

# Assessing Destination Brand Image Chinatown in Term of Semarang City Branding Implementation

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## Assessing Destination Brand Image Chinatown in Term of Semarang City Branding Implementation

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**Abstract.** The brand image in city branding context is very important for visitors to remember the tourism destination. The destination brand image can identify by five elements of city image, namely path, edge, node, district, and landmark. Semarang Chinatown is one of the historical tourism sites to represent the Semarang's city branding as a "variety of culture" with Chinese cultures and interactions. The aim is to identify the Semarang's City Branding (variety of culture) through destination brand image in Chinatown. This research used qualitative method. First step analysis was to describe the image of Chinatown. The second step was to find the correlation between image of the Chinatown area and the Semarang city branding. Descriptive comparative technique was used to compare between the existing and the trend of Chinatown development with theory image of the city. The results of this study consisted of 5 elements. First, path with character toponym of alley based on its history and the special function as trading area, namely the *Gang Baru* as traditional market path and *Gang Warung* as semicircular market path. Second, edge that shown by the form of Kali Semarang and *Gang Beteng* which has a history of Chinatown development as centre trade zone in Semarang at the past until now. Third, node that can be seen from every pagoda located at Chinatown junction (skewers location) because of the *fengshui* that is embraced by Chinatown communities and it is believed that the location of pagoda can protect against evil and crime. Last, districts and landmarks that represented by the *Semawis* Market and pagoda as the Confucian temple. As a conclusion, Semarang Chinatown's destination brand image as a historical and cultural tourism area of China is memorable and has a strong character to describe Semarang's city branding "Variety of culture".

### INTRODUCTION

City branding is considered as a concept that can be used as a way of promoting the city. Understanding the city branding itself from its name, symbol, logo, word, or picture can provide the whole pictures of the city and destination discoveries [1]. Associated with the tourist destination, branding is a concept to promote and to market tourist attractions then can attract the visitors [2]. Destination brand image is referred to a description and found in a city that can be remembered by visitors because it has certain uniqueness with attributes such as customs or cultural attributes [3]. Image is a clearly physically bound that able to see the role of a regional form function and environment that is formed. In viewing the image (image), it can be seen from the five elements containing of path, edges, nodes, districts and landmarks [4]. Likewise, the city branding of Semarang "variety of culture" is formed by branding related to cultural and historical tourism, such as Javanese, Arabic and Chinese culture. Based on city branding tagline, Chinese culture is one of cultural variations in Semarang. Chinatown has been designated as one of Semarang City's cultural heritage tours through the Semarang's Spatial Plan in 2011-2031. The aim of this study is to identify the implementation of Semarang's city branding in Chinatown through destination brand image that was

identified from five elements image. Therefore, the research question can be formulated as "how is destination brand image of Chinatown in the context of the Semarang's city branding as a unique Chinese cultural and historical tourism?".

## DESTINATION BRAND IMAGE AS CITY BRANDING ELEMENT

City branding involves promotional activities of the uniqueness of a city that can be enjoyed by the tourist [2]. City branding is the core of a city's marketing activities in the marketing triangle. The marketing triangle plays a role in the success of tourism activities because it can describe the relationship between marketing targets, products, promotions, and distribution [5]. City branding in tourism context related to brand equity [6]. Brand equity is a concept to manage and make competitiveness of a city branding. The city branding is preferred, unique, and memorable for a long time [7]. There are five aspects to make brand equity in tourist destination areas [8]. One of them is Destination Brand Image (DBI) that is an image defined as the perception of prospective visitors about a tourism destination in their memory because of the certain uniqueness [3]. Destination Brand Image is considered to be an important component to forming city branding model [9]. Destination Brand Image becomes popular, then prospective visitors will lead to positive expectations and benefits for tourism activities in tourism destination such quality, reliability and trust [10]. One of the ways to build strong brand of city branding is making brand identity [11].



FIGURE 1. Marketing Triangle (Weymouth dan Gall, 2007)

DBI closely related to image carrier and usually identified from the built environment, events, and activities that are unique in a city [12]. It's can be identified from five elements to describe the uniqueness of the city. The five elements made up the depiction the uniqueness of the City [4], such as:

- Path is a plot where observers move along objects such as roads, pedestrian paths, transit lines, canals, railroads, etc. It connects several environment elements that connected to each other. The factors to identified paths, such as:
  - *Spatial characteristics*; it can strengthen the path image such as very wide and very narrow.
  - *Activities characteristics*; activities along the path which unique and attracts the observers attention.
  - *Special function path*, such as culinary tourism, festivals, and etc that can show a strong identity to become the main route of the region.
  - *Facade characteristics*, it can make path identity.
  - *Connected to crucial functions of the city*, for example CBD, central government, commercial centre, and etc.
- Edge is linear. Its function is as a barrier between two different types of areas on the same side. Arterial roads, railroads, and waterfront is a clear character of edge. Characteristic such as spatial, building, and activities that clarify the boundaries of two types of areas. An important principle of an edge must be continuous, clear, and visible to the observer. Moreover, an edge must be able to unite two areas with different types without isolating (closing the connection).
- Nodes are focus on entry point of observation, either in form of road intersections, central points, or a concentration point characteristics of a particular area. Even though nodes are identical to points, they can in form of large squares, linear shapes, or in the form of a district on a larger scale. Nodes can be describe as:
  - *Junction (intersection)*, transit point transportation system. Intersection point can become a place for gathering the character image of an area formation.
  - *Railway station*, an important point for a city.
  - *Concentration area of core city*, it is thematic such core point of urban activities not only national but also international scale.

- District defined as the area with a specific characteristic that distinguish with other areas and memorable by most people. The dissimilarity of certain area and outside can be signed by a physical character, a specific functional area, a historical background such a unique character. The physical characteristics that are thematic and continuity, such as texture, space, shape, detail, symbols, type of building, use, activity, population, level of maintenance and topography.
- Landmark is a point that visually interesting for people from outside the area, identity and guidance. such as monuments, mountains, and buildings. The principles of character form landmark are clear forms, contrast with the background of the place, and are prominent spatial locations. Creating spatial characters of landmark can be conducted in several ways. First, by making the landmark is clearly visible from various positions of view. Second, by displaying other landmarks, the elements contrast with the elements, namely the set-back shape and height of the landmark. Third, it is by installing landmarks in different positions. Fourth, by making the serial sequence of the landmark that it becomes an observer's guide to the promotion of the city.

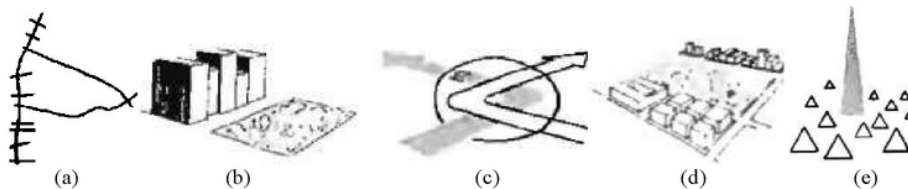


FIGURE 2. 5 Element Of City Image i.e. (a) path (b) edge (c) node (d) district and (e) landmark (Lynch, 1960)

## RESEARCH METHOD

This research employed qualitative method to explain image of the Chinatown area and its correlation to Semarang city branding "variety of culture". Chinatown area is one of the heritage areas in Semarang which is inhabited by Chinese people and the Chinese culture and buildings still found until now. This research conducted two steps; the first step analysis was to describe the image of Chinatown area by using the descriptive qualitative method. Likewise, the trend of Chinatown development had also described qualitatively. The second step was to find the correlation between image of the Chinatown area and the Semarang city branding. Descriptive comparative technique was used to compare between the existing and the trend of Chinatown development with theory image of the city.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### Chinatown's Destination Brand Image through Path

#### *Spatial Characteristics*

The Spatial characteristic is very much influenced by Fengshui. Fengshui is believed to create a pattern of settlements and pagoda position. It is reflected on a relationship between pagoda and a skewer location that directly faced the street and causes it grows organically and changed into grid pattern.

#### *Activity Characteristics*

The toponym of alleys in Semarang Chinatown cannot be separated from its economic activities development, there are:

- *Beteng Alley*, a fortress as a security path from VOC attack.

- *Pinggir Alley*, near of Semarang river which is the boundary of Chinatown area and formerly referred to as Wetan Chinatown (East Chinatown/ Tang-kee).
- *Warung Alley*, there are many stalls built by the Confucian and local community in Chinatown and is called Chinatown Lor (North Chinatown/ A-long-kee).
- *Wot Gandul Alley*, it is an area with identity of Chinatown, Tjap Kauw King. The name of this road is based on the number of houses, which are 19 houses (the stamp is ten, and you are nine).
- *Lombok Alley*, it is an area that was once a Lombok garden (Javanese called from chili).
- *Sebandaran Alley*, based on the word "syahbandar" (sailor-red). It can be identified from two pagodas that worship the Goddess of the Sea, which is believed to provide protection for sailors who travel by ship. It shows that there is an important point for shipping activities in the past.

#### *Special function path*

In Semarang Chinatown, these following alleys have special function characteristics:

- *Warung Alley*, as a place for *Waroeng Semawis* (Semawis market) which is the Chinese culinary tourism place in Semarang. There are various foods and beverage snacks along the alley. There is also the *Semawis Imlek* Market to commemorate the Chinese New Year.
- *Baru Alley*, it is a route for the traditional market activities, selling traditional Chinese food, and Chinese ritual ceremonies.
- *Pinggir Alley*, it is the place where pagoda is mostly location in Chinatown, such as Tek Hay Bio, Tong Pek Bio and Ling Hok Bio.

#### *Facade Characteristic*

In Semarang, Chinatown facade characteristics are formed by Chinese architecture and culture [13], such as:

- *Traditional Chinese architecture*, Pagoda buildings are the examples of the traditional Chinese architecture with saddle roof, which is like a bulb at its peak. The doors and windows made from wood and decorated with iron nail ornaments.
- *Chinese-European architecture*, it can be seen in commercial house typology with one door (the leaves are divided into two, up and down), each of which can be divided individually. A wide window, divided in two horizontally as well and each is opened by rejecting it up and down.
- *Chinese-Local Architecture*, it is found in residential buildings that creativity of acculturation in Chinese and local cultures. It has a curved roof but the facade is affected by local influence manifested in panel openings in the form of panel doors
- *Color of building*, Chinese culture is laden with symbols manifested in physical and non-physical forms and special colors. The color in pagoda building has an attraction as an element of beauty. The color such as red color for happiness, green color for peace and eternity, white color for peace and sometimes for sorrow, golden color for the symbol of the kingdom, strength and wealth.
- *Residential buildings*, each clan usually lives in the same village. The Chinese residential housing pattern is not only considered as a residence by individual of family members but also is regarded as a symbol of unity and social status for large families. This causes the character of the Chinatown house to be tight and solid, and tends to be vertical upwards.

#### *Connected To Crucial Functions of the City*

The commercial activities of Semarang Chinatown are related to the existence of *Johar* Market. It is related to existence of a trade route through the Semarang River that connects the two areas in the past. In the past Chinatown areas were also connected with the crucial functions of the old city as the center of government.



FIGURE 3. Memorable Path In The Chinatown Area To Imaging "Variety Of Culture" In Semarang

## Chinatown's Destination Brand Image through Edge

### *Administrative Limits Area*

Based on the map of Chinatown, Semarang. The northern corner is Lombok Alley, eastern corner is Semarang River, south corner is Semarang River and Sebandaran Alley and west corner is Beteng Alley.

### *History of Development Area*

The history of Chinatown Semarang is inseparable from Semarang trading activity in the past, there are:

- *Beteng alley*, it is located on western part that is emerged with Chinese rebellion in Simongan and arrival of Chinese citizens from Batavia who were not pro-VOCs. They are isolated and lived in a fortress building. Until now the former fortress had become boundary of area and there was no development of outside the former fortress area.
- *Semarang River*, it is south and east corner that Chinese people were isolated and moved from *Gedong Batu* area, then separated by a VOC area. This aims to supervise and reduce the movement of Chinese society to fight VOC. Semarang river at past was a transportation route as a trading artery in Semarang City.

### *Visual Path Character*

Path form of alleys with Chinese architecture visual buildings. This path has a visual character in the form of typical Chinese architecture such as buildings, ornaments, trading activities, and existence of pagoda along *Pinggir Alley*.



FIGURE 4. Memorable Edge In The Chinatown Area for Imaging "Variety Of Culture" In Semarang

## Chinatown's Destination Brand Image through Nodes

### *Nodes in Form of Chinatown Entry Points*

Nodes are entry points of Chinatown area and are marked by the presence of arches and monuments with distinctive ornaments, architecture, and colors showing identity as a Chinatown area.

### *Nodes in Form of T-Junction (Pagoda Location)*

There is pagoda's location on almost every junction. Based on Fengshui, a pagoda's location of the skewer point, because it can protect the Chinese people residence from disturbance of a negative thing or crime and shows typical Chinese culture. There are 11 pagodas in Semarang Chinatown which are scattered in *Pinggir Alley*, *Wot Gandul Alley*, *Lombok Alley*, *Cilik Alley* and *Sebandaran Alley*.

### *Nodes in Form of Chinese Handycraft Place*

Chinese painting and calligraphy "Tan Eng Tiong" are found in *Warung Alley*, Paper Craft "Ong Bing Hok" is found in *Cilik Alley*, Bong Pay Stone is found in *Gambiran Alley*, *Potehi Puppet* is found in *Petudungan Street* and *Keray* is found in *Sebandaran Alley*.



FIGURE 5. Memorable Nodes In The Chinatown Area To Imaging "Variety Of Culture" In Semarang

### Chinatown's Destination Brand Image through Districts

Chinatown area is famous as the commercial district area since colonial age until now. The existence of *Gang Baru* market and *Semawis* market in are the two main commercial activities of Chinatown. First, *Gang Baru* market is a traditional market located between *Wot Gandul* Street and *Gang Baru* Street. There are various goods traded in the market such as daily needs, traditional food, traditional Chinese medicine, and Chinese ceremonial equipment. The last day of Chinese calendar, this market opened full day and many people bought several equipment to celebrate the Chinese New Year; it is called as *Ji Kao Mee* (the night of 29<sup>th</sup>). Second, *Semawis* market that is initiated by *Komunitas Chinatown Semarang untuk Pariwisata (Kopi Semawis)* is held to celebrate the Chinese New Year. There are several goods traded such as Chinese's traditional foods, Semarang's traditional foods, and souvenirs. Moreover, some Chinese traditional performances held every Chinese New Year. Third, Chinatown area is well-known as a center of Chinese traditional medicine whose customers are not only from the Chinese community but also others. Besides, this area is also known as the jewelry trade center. Moreover, the existence of *Semawis* market as the central traditional food contributes significantly to the Semarang city branding achievement.



FIGURE 6. The Semawis market gate (left) and its situation (right)

### Chinatown's Destination Brand Image through Landmark

The main identity of Chinatown area is the existence of pagodas. Some people call Chinatown as 1001 pagodas area. This pagoda spread out over the area and still used as the worship place for Confucian. At this moment, these pagodas do not only used as a place to pray but also a place to visit (tourism) to get know the Chinese culture. Entering the pagoda area, the visitor will smell the incense; see many lampions; the domination of red and green colour in the area. These are the unique characteristics and as a symbol that we are entering the Chinatown area, particularly found surround the pagodas. There are 11 pagodas in Chinatown, which each pagoda has the unique characteristics; the symbol and the worshiped God, such as:

- *Tay Kak Sie* pagoda. The main pagoda of all pagodas in Chinatown because has best ornament and has many worshiped God. Loceted in lombok alley. Having a wider yard that even used to practice *Barongsai* (Chinese traditional performance) and opening ceremony for *Ji Kao Mee*. Moreover, this pagoda has also provided food court that sell Chinese and Semarang traditional food.
- *Siu Hok Bio* pagoda. It is the oldest pagodas in Chinatown that built in 1753. Located in *Wotgandul Timur* alley.
- *Tek Hay Bio* pagoda. It is considered as calm ocean pagoda and worship "local" God that is Kwe Lak Kwa.
- *See Ho Kiong* pagoda. It is used to worship the sword god, because sword was found surrounding the pagoda. Therefore, the sword will bring luck for people who pray.
- *Tong Pek Bio* pagoda. It is located in eastern part of Chinatown and considered as the east boundary for the Chinese settlement in colonial period. Therefore, this pagoda did not only as a place to pray but also as a place of guard.
- *Ling Hok Bio* pagoda
- *Hoo Hok Bio* pagoda
- *Hwie Wie Kong* pagoda
- *Tiong Gie Tong* pagoda
- *Tri Noto Buko Bawono* pagoda
- *Gerjen* pagoda



FIGURE 7. Tay Kak Sie pagoda (left) and See Ho Kiong pagoda (right)

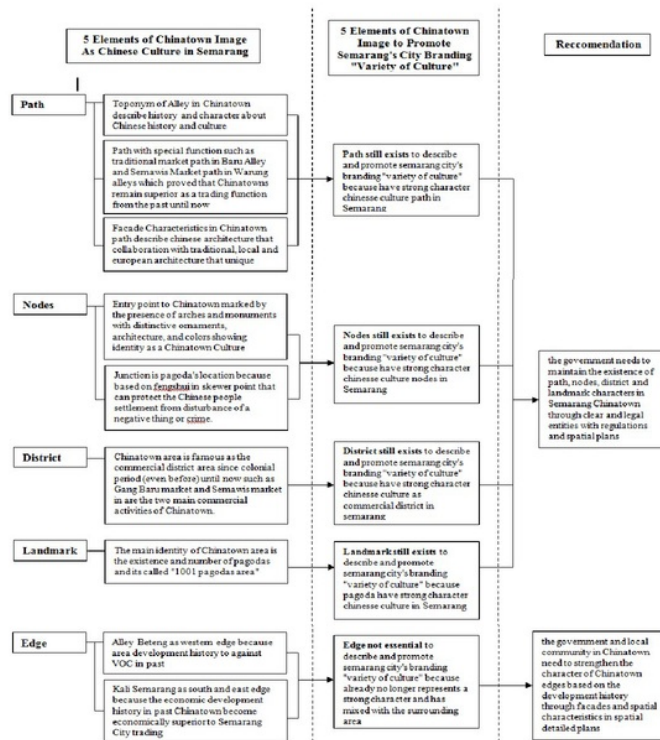


FIGURE 8. Five elements of Chinatown Image to Promote Semarang's City Branding

## CONCLUSION

Semarang Chinatown is one of the tourism areas of Chinese culture. By identifying destination brand image from five elements of the city image, Semarang Chinatown is able to represent a strong character as the city branding of Semarang, namely "variety of culture", there are:

- **Path**, the alleys in Chinatown area have strong characters through the toponym street. Toponym is based on alley's history then formed the character about Chinese history and culture. For example, toponym of *Beteng* alley with its history, there used to be a fort built as a form of security for Chinese people against VOC in the past. In addition, path with special functions also makes strong characters, such as the existence of traditional market path in *Baru Alley* and *Semawis Market* path in *Warung* alleys which proved that Chinatowns remain superior as a trading function from the past until now.
- **Edge**, such as from history of development, when Chinese community against the VOC colonial era. At that time, Chinatown became economically superior to trade to Semarang City by passing Semarang river as a transportation that had an important role. Now, the development of Chinatown not beyond the edge that was formed in the past.
- **Nodes**, such as location of the pagoda in a junction with Feng Shui in Chinatown where it's believed that if each junction with a "skewer" location is placed the pagoda can protect the surrounding settlements from evil forces and bad things. This strengthens Chinatown character with all Chinese culture.

- *District and Landmark*, such as existence of *Semawis* market indicates this district element can represent the Chinatown well. *Semawis* market and pagoda are memorable for people as the identity of Chinatown. However, the pros and cons of *Semawis* market's location and its aim which is still debatable seen as challenges that should be discussed by involving all of communities.

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