

## Research Article

# City Font Design in Destinations Branding

Yon Ade Lose Hermanto

Faculty of Letters, Universitas Negeri Malang

**ORCID**Yon Ade Lose Hermanto: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0583-6571>**Abstract.**

Letter design plays a crucial role in establishing city branding. This letter is a representation of the appearance and nature of the city. The objective of this research is to find out how to design letters from branding in several cities worldwide. This research is vital and timely, as effective city branding relies on visual design elements, including typography. This study aims to determine the number of cities that apply branding using unique letter shapes. Additionally, it also aims to see the application of city-specific fonts in branding and determine their effect on the visual strength of branding. The study employs the Contextual Design method, using the Requirements and solutions to define and Validate Concepts and Processes. The results of this study are the letter designs used in city branding in several places in the world. These findings serve as valuable references for designers and offer insights into societal perceptions.

Corresponding Author: Yon Ade  
Lose Hermanto; email:  
[Yonade.fs@um.ac.id](mailto:Yonade.fs@um.ac.id)

**Published:** 9 May 2024

**Keywords:** font design, city branding, city font

Publishing services provided by  
Knowledge E

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Selection and Peer-review under the responsibility of the ICADECS Conference Committee.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

As our world becomes increasingly globalized, cities are vying for attention and relevance in the eyes of potential tourists, investors, and their inhabitants [1]. It has given birth to a crucial and dynamic field, destination branding. Within the broader sphere of destination branding, a unique aspect that has emerged as a powerful tool is city fonts.

City fonts are not merely a collection of characters in a particular typeface [2], [3]. They are the visual and verbal expression of a city's spirit and character, encapsulating its history, culture, and essence in a subtle and strikingly evident way. City fonts provide a distinctive typographic identity that sets one city apart. They can be seen in city logos, official documents, street signs, public transportation, and tourism marketing materials, to name a few.

These fonts often combine aspects of past, present, and future aspirations, harmonizing them into a typographic representation that resonates with residents and outsiders. Whether it is the Gothic architectural legacy reflected in Berlin's city font or the modernity

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of Dubai encapsulated in its sleek typography [4], city fonts add a layer of depth to the narrative of a city, making it more relatable and distinctive.

However, creating a city font is not a task to be taken lightly. It requires a deep understanding of the city's history, culture, and ambitions and a keen sense of aesthetics and typography. Furthermore, it should be functional, scalable, and adaptable to various formats and media.

The effectiveness of a city font in destination branding lies in its ability to communicate a city's unique identity consistently across different platforms [5]. Whether used in digital campaigns, print advertising, or physical spaces such as airports and landmarks, the city font must capture the essence of the destination memorably and attractively.

City fonts are much more than typography [6]. They are silent ambassadors, narrating the story of a city in an artful, coherent, and visually captivating way. In destination branding, they are an invaluable tool, enabling cities to express their unique identities and allure their audiences in a singularly artistic manner.

## 2. METHOD

The phenomenological method is a qualitative research approach rooted in philosophy, which aims to understand the human experience from the perspective of those who live it [7], [8]. It involves capturing detailed descriptions of phenomena as individuals perceive them without imposing prior assumptions or trying to quantify the data.

The phenomenological method can be crucial in city branding or font research. City branding is an aspect of place branding that aims to shape the image or identity of a city to make it more attractive to tourists, residents, investors, and others. City font, meanwhile, refers to the typography or lettering style used in city branding, which can significantly influence the perception and identity of a city.

Here is how the phenomenological method can be employed:

1. **Bracketing:** In city branding or city font research, the researcher would start by setting aside their own experiences or preconceived notions about the city or its branding. It ensures that their understanding is based on the participants' experiences, not their biases.
2. **Data Collection:** The researcher might then conduct interviews or focus groups with various stakeholders (such as residents, tourists, city officials, and business owners). They might be asked to describe their experiences and perceptions of

the city and its branding or to reflect on how the city font affects their perception of the city's identity.

3. Analysis: The researcher would then analyze the data to identify key themes or “essences” in the participants' experiences. For example, they might discover that a particular city font evokes feelings of nostalgia or that a city's branding strategy is seen as effective or ineffective for particular reasons.
4. Description: Finally, the researcher would write a detailed description of the findings to capture the essence of the participants' experiences and perceptions of the city branding or font. This description can provide valuable insights for city officials or designers who want to understand how their branding strategies are perceived and experienced.

The phenomenological method provides a powerful tool for city branding or city font research. It offers an in-depth understanding of how branding strategies are perceived and experienced by different stakeholders, which can be instrumental in developing more effective and resonant branding strategies.

### 3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

City branding, also known as place branding, is a common practice worldwide and is used by large and small cities to attract tourists, businesses, and residents. It involves creating a unique and memorable identity for a city and promoting it through various forms of visual communication media. Here are some examples of cities that have effectively employed city branding:

**New York City, USA:** One of the most iconic examples of city branding is the “I Love New York” (I♥NY) campaign. This logo, designed by Milton Glaser in 1977, has become a globally recognized symbol for New York City. The simple yet robust design is used across various forms of media, including t-shirts, mugs, posters, digital advertisements, and more. The campaign has helped promote New York City as a vibrant, dynamic destination for tourists worldwide.

**Amsterdam, Netherlands:** Amsterdam's city branding strategy included the development of the “I Amsterdam” slogan, which quickly became popular globally. These large, red, and white letters are strategically placed in various parts of the city, physically embodying the brand. They are popular tourist photo spots, helping promote the city on social media and other digital platforms.

Melbourne, Australia: Melbourne underwent a rebranding process in 2009 that led to the creation a dynamic and flexible logo representing a diverse and vibrant city. The logo is adaptable, with various colors and patterns that can be changed to suit different applications. This branding is applied to city signage, promotional materials, digital media, and other visual communications to promote Melbourne as a creative and exciting city.

Copenhagen, Denmark: Copenhagen's branding strategy promotes the city as a hub for sustainability and quality of life. The visual representation includes a simple, clean, contemporary design that mirrors the city's commitment to modern, sustainable living. The brand is applied across various platforms, from digital media to physical signage.

Singapore: The "Passion Made Possible" campaign is a joint branding initiative by the Singapore Tourism and Economic Development Board. This campaign is aimed at marketing Singapore internationally for tourism and business. The visual media adopted in this campaign are vibrant, dynamic, and diverse, showcasing various aspects of Singaporean life and culture.

In conclusion, cities worldwide have harnessed the power of branding and visual communication to create unique identities and position themselves favorably in the eyes of the world. The visual elements – be they logos, color schemes, typography, or icons – play a crucial role in these branding strategies, helping to convey the city's identity and values in a visually compelling way.

#### *BENEFIT OF CITY BRANDING*

City branding provides a number of benefits to local governments and communities. Here are some of the main benefits:

##### **For the Government:**

1. Revenue from Tourism: Successful branding can increase the number of tourists coming, which means increased revenue from the tourism sector, such as hotels, restaurants, and attractions.
2. Investment: Strong branding can attract investors, which can bring capital and new jobs to the city.
3. Image Enhancement: Successful city branding can improve a city's image in the eyes of the world, making it seen as more advanced, innovative, or attractive.
4. Diplomacy Tool: A city with a strong brand can strengthen its negotiating position and collaboration with other cities or international entities.

5. **Drives Infrastructure Development:** With increased interest in visiting or investing in the city, the government may feel the need to improve or update its infrastructure.

#### **For Local Communities:**

1. **Satisfaction and Confidence:** A successful city branding can make its citizens feel proud and have greater confidence in where they live.
2. **Job Opportunities:** Increased tourism and investment means more job opportunities for local people.
3. **Infrastructure Development:** As mentioned above, the government may update infrastructure, which can improve the quality of life for the community.
4. **Education and Culture:** With increased attention on the city, there may be more initiatives to promote education and local culture.
5. **Cultural Interaction:** An increase in the number of tourists and investors can introduce local people to new cultures and ideas.
6. **Increase Property Values:** As the city's image improves, property values may increase, which can benefit property owners.
7. **Recognition and Awards:** Successful city branding can lead to the city gaining recognition and awards, both on a national and international level.
8. In the long run, successful city branding not only improves the city's image but also the quality of life of local people and the city's economic performance.

## **4. CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS**

City branding is creating and communicating a city's unique identity to attract attention from locals, tourists, and investors. The objectives of city branding include:

**Increase Tourism:** One of the main goals of city branding is to attract more tourists. With a strong brand, a city can become a more prominent tourist destination among many other destination options.

**Attracting Investment:** City branding can help attract investors and businesses. A positive city brand can show that the city is business-friendly, has good infrastructure, and supports growth.

**Increase Citizen Satisfaction:** By developing a positive city identity and promoting it well, residents can feel more proud of where they live.

**Differentiation:** With many cities worldwide competing for attention, city branding can help cities differentiate themselves from other cities with unique characteristics or features.

**Communicating Change:** If a city has undergone a significant transformation or change, city branding can be a tool to communicate that change to a broad audience.

**Building Relationships:** Effective city branding can help build stronger relationships between a city and its citizens, as well as with other cities, organizations, or countries.

**Stimulating Economic Development:** A strong city brand can catalyze economic growth by attracting more tourists, investment, and talent.

Overall, city branding aims to create a positive and attractive image of a city, ultimately providing economic, social, and cultural benefits to the city.

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