse aesthetic elements. Each PTKIN used different promotional media, depending on the creativity of its public relations officers.

The inconsistency of this element's usage for several years is understood for the application history of these elements. The fixed usage of the PMB PTKIN logo began in 2017. However, at that time, the branding concept for this admission was not officially confirmed by all of PTKIN. New student admissions' goals, vision, and mission have not been clearly integrated into the aesthetic elements used. The logo was initially intended to be more of a basic visual identity that functioned to differentiate student admissions at PTKIN from admissions at State Universities (PTN). There has been no systematic effort to create a strong brand using aesthetic elements consistently.

From 2017 to 2021, aesthetic elements were more often considered as decorations to beautify the appearance of promotional media (see Figure 1). The main focus of the national committee at that time was to drive socialization performed by the public relations team at each PTKIN. Therefore, it is unsurprising that each institution prioritized its local creativity in designing promotional media during that period, so the results were diverse.

From 2022 to 2024, the branding began to use the same aesthetic elements for students' admission. It is the impact of the committee's commitment to use a specific brand consistently. This change reflects a collective effort to strengthen the image of new student admissions at PTKIN through integrated aesthetic elements.





Figure 1 Branding of PMB PTKIN in 2021

The consistency of the aesthetic elements has changed significantly since UIN Walisongo Semarang hosted PMB PTKIN in 2022. It occurred because the committee realized the importance of building strong branding in creating a brand identity.

Aesthetic elements were no longer used merely as visual decorations but as strategic tools to effectively convey information to prospective PTKIN students. With this new approach, the committee utilizes aesthetic elements as a communication channel to attract attention, communicate clear messages, and create a deep impression in the audience's minds (see Figure 2).



Figure 2 Branding of PMB PTKIN in 2022

The approach is designed to create a unique, simple, and easy to understand by the target audience, namely prospective students and their parents. This approach includes the selection of colors, typography, layout, and illustrations that consistently reflect the character and values of PTKIN. These strategies aim to ensure that branding is able to give a professional, relevant, attractive, and contemporary impression. Abstract motifs are used as the main aesthetic element in the 2022 PMB PTKIN branding, presenting a modern and classy visual character. Vector graphic patterns are chosen to create a clean, organized, and relevant impression with current design trends. The use of these abstract elements not only provides an aesthetic touch but is also able to convey a flexible visual message that is easily accepted by various audiences.



In addition, great attention is paid to the selection of colors to strengthen the visual identity. In abstract graphic elements, green is used to give a bold impression while symbolizing growth, sustainability, and dynamism. This color is combined with a light yellow background, which gives a bright, energetic, and refreshing touch. The combination of green and yellow creates a harmonious contrast, making the branding design look more attractive and prominent.

In that year, the branding of PMB PTKIN 2022 was also equipped with the jargon "It's My Dream" as a strong *call to action* to support the brand identity. This jargon was chosen because, at that time, it was very familiar among young people, especially because of the popularity of the "*Layangan Putus*" series starring veteran actors Reza Rahadian and Putri Marino, successfully introducing the phrase as part of its iconic dialogue. By including this jargon, branding is not only emotionally relevant to young audiences but can also take advantage of the momentum of pop culture trends to strengthen its appeal.

With this approach, the branding of PMB PTKIN 2022 looks modern and has high aesthetic value. Its visual and verbal elements are carefully designed to convey a strong, inspiring, and memorable message to the audience. This branding successfully represents the spirit of innovation and big dreams carried by the institution while being part of a relevant cultural conversation of its time.

In the following year, 2023, the branding concept applied in PMB PTKIN was designed by considering the main target audience: Z Generation. As a generation that grew up in the digital era, Z Generation has unique characteristics, such as a tendency towards attractive visuals, creative designs, and short but meaningful messages. Therefore, the aesthetic elements and branding strategies of PMB PTKIN are adjusted to the tastes and needs of this segment.

PMB PTKIN adopts a dynamic, colorful, and modern visual approach to attract the Z Generation. The graphic design emphasizes interactive, innovative, and easily recognizable elements—for example, the selection of bright colors, contemporary typography, and a simple but functional layout. The content delivered is also designed to be relevant and easy to understand by this generation through visual narratives, unique illustrations, and inspiring messages.



Figure 3 Branding of PMB PTKIN in 2023

In 2023, the branding concept changed significantly to adapt to the evolving visual and cultural trends. The aesthetic elements used were inspired by the simplification of the shape of a bee, which was combined to form a hexagonal pattern resembling a honeycomb, a place to store honey. This hexagonal shape has aesthetic value and symbolizes strength, harmony, and collaboration—values relevant to the message the branding wants to convey (see Figure 3).

Uniquely, the shape resembling a bee is also inspired by the *saranghaeyo* hand gesture, which is popular among Koreans. This inspiration emerged as part of a global phenomenon where K-pop culture and Korean dramas have a significant influence, especially among the Z Generation. The popularity of Korean culture makes this element very emotionally and contextually relevant, making it readily accepted by the young audience, which is the main target.

In the same year, the slogan "Make It Happen" was introduced as a continuation of the previous slogan, which focused on dreams and aspirations. When the previous branding was more oriented towards building dreams, this new slogan encouraged the audience to dare to realize those dreams. This short but powerful sentence provides motivation and a firm call to action, in line with the progressive and optimistic values carried by the brand. With an approach that combines unique conceptual visual elements and emotionally relevant jargon, the 2023 branding has created a strong, modern, and youth-friendly identity. This transformation shows how a brand can adapt to changing cultures and global trends to stay relevant and attract the attention of its audience.

Z Generation is known as a generation that values diversity, inclusivity, and sustainability. Therefore, the branding concept of PMB PTKIN is to promote the



institution and to convey positive values that align with PTKIN's mission, such as religious tolerance, respect for cultural diversity, and a commitment to producing a young generation with integrity. With this approach, PMB PTKIN is expected to be able to compete with other State Universities (PTN). The branding concept designed according to the tastes of the Z Generation not only attracts the audience's attention but also creates a strong brand identity to build the image of PTKIN as the primary option for prospective students. Tolerance of cultural diversity is one of the main principles in determining branding for PMB PTKIN. As an institution under the Ministry of Religious Affairs, PTKIN has a vision and mission to promote the values of religious tolerance and cultural diversity, which are an inseparable part of the identity of the Indonesian nation.

The aesthetic elements used in PMB PTKIN branding are designed to reflect the richness of culture rooted in various local traditions in Indonesia. The colors, typography, illustrations, and layouts chosen are for visual aesthetics and to convey a message of harmony and respect for differences. These elements provide a distinctive touch that combines Islamic values with local wisdom, creating an inclusive and relevant visual identity for a diverse audience.

The cultural values of the archipelago began to be included in branding elements when the Raden Fatah State Islamic University (UIN Raden Fatah) Palembang was appointed as the Head of PMB PTKIN in 2024. With a strong regional cultural background, this year's branding was inspired to raise the Palembang *songket* motif as the primary aesthetic element in branding. Songket, as one of Indonesia's cultural fabrics besides batik, is a symbol of local genius that reflects the creativity of the Palembang people in preserving and introducing regional culture. The selection of this motif also aims to strengthen the sense of pride in cultural heritage, especially for the Z Generation (see Figure 4).



Figure 4 Branding of PMB PTKIN in 2024



To make the *songket* motif more relevant and attractive to the younger generation, the committees of PMB PTKIN used a pixel art style inspired by visuals in video games. The idea of collaborating between traditional motifs and pixel art was raised from Z Generation's favorite digital game activities, which at that time was an inseparable part of their lifestyle. This approach aligns traditional elements with modern trends, making branding culturally meaningful and visually relevant to the target audience. As a result, the theme of PMB PTKIN 2024 carries the concept of a game with pixel art-based visual elements, presenting a unique and beautiful visual identity.

The slogan used that year was "Start to be Smart," proposed by Prof. Dr. Muhammad Ali Ramdhani, S.TP., M.T., who then served as Director General of the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia. This slogan encouraged the younger generation to start their journey towards intelligence, both intellectually and emotionally. This message is very relevant to the spirit of innovation and learning carried out by PTKIN.

In terms of color, the 2024 branding also underwent significant changes. Salem was chosen as the primary color because it was considered neutral amidst the heated political situation due to the political party contestation and the presidential and vice presidential elections that year. Salem, between the orange and pink color palettes, not only gives a friendly and warm impression but also ensures that the branding remains independent and does not side with the typical colors of any political party.

By combining the values of the archipelago culture, modern visual style, and emotionally relevant messages, the branding of PMB PTKIN 2024 has created an inclusive and contextual identity. This approach reflects how traditional values can be aligned with contemporary trends to create effective and meaningful branding.

The approach taken through this branding strategy aims to show that PTKIN is a space open to all groups, regardless of ethnicity, culture, or religion. The values of religious tolerance that are in line with the vision of the Ministry of Religion are combined in every aesthetic element to strengthen the message that PTKIN is a place to learn and grow in an atmosphere of harmony and mutual respect.

By using cultural diversity as inspiration, the aesthetic elements in PMB PTKIN branding function as decoration and as a communication medium that emphasizes PTKIN's commitment to fostering tolerance, respecting differences, and building a young generation with broad and inclusive insights.

By combining consistent aesthetic elements, values of cultural diversity and religious tolerance, and an approach tailored to the characteristics of Generation Z, PMB PTKIN seeks to create strong and relevant branding. This strategy emphasizes



PTKIN's identity as an inclusive and progressive educational institution and provides competitiveness that can attract prospective students amidst competition with other State Universities. With a commitment to continue to innovate and uphold noble values, PMB PTKIN is expected to be a gateway for the young generation of Indonesia to achieve quality education in an atmosphere full of harmony and diversity.

Conclusion

After analyzing the branding strategy of PMB PTKIN since 2021-2024 using social media, it can be concluded that PMB PTKIN branding has used a conceptual brand design every year. The branding strategy that has been carried out has also been supported by the facilities owned by the committee. The facilities are physical facilities and creative ideas from the committee every year. The committee is an essential factor behind the PMB PTKIN branding strategy. This is in line with previous research conducted by Nguyen et al. that to carry out branding, especially in Higher Education, not only tangible physical facilities are needed, but intangible facilities in the form of creative ideas, for example, are significant needs.

Further research is expected to conduct a more in-depth investigation into the impact of PMB PTKIN branding by presenting quantitative data to support the qualitative data presented in this study. A more in-depth investigation can also be carried out with a comparative analysis between PTKIN and PTN or other types of Higher Education so that the results obtained can mutually strengthen Higher Education in Indonesia.



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