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# DESIGN AS A STRATEGIC ASSET IN VISUAL CITY BRANDING

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# Design as a Strategic Asset in Visual City Branding

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## Declaration of Originality

I hereby declare that this thesis is entirely my own work and that any sources of information have been fully cited. I understand this thesis has not been submitted in substantially the same form for the award of a higher degree elsewhere. To the best of my knowledge it does not contain any materials previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the text.

Seo Young Kim.....

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## Acknowledgements

The original research proposal for my PhD thesis was 'Local Museum's Strategic Design Management to Create Synergy for City Branding - Case Studies in London and Seoul'. The inspiration from the idea of the proposal was developed following the research experience about city branding with personal interest in and enthusiasm about museums.

The research process, involved reading a portion of the vast amount of literature available, undertaking interviews with leading professionals in Manchester and constructing the thematic structure. This academic exercise and personal determination during the study process were extremely valuable for my intellectual and personal development.

On reflection, perhaps the best gift I received from my PhD journey were the rewarding visits to the mysterious, enchanting and energetic city of Manchester. I gained a sense of Englishness from its distinctive and attractive architectural styles of the city. Seeing Manchester, it was easy to imagine the turbulence between the glory and the misery of the Industrial Revolution manifested in the creation of the city.

On reaching the completion of my PhD, I would like to express my deepest appreciation to my supervisors, Dr. Christopher Boyko and Dr. David Hands. They never stopped providing me with the confidence, counter perspectives and academic rationality to underpin my exciting PhD journey. I sincerely appreciate their gentleness, warmth and profound patience with all my ups and downs in completing the thesis.

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## Abstract

This thesis aims to investigate city branding via the design of tourism websites. The research scheme is shaped by the main themes of this research in city branding via tourism websites, cultural attractions and visual design. Specifically, this research attempts to identify city branding strategies using the visual impact of primary attractions and associated components via the representation of well-designed tourism websites.

In comparison to the approach driven by marketing or linguistics in the majority of existing literature and theories, this research positioned its academic character in visual design-led city branding. In developing the research, a primary research question on the subject was posited: How does the design context of the tourism websites enhance city branding? To specifically examine connected topics identifying answers to the question, two subsequent questions and five research propositions were formulated within the body of the thesis.

The research design, which provides substantial data in shaping a strong foundation, consisted of two types of research. One is a systematically approached web-based study of selected international city brands. The other is a series of expert interviews constituting field research in Manchester. Methodologically, qualitative research was selected with an inductive approach to generate a theoretical framework on the topic of culture-driven city branding. For specific research methods, a combination of in-depth interviews as field research and cross-analysis via internet research on tourism websites was utilised.

From a visual design perspective, the main findings of the research present central themes on city branding. First, design practice and its visual outcomes in cities characteristically represented the strategic design of both official and unofficial tourism websites. Second, a thematically designed visual context of tourism websites supports the enhancement of cultural city brand personality. Third, the reputation of museums and their design value act as an indispensable branding vehicle in creating a cultural city at the international level.

It is hoped that specific visual design topics generated in a potential agenda of cultural city branding constitute a knowledge contribution. Development of a conceptual framework to construe a distinctive brand vision can be extensively discussed for second-tier cities, such as post-industrial Manchester. Furthermore, it is to be hoped that this thesis will be of use to emerging cultural cities and their stakeholders in creating their own visible branding strategies through their tourism websites.

# Table of Contents

Declaration of Originality .....	3
Acknowledgements.....	4
Abstract.....	5
Table of Contents.....	6
List of Tables .....	16
List of Figures .....	17
Structure of Thesis .....	19
CHAPTER 1.0 Introduction.....	21
1.1 Introductory Remarks .....	22
1.2 Background to the Research.....	23
1.2.1 Key literature context .....	23
1.2.2 Evaluation of and gaps in the literatures.....	25
1.3 Motivation for this Research.....	26
1.3.1 Practice in design and branding.....	26
1.3.2 Training in interdisciplinary research.....	26
1.3.3 Experiencing cities and their design culture .....	27
1.4 The Focus of the Research .....	27
1.4.1 Research problem .....	27
1.4.2 Research aim.....	28
1.4.3 Research objectives .....	28
1.4.4 Design within the research aim .....	29
1.5 Research Framework .....	29
1.5.1 Research questions .....	29
1.5.2 Research propositions.....	29
1.5.3 Research methodology .....	30

1.6 Summary of the Chapters .....	30
1.7 Chapter Summary .....	32
CHAPTER 2.0 Literature Review .....	33
2.1 Introduction .....	34
2.2 The Scope and Area of Focus within City Branding Literature.....	37
2.3 The Idea of City Branding and Tourism Websites.....	37
2.3.1 City brands in global competition .....	37
2.3.2 Cultural city image .....	38
2.3.3 Tourism websites as a city image mediator.....	40
2.3.3.1 Visual culture in applied design .....	40
2.3.3.2 Visual communication via tourism websites .....	40
2.3.3.3 Identification of official tourism websites .....	41
2.3.3.4 A challenge from unofficial tourism websites .....	42
2.3.3.5 The research topics of tourism websites .....	42
2.4 Meanings in Cultural Cities and their Visual Images.....	43
2.4.1 Aspects of city image .....	46
2.4.2 City image as a component of visual identity.....	47
2.4.3 City identity .....	48
2.4.4 Brand image .....	49
2.4.5 The conceptual intention in visual design.....	51
2.4.6 Intentional message(s) of the designer .....	52
2.4.7 Creative expression.....	52
2.4.7.1 Visual arts.....	52
2.4.7.2 Creative writing.....	53
2.4.7.3 Connectivity to the research.....	54
2.5 Aligning Culture and Branding .....	54
2.5.1 Primary cultural attractions .....	55

2.5.2 Cultural mega-events.....	57
2.6 Museums as Visual Representative of Cultural Branding.....	58
2.6.1 World-class museums.....	59
2.6.2 Museum branding.....	60
2.6.3 Museum exhibitions as curation.....	61
2.6.3.1 Modern art museums.....	62
2.6.3.2 The paradigm shift in postmodernism.....	62
2.6.3.3 The impact of contemporary art on curation.....	63
2.7 Stakeholders: Cultural Cities into Visual Branding Practice.....	64
2.8 Chapter Findings.....	66
2.9 Evaluation.....	68
2.9.1 Identifying gaps in the literature.....	68
2.9.2 Research connectivity to the next chapters.....	68
2.9.3 Limitations and further study.....	69
2.10 Summary.....	69
CHAPTER 3.0 Research Methodology.....	72
3.1 Introduction.....	73
3.2 Research Strategy.....	73
3.3 Research Design.....	74
3.3.1 Research framework.....	74
3.3.1.1 Research questions.....	74
3.3.1.2 Research propositions.....	76
3.3.2 Views on interpretative meanings.....	77
3.3.3 Research approach.....	78
3.3.3.1 Qualitative research.....	78
3.3.3.2 Inductive approach.....	78

3.3.3.3 Types of research .....	79
3.3.3.4 Developing research methods .....	80
3.3.3.5 Structuring the research design .....	81
3.3.3.6 Connection between the pilot study and the primary research.....	83
3.3.3.7 Selecting analytic methods .....	84
3.4 Research Process.....	89
3.4.1 Rationale for city selection 01: a web-based study .....	89
3.4.2 Rationale for tourism websites selection .....	90
3.4.3 Data collection 01: a web-based study .....	91
3.4.4 Data analysis 01: a web-based study .....	93
3.4.5 Types of analysis 01: a web-based study .....	94
3.4.5.1 Analysis of the data of the visual images.....	94
3.4.5.2 Analysis of the data of the textual context.....	96
3.4.5.3 Coherence of the analysis between the visual images and texts .....	97
3.4.6 Rationale for city selection 02: a case study.....	98
3.4.7 Data collection 02: a case study.....	99
3.4.7.1 Preparation of the interview guide.....	99
3.4.7.2 Formatting qualitative interview questions.....	99
3.4.7.3 Participant recruitment.....	100
3.4.7.4 Identifying interviewees .....	101
3.4.7.5 Exploration and representation of the data .....	104
3.4.7.6 Validation of the interview data .....	105
3.4.8 Data analysis 02: a case study.....	105
3.4.8.1 Types of analysis 02: a case study.....	105
3.4.8.2 Coding process .....	106
3.5 Ethical Issues in Qualitative Research.....	109
3.6 Research Connectivity: Methods and the Aim.....	111
3.7 Summary .....	111

CHAPTER 4.0 Thematic City Branding via the Design Features .....	113
4.1 Introduction .....	114
4.1.1 Rationale for city selection: design-initiative city brand culture .....	114
4.1.2 The focus of the research .....	115
4.2 Design Features in City Brand Image .....	117
4.2.1 Introduction .....	117
4.2.2 Contextual pattern of city design features .....	117
4.3 Thematic Classification of Visual City Branding .....	123
4.3.1 Introduction .....	123
4.3.2 Types of thematic visual city branding .....	123
4.4 Brand Interrelationship with the Textual Content.....	127
4.4.1 Introduction .....	127
4.4.2 Frequency.....	127
4.4.3 Implications.....	128
4.5 Chapter Findings .....	129
4.6 Summary .....	130
CHAPTER 5.0 Visual Design Features in City Branding Part 01 .....	131
5.1 Introduction .....	132
5.2 Design Originality .....	132
5.2.1 The use of the term 'city-oriented' design/designers .....	132
5.2.2 Brand exchange of the design originality.....	133
5.3 Core Design Features .....	134
5.3.1 Premium architectural design.....	134
5.3.2 Fashion heritage.....	136
5.3.3 Entertainment: TV programmes, films .....	139
5.3.4 Café culture .....	141

5.3.5 Transportation .....	142
5.4 Chapter Findings .....	143
5.5 Summary .....	144
CHAPTER 6.0 Visual Design as the Transformative Agent.....	145
6.1 Introduction .....	146
6.2 Defining of the New City Image by the Stakeholders .....	147
6.3 Innovation Heritage .....	150
6.3.1 Science and creative industry .....	150
6.3.2 Original Modern.....	152
6.3.3 City image-making.....	154
6.4 Visual Transformation.....	155
6.4.1 Reconstruction .....	156
6.4.2 Architectural practice.....	157
6.4.3 Iconic design: sufficiency and ‘geographic ambiguity’ .....	159
6.5 Leading the Innovative Branding of the Tourism Websites.....	160
6.5.1 Content .....	161
6.5.2 Cultural scheme .....	161
6.6 Chapter Findings .....	164
6.7 Summary .....	165
CHAPTER 7.0 Visual Design Features in City Branding Part 02.....	166
7.1 Introduction .....	167
7.2 The Key Design Drivers in Manchester Brand Features.....	167
7.2.1 Football: the brand ambassador .....	167
7.2.2 Music brand capital.....	170
7.2.3 University brand impact.....	171

7.3 Manchester-Driven Creative Practice .....	174
7.3.1 Views on creative Manchester.....	174
7.3.2 London: the role model as a creative nexus .....	175
7.3.3 Localisation of creativeness from London to Manchester.....	176
7.3.3.1 Museum events.....	177
7.3.3.2 Museum exhibition themes .....	177
7.3.3.3 Theatre performance .....	178
7.4 Chapter Findings .....	179
7.5 Summary .....	180
CHAPTER 8.0 The Visual Role of Museums in Leading City Brand .....	181
8.1 Introduction .....	182
8.2 Definitions of Museums and Galleries .....	183
8.3 Visual Features of Museums as Cultural Representation .....	184
8.3.1 Destination for the visual city .....	184
8.3.2 Beyond the city representation .....	186
8.4 Valued Museums for Valuable City Branding .....	186
8.4.1 From arts to shopping.....	186
8.4.2 Primary cultural access .....	188
8.5 Museum Brand via Tourism Websites .....	189
8.5.1 Relationship between the ownership and museums .....	189
8.5.2 Collaborative marketing with the official and unofficial channels .....	190
8.6 Museums' Visual as Creative Brand Capital.....	193
8.6.1 Iconic museums' solid brand validity.....	193
8.6.2 Branding small museums .....	195
8.6.3 Creative exhibitions for visual city .....	197
8.7 Chapter Findings .....	199

8.8 Summary .....	200
<b>CHAPTER 9.0 An Inside Look at the Visual Design of City Branding. ....</b>	<b>202</b>
9.1 Introduction .....	203
9.2 Design 01: Visioning the City Image.....	203
9.3 Design 02: Organisation .....	203
9.3.1 Ownership and design flexibility.....	204
9.3.2 Planning a cultural calendar.....	204
9.3.3 Decision-making.....	205
9.4 Design 03: Primary Attractions .....	206
9.4.1 Data sources for a specialised view .....	207
9.4.2 Trends .....	207
9.4.3 Core product’s meaning.....	208
9.5 Design 04: Engaging in City Branding.....	209
9.5.1 Stakeholders .....	209
9.5.2 Marketing strategy.....	209
9.5.3 Visual network in city branding .....	210
9.6 Chapter Findings .....	211
9.7 Summary .....	211
9.8 Design Feature-Based City Branding Framework .....	212
9.8.1 The aim of the framework .....	212
9.8.2 Application of the framework.....	212
9.8.3 Key text of constructing the framework.....	214
<b>CHAPTER 10 Discussions.....</b>	<b>218</b>
10.1 Introduction .....	219
10.2 Key Context of the Findings .....	219

10.2.1 Context mapping 01: the literature review .....	219
10.2.2 Context mapping 02: the pilot study .....	220
10.2.3 Context mapping 03: the primary research.....	221
10.3. The Unenviable Task of Making a Culturally Attractive Image .....	222
10.4 Discussion Themes .....	223
10.4.1 A visual assemblage of primary attractions.....	223
10.4.2 Museums as a city’s brand icon: mission and dilemma.....	224
10.4.3 Value up local design/designers in fashion.....	225
10.4.4 Curating design features into a city branding framework .....	226
10.4.5 Application of design to city branding by stakeholders.....	228
10.5 Summary .....	229
CHAPTER II Conclusions .....	231
11.1 Introduction .....	232
11.2 Overview of the Research Aim, Questions and Key Findings .....	232
11.2.1 Research conjunction between the pilot study and the primary research .....	233
11.2.2 Summary .....	234
11.3 Original Contribution to the Knowledge.....	234
11.4 Beneficiaries.....	236
11.5 Limitations.....	239
11.6 Further Study .....	240
11.7 Concluding Remarks.....	241
References .....	244
Appendices.....	264
A. Glossary.....	265
B. Interview Guide.....	271
C. Primary Context on the Design Features in City Branding Used in the Thesis .....	275

D. Cross-Analysis of the Official Tourism Websites of the International City Brands:	
Description of the Attributes .....	283
E. Cross-Analysis of the Promoted Key Design Features: The Textual Examples .....	288
F. The Positioning of Museums, Galleries and Exhibitions in the Attributes .....	293
G. Measurement of Primary Categories .....	296
H. Cross-Analysis of the Visual Text on the Official and Unofficial Tourism Websites of the International City Brands .....	302
I. Cross-Analysis of the Coherence between the Visual and Textual Messages on Branding	308

## List of Tables

2.1 Media Communication Strategy from Levels and Components in Brand Strategy Management.....	43
2.2 Key Context from “Environmental Forces that Impact on Brand Strategy Development”	51
2.3 Overview of the Possible Linking Relations between Visual and Verbal Elements Compiled from van Leeuwen.....	53
3.1 Selected Tourism Websites.....	91
3.2 Justification of Two Categorised Groups of Interviewees .....	101
3.3 Summary of Interview Participants.....	102
3.4 Interview Guide.....	103
5.1 Brand Relationship between the Promotional Text and Brand Message(s) on London’s Official Tourism Website.....	143
9.1 Description of the Context of the Framework.....	215

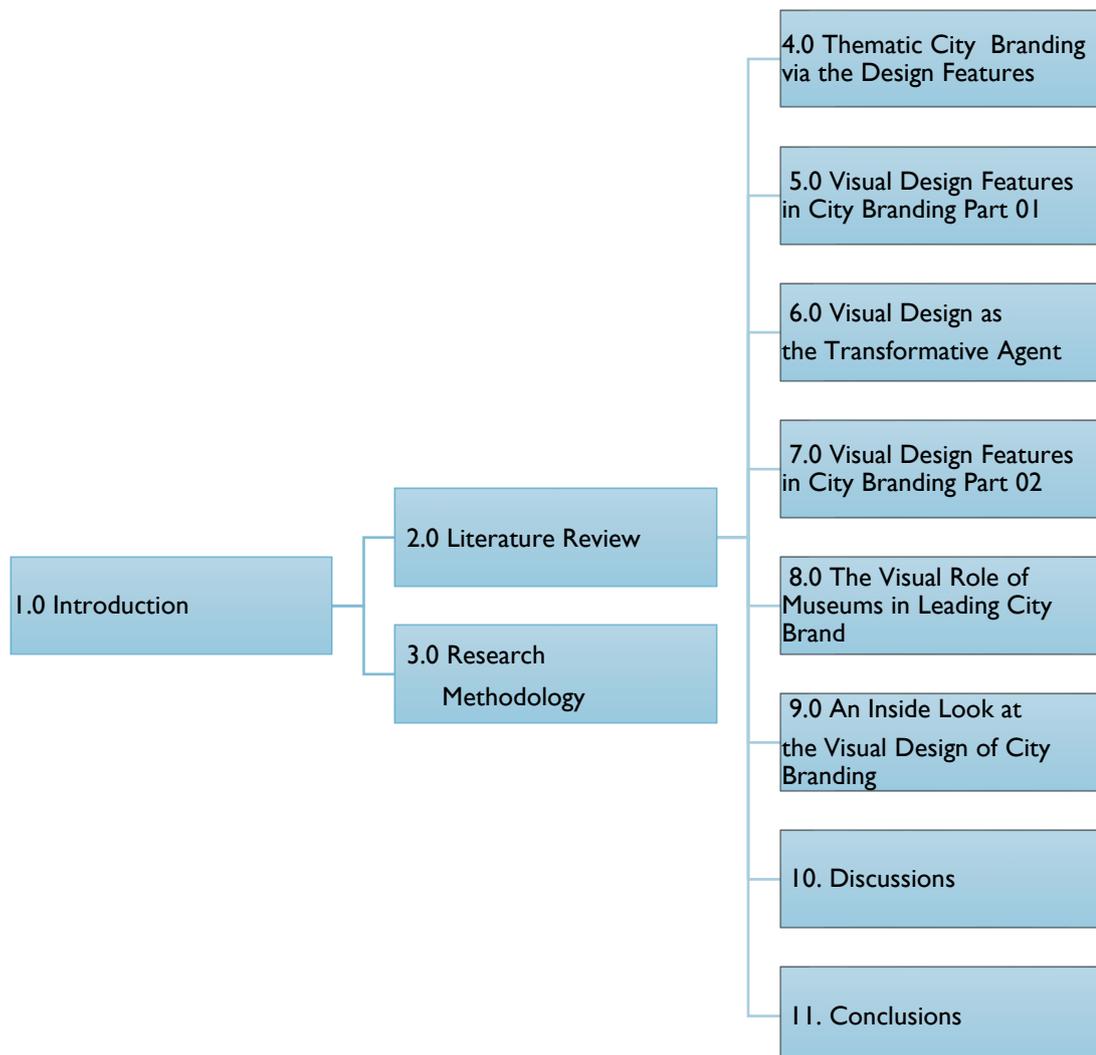
## List of Figures

1 Structure of the Thesis.....	19
1.1 Chapter Map .....	21
2.1 Chapter Map .....	33
2.2 Literature Scope and Area of Focus .....	36
2.3 Modified from “Leading Global Cultural and/or Economic Centers” .....	39
2.4 Modified from “Family Tree of ‘Images’ According to Mitchell” .....	48
2.5 Modified from “Barthes’ Classification of Text-Image Relations Represented Graphically as a Systematic Network” .....	53
2.6 Contextual Mapping Exercise.....	71
3.1 Chapter Map .....	72
3.2 Connectivity between the Two Types of Research.....	84
3.3 Modified from “Design versus Data Collection: Different Units of Analysis” .....	88
3.4 Modified from “Convergence and Non-Convergence of Multiple Sources of Evidence” ..	89
3.5 A Sample of Coding Analysis from Interview Number 6 .....	108
3.6 Key Context on Design Features of Cultural Attractions in City Branding based on the Result of the Coding .....	109
3.7 Research Process.....	112
4.1 Chapter Map .....	113
5.1 Chapter Map .....	131
6.1 Chapter Map. ....	145
6.2 Matrix of Manchester’s Image.....	150
6.3 Brand Platform based on Design Innovation .....	163
7.1 Chapter Map .....	166
8.1 Chapter Map .....	181
8.2 Key Brand Features of Museums for City Branding .....	198
8.3 Design Function of Museums for Branding International Cites.....	199

8.4 Design Function of Museums for Branding Manchester .....	199
9.1 Chapter Map .....	202
9.2 Matrix of the Core Design Features in City Branding.....	216
9.3 Design Feature-Based City Branding Framework .....	217
10.1 Chapter Map .....	218
11.1 Chapter Map .....	231

## Structure of Thesis

This thesis consists of eleven chapters that are linked as shown in Figure 1. The following are the summaries of the structure:



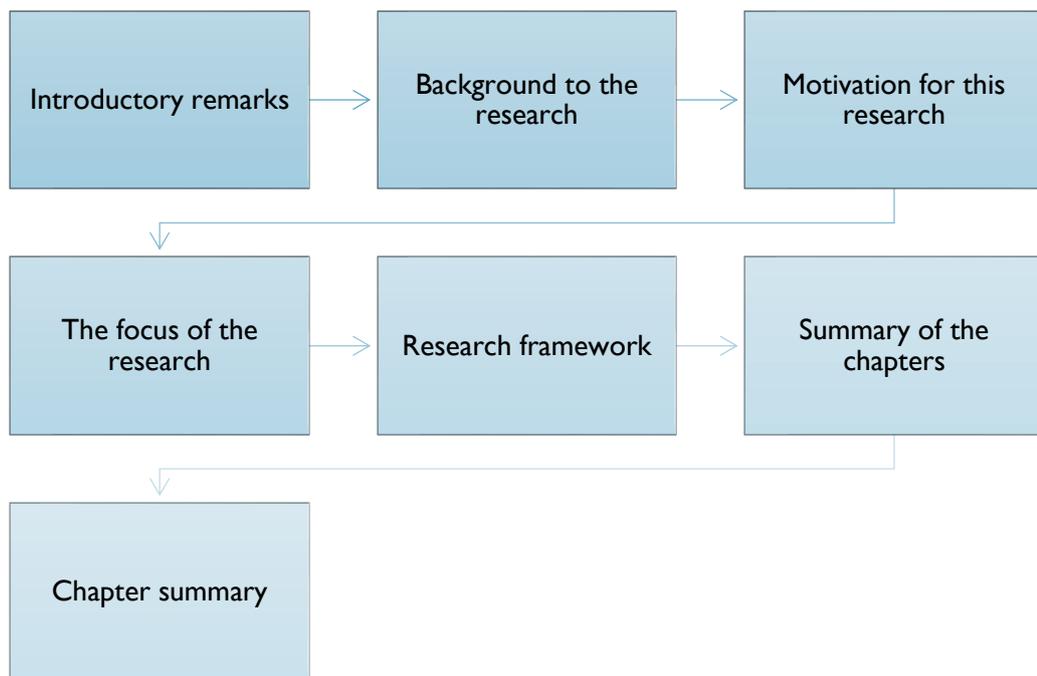
**Figure 1.** Structure of the Thesis.

Cities have always played a privileged role as centers of cultural and economic activity.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Hall (1998).

## I.0 INTRODUCTION



**Figure 1.1** Chapter Map.

## 1.1 Introductory Remarks

It is commonly known nowadays that a well-designed tourism website's function is to visualise and conceptualise a city as a desirable place to visit. However, the relationship between tourism websites and attractive places presented by that technology reveals much more than this common recognition. In other words, tourism web technology releases and transmits its intrinsic power towards people and city alike. For example, neatly arranged window displays in flagship stores evoke and stimulate one's inner desire to participate in that world of beauty, which lies far removed from one's actual everyday life (Derek, 2005: 15, 16, 20). In this manner, the possibility of meeting points between tourism websites, design of city attractions and the participatory observer him/herself is produced. This is probably one of the most convincing explanations why so many people are attracted by the luxury fashion brands regardless of whether or not they can afford to purchase them.

If the tourism websites are successful in this, it will also certainly be an effective tool to motivate a remake of the city. Any cultural city would be prepared to share its material and aesthetic properties with others seeking for a stronger manifestation of itself in ever increasingly intensive competition among cities. Therefore, opening a discussion about branding cities could contribute to a substantial effectiveness of tourism websites for the enhancement of a designed city. Tentatively, this kind of working process could be called *design curation*. Indeed, this thesis describes how city attractions are vividly represented via the intentional design curation utilised by tourism websites.

Thus, the design research planning has two directions. To provide substantial data by means of constructive interdisciplinary research, and to propose a pragmatic cultural design perspective on city branding. This will be developed through in two stages. The initial stage is a critical analysis of the web studies of the selected international cities: Amsterdam, London, New York City, Paris and Sydney. The following stage is wholly devoted to the case study on Manchester. Considering the authentic and historic character of the city of Manchester, the field research deals primarily with the experience of Manchester itself, with semi-structured in-depth interviews being carried out for that reason. Listening to the experts and reimagining the problems related to branding in Manchester is a methodology chosen consciously to understand what the real problems are in branding Manchester.

The findings of the research confirm the value of visual design for cultural attractions, and the attractions' role and function in the branding agenda. Museums are placed as one of the leading types of cultural attraction. Based on these key findings, a conceptual framework of a design feature-based city branding will be proposed, since cultural city branding requires abstract thinking together with practical execution. It is hoped that the meaningful results of the findings and the expanded discussion themes will provide a potential guideline for city branding planners and practitioners alike. It is also anticipated that website design specialists, such as design theory researchers, experts in city branding, and designers and marketers of tourism websites will find suggestions in this study to be a helpful reference. The best outcome would be for the museum directors, who deal with exhibitions as well as the opinions of visitors and non-visitors, to take notice of this research.

This introductory chapter essentially sets out the framework of the research development of the thesis. Following the main contextual outline of the themes, the chapter outlines: introductory remarks (Sec. 1.1), background to the research (Sec. 1.2), motivation for the research (Sec. 1.3), the focus of the research (Sec. 1.4), the research framework (Sec. 1.5), and the summary of the chapters (Sec. 1.6).

## 1.2 Background to the Research

### 1.2.1 Key literature context

The examination of the key contextual literature, paying attention to the associated implications for city branding, resulted in the following topics: i) the necessity for city branding and image-making for tourism, ii) media branding for cities via tourism websites, iii) the production of meanings through the design of visual images; and iv) the function of museums as a key branding tool. A detailed account of these topics follows:

- The background of city branding has been considerably influenced by skilled tourism promotion and advanced tourism products for major international cities. Ilmonen stated that creating an attractive image of a city through tourism promotion is not a new phenomenon; it was intentionally implemented at the end of the 19th century, at the beginning of the modern age, particularly in major international cities such as London and Paris (2007). Morgan and Pritchard state that tourism promotion creates certain images and their images are linked to identity, branding, cultural and social conflicts, and 'power' (1998).
- As marketing for tourism has been developed using diverse methods and mediums,

Kotler et al. and Holloway define tourism websites as online marketing channels for cities and cultural productions on the websites as part of a tourism product (2013; 2004). Furthermore, Hallett and Kaplan claim that the visual images and text of official tourism websites represent tourism and cultural change such as tourism products, tourists' activities, social construction and a city's identity from a discourse analysis perspective (2010). Similarly, Nekic states that visual images and text of the design on official tourism websites indicate and construct layers of meanings within relationships between tourists' activities and their reflections of socio-cultural change (2014).

- City branding has been broadly researched and stimulated discussions about its positive and negative impacts on perceptive visual images. The strategy of using culture as a branding tool has been applied to branding cities by stakeholders, and it defines a city's strongest cultural attractions to international audiences. The progress in research on city branding has emerged mainly from various marketing perspectives, because the concept of city branding originated in city marketing. In this context, the success of branding for international cities is clearly based on the values and purpose of tourism consumption of cultural heritage. Consequently, the spectrum of cultural heritage (e.g. museums) has been broadly developed to promote cities and has built a visual portfolio for branding the cities. Although the literature provided some successful examples of iconic architectural design as a landmark (e.g. Guggenheim in Bilbao, Spain), there was a lack of research into industrial-driven cities such as Manchester that looked at the actual function of the visual design to transform the city into a cultural venue.
- The main topic of the literature about city branding addresses the practice of rebranding in museums to improve the city image. Case studies of city image and museums have broadly utilised the relationships between city image development and museums, including the branding of iconic museums. The scholars producing this literature comprehensively discuss the problems and agenda within the topic, and question the notion of an established, culturally visible city image via the study of iconic museums (Vivant, 2010; Plaza, 2006; Côté et al., 2006). The key topics of this literature are: measuring museums as an economic 'reactivator'; actual outcomes of cultural city branding; and global museums. These reveal the relationship between global museums and city

branding and how launching a world-famous museum in a city enhances the global city brand identity. From an examination of the literature, the review of primary cultural attractions including museums and their effect on city image developed into a major aspect of this research.

Based on the contextual literary background to this research, a couple of gaps in the thesis topic have been noticed. These gaps will be identified as part of a more clearly defined research problem and for the development of an improved research programme.

### 1.2.2 Evaluation of and gaps in the literatures

The majority of the existing literature on city branding through the design of tourism websites focuses on the analysis of visual images and promotional text on official tourism websites, from the linguistics perspective of the multimodal communication theory.<sup>2</sup> To extend and offer a perspective on branding cities and its implications for the study, the main body of this thesis establishes a specific topic on building a cultural city brand personality from a design perspective.

- What are strong aspects of internationally-successful cities in branding, such as London and Paris, from a culturally comprehensible branding perspective?
- Why and how have industrial cities such as Manchester achieved and failed to recreate their culturally notable identity at the international level?
- What is the role of museums as a prime driver in branding cities and how do these museums represent the cities' core cultural aspect?
- How does the design of tourism websites of major international cities visually curate the cities' best scenes in cultural attractions?

The limited scope and focus of related research highlights two potential opportunities for developing this research: i) investigating city branding from the design of official and unofficial tourism websites; and ii) qualitative research based on interpretation for making meanings and design. Four major fields were identified within the topic of this research,

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<sup>2</sup> Norris and Maier (2015: 1) state that multimodal theory research has been broadly conducted in various disciplines from business and design, communication studies (e.g. webpages) and linguistics, psychology and sociology to health. Studying semiotics, meanings and messages of visual images and texts is an important subject in multimodal communication research.

which enabled this research theme to be proposed. In this contextual framework, the primary question that this research will address is: **Based on the curation of visual design attractions, what are the main messages of city branding?**

To answer this primary question, a series of systematic methods (e.g. a comparative analysis of content design of tourism websites) and specialised but interconnected interviews were adopted to identify the core meanings of city branding.

### 1.3 Motivation for the Research

The rationale explaining the motivation for this research are: i) the researcher's background in design and the brand industry; ii) interdisciplinary research training in branding from product to city; and iii) experience of international museums.

#### 1.3.1 Practice in design and branding

The idea comes from engagement in over a decade of design practice from the field of fashion to brand design: working as a trend analyst for a brand design coordinator for residents and the hotel business franchise prompted an interest in spatial design as much as in the impact design has on people. This designer training was an unexpected step towards more detailed knowledge, insight and know-how in brand design consulting. In particular, collaborating with professionals both in design and management, from architects to executives, enhanced an understanding of the design industry and its actual and fictitious impact on business. From all these experiences, the author has learned how closely the design process is related to organisational structure, available investment and the owners' visionary potentiality. Another important lesson was that every design requires reflective thinking and a definite focus on design from the designers. In summary, a good use of branding can be realised when the design system is established on the grounds of design philosophy and appropriate material conditions.

#### 1.3.2 Training in interdisciplinary research

Currently working as a researcher in academia, the author has participated in interdisciplinary research projects on design and branding. The research projects covered topics from fashion to tourism: store display management of Northface Korea; brand strategies development for Seoul tourism; and the impact of FutureEverything in Manchester. These diverse research projects provided valuable experience in two

considerable aspects of interdisciplinary research: i) the relationship between commissioners and researchers, and how researchers in different disciplines respond to opinions/demands of commissioners; and ii) collaboration between researchers from different disciplines. In particular, collaborating with researchers from management, tourism management and cultural studies in these projects has given the author a keen enthusiasm for cross-disciplinary research on design projects. Respecting, understanding and widening one's perspective and knowledge within interdisciplinary research teams is a key principle for producing good research outcomes.

### 1.3.3 Experiencing cities and their design culture

Together with this professional experience in design and branding, a decade of urban culture experience in western metropolitan cities prompted me to enter into this study area. I grew up in an old metropolitan city that was virtually demolished to be reborn as modernised, westernised urbanism, but which preserved its visual design culture as heritage assets. Tourists' experiences of places unknown to me enabled me to analyse the topics on city brand in an academic and creative sense. Specifically, my own personal enthusiasm and curiosity about museums provided a major motivation to study museums: impressions from the Frida Kahlo exhibition at Tate Modern in London to a small but sophisticated show at the Children's Toy Museum in New York. Moreover, observing cities as well-preserved and well-managed design aesthetics inspired me to devise this study. The reason for selecting Manchester came from participation as a volunteer to get to feel and know the city through a digital community, conferences and conversations with various experts for the project and pilot study. Visiting organisations in various locations in Central Manchester and Salford for the interviews of the pilot study and the field research helped greatly in getting to know this subject. Therefore, my research and work experience across design and branding help me to conduct this research with a deeper comprehension and focused design thinking for strategic visual design for branding cities.

## 1.4 The Focus of the Research

### 1.4.1 Research problem

The problem of the research in this thesis addresses the fact that it is difficult to know and understand how cultural heritage (attractions) can be seen as a production of visual design for cities within the branding process. A key aspect of this research problem requires practitioners in branding, design, tourism and researchers in those fields to engage with the

discovery, understanding, visualisation and promotion of the design value of cultural heritage. To approach the research problem from the interdisciplinary design perspective, the author attempted to coordinate the two stages of the research. One is from the perspective of international cities and the other from the perspective of the city of Manchester. This claim is not entirely new for branding cities, but valuing and interpreting visual design as a core branding philosophy to distinguish cities from others can be culturally and historically meaningful, and at a national level. Ultimately, conceptualising the roles of the visual design within the context of transformation of the old and industrial-driven images of some cities can be a useful proposal in upgrading their branding strategy to the next level.

#### 1.4.2 Research aim

**The aim of the objectives is to explicitly investigate comparable city branding through the visual window of tourism websites.** In this way, elaborately designed features of cultural attractions could be identified according to adaptable criteria. To elaborate that general aim, the research objectives were divided, as shown below.

#### 1.4.3 Research objectives

- To explicitly review literature and web sources covering the phenomenon and competition of branding cities to create a solid concept of a cultural city.
- To identify the scope and development of cultural attractions in the context of visual design production in cities, and the essential background of branding cities by visual design.
- To clarify the role and impact of museums in city branding, and how the design value of museums in the sense of heritage, architecture and exhibitions interacts with the positioning of cities.
- To define the function of visual curation of tourism websites in terms of producing brand messages for cities that could enhance and vitalise an individual city's cultural attractiveness.

On the basis of the research aim and objectives, the research questions and propositions were constructed to shape the research framework.

#### I.4.4 Design within the research aim

The character of design is defined within the context of branding to structure the research aim and objectives. Questions on the topic were developed in the analysis of design features in city branding:

- How does the design expression of tourism websites represent the primary attractions of cities that visually contribute to the branding of the cities?
- How can the primary attractions be identified as a core product of visual design for the cities selected in this thesis?

### I.5 Research Framework

#### I.5.1 Research questions

The above research focus was contextualised in detail from a cross-analysis of the essence of culture-oriented branding trends for cities. The formulation of these propositions was undertaken to reflect the key philosophy of the published work of the literature contained within this thesis. Based on the understanding of the contextual framework of the literature, three research questions were asked:

**RQ 01:** How does the design context of the tourism websites enhance a city's branding?

**RQ 02:** How do the visual designs help to construct a city brand's personality?

**RQ 03:** How do the design features of museums act as a vehicle for city branding?

#### I.5.2 Research propositions

Based on a theoretical understanding of approaches, it was identified how to develop a visibility of city brands by using legible cultural amenities and web design in the tourism market. Three main sources of literature were used for the critical review in the fields of: complexity and needs of city branding and cultural image creation; building a distinctive portfolio based on key cultural attractions, and the use of museums as a primary branding vehicle; and the function of tourism websites in the context of city branding by visual messages on the representation of attractions on the websites.

From the results of the key contexts from the literature, several related research propositions were developed as follows:

**RP 01:** The strategic design of tourism websites contributes to city branding.

**RP 02:** Visuality of cultural attractions has been essential for city branding.

**RP 03:** Use of cultural attractions for branding relates to production of the designs.

**RP 04:** Museums function as the key design feature of city branding.

**RP 05:** The visual context on tourism websites enhances cultural brand personality.

### 1.5.3 Research methodology

This thesis is constructed based on a series of web-based studies and a case study using a critical analysis approach to articulate in-depth observation and interpretation on the subject of city branding via the design of tourism websites:

**Stage 01:** A web-based contextual study involved the selection of global cities' official and unofficial tourism websites via the Internet to establish the foundation of an academic investigation.

**Stage 02:** A research-based field case study in a city in the UK, based on interviews with a number of local experts to explore the research topic in more detail. Together, the two types of studies answer the research questions.

To provide the findings and the answers to the research questions within the context of this thesis, two types of methods will be shown in Chapters 4.0 to 9.0: i) comparative analysis of visual text and words within the examples of global cities' official and unofficial tourism websites; and ii) the use of semi-structured interviews with experts drawn from related fields, such as the creative industries (museums and theatres), branding agencies, tourism websites (official and unofficial) and academia (management, museology and urban design). The key findings of these chapters will be grouped to construct the main themes and associated topics for discussion in Chapter 10.

## 1.6 Summary of the Chapters

The content of the research questions and methods enabled the building of a research framework to structure, organise and conceptualise the research findings.

Chapter 1.0 Introduction, sets out the background, focus, methodology, and an overview of the research contained within this thesis. It explains the rationale for this study, its aims and questions and a summary of the chapters.

Chapter 2.0 Literature Review, presents an in-depth literature review that focuses on three areas of examination: i) city branding and cultural image construction; ii) cultural attractions for branding cities; and iii) tourism websites and their design contribution in enhancing city brands. The primary aim of the literature review was to construct an integrated foundation incorporating city brand, cultural attraction, and the design of tourism websites.

Chapter 3.0 Research Methodology, provides a detailed description of the theoretical basis for using the selected methodological approaches, as well as justification for the methods used. Based on the research design and the methods, a research content of the central topics was adopted in Chapters 4.0 to 9.0:

Chapter 4.0 Thematic City Branding via the Design Features, presents an introduction of city branding strategy through an overview of the visual theme design of the tourism websites. This chapter aims to identify the diversity in approaches of the selected five selected international cities in characterising their cultural brand personality: Amsterdam, London, New York City, Paris and Sydney.

Chapter 5.0 Visual Design Features in City Branding Part 01, discusses design features of primary attractions on the tourism websites of these international cities. The key topic of this content is the potential of design meanings for city branding in the representation of specifically curated design features of the attractions.

Chapter 6.0 Visual Design as the Transformative Agent, provides an introduction to the case study of Manchester's branding concept, using material from its distinctive remarkable industrial history and cultural heritage scheme. The chapter aims to identify the background of innovation-driven cultural city branding for the visual transformation of city image through active visual design practice and branding.

Chapter 7.0 Visual Design Features in City Branding Part 02, presents a detailed research of the central and visual features of brand components in shaping the cultural identity of Manchester. This includes an in-depth analysis of the topic from a diverse range of perspectives, including football culture and the universities' impact on city branding.

Chapter 8.0 The Visual Role of Museums in Leading City Brand, discusses the role of museums in city branding as a specific topic on the basis of the results from both stages of the research of international city brands and of Manchester. The necessity, roles, functions and problems of the utilisation of museums in enhancing city brand value are discussed. Interactive sub-topics, from cultural scheme to marketing strategy, cover existing and future issues on the subject.

Chapter 9.0 An Inside Look at the Visual Design of City Branding, provides insight into a city brand through the design of Manchester's leading tourism websites. The sub-topics explicitly address a system for designing the websites, e.g. content development. Additionally, a section of focusing on 'a design feature-based city branding framework' was explicitly illustrated in order to present a conceptual framework that formed part of the research.

Chapter 10 Discussion, summarises and critically examines the key findings from the research in order to develop themes within the research findings for discussion. The three primary meta-themes are: i) the necessity for cities' brand images to be culturally attractive; ii) visual design in the cities; and iii) museum-driven attractiveness. Each primary theme consists of relating sub-themes.

Chapter 11 Conclusions, discusses an overview of the research outcomes, an evaluation of the contribution of knowledge, identification of the limitations, and the potential for further study. The chapter ends with concluding remarks with regard to the body of research contained within the thesis.

## 1.7 Chapter Summary

This chapter has set out the main background to the research within the scope of this thesis. First, the key context of the research is presented. Second, the rationale and the motivation for the author conducting this study process. Third, the research problem and framework that explicitly identified the research questions the study aims to answer. Lastly, the chapter addresses a brief outline of the contents of the thesis by providing a summary of chapters. Therefore, the purpose of this chapter is to assist the reader in navigating through the contextual material presented.

## 2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW



**Figure 2.1** Chapter Map.

Image marketing (has become) perhaps the most frequently employed marketing approach to place development used by states, cities, and various places. Image marketing can be used to reinforce existing positive images, neutralize and change unfavourable ones, or create new images where [few] or no images exist.<sup>3</sup>

## 2.1 Introduction

City branding is closely connected with both image creation and cultural strategy. The phenomenon of global competitiveness in city branding stimulated and diversified in-depth study in the image area of cities. Various related fields such as urban studies, tourism, branding, cultural studies, mass psychology and others were developed since the-late 1990s. This chapter reviews the current literature on city images, branding and cultural production, in order to learn how these theories and explanations underpin the basis of this thesis, and where they can be usefully expanded.

As this chapter will point out, cultural attractions such as museums can be used as one of several branding strategies to enhance city image, balancing hard branding with the branding of cultural/entertainment flagships. In this strategy, any content like museums, festivals, and exhibition themes can be mobilised. These examples of cultural productions in cities function as a vehicle for cultural production in representing urban culture as well.

Therefore, the current interest in, and awareness of, city branding in academia and in practice contribute to improving and reinventing the cultural character of cities. In the literature review, the central disciplines within city branding will be addressed, as well as reputations of primary attractions, especially museums, in creating a solid cultural city image.

Three major research points will be articulated in the context of: i) understanding the relationship between the background of city branding and the development of a culturally driven city image; ii) identification of key urban cultural attractions, e.g. museums and cultural events in creating an identity of a cultural city; and iii) understanding the concept of

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<sup>3</sup> Kotler et al. (1993: 131).

encoding and decoding in the use of visual images and their application in cultural city branding.

The key sections of this chapter are as follows:

### Section 2.2 The Scope and Area of Focus within City Branding Literature

The main topics and issues of literature on city branding will be explored from an interdisciplinary perspective. The reason for this is because the interdisciplinary method is necessary and adopted is founded on the complex fusion of discourse, image and power in post-structuralism. Moreover, many dissimilar or diverse elements converge around the subjects of city and branding. This examination of subjects of city branding across branding, image and culture will provide some relevance to the theoretical foundation for conducting this research.

### Section 2.3 The Idea of City Branding and Tourism Websites

The background of city branding and rationales for city image-making will be addressed via three main topics: i) applicability of essential product branding theories to cities; ii) constructing visual identity through legible city image via tourism websites; and iii) repositioning city image with case studies such as Manchester.

### Section 2.4 Meanings in Cultural Cities and their Visual Images

Visual design and its communication capability through the use of visual culture (e.g. image) will be examined as follows: i) encoding and decoding in visual presentation of city image, from the postmodern perspective; ii) producing meanings from the intention of the designer in the genres of visual arts and creative writing; and iii) using websites as a communication medium in tourism and city branding.

### Section 2.5 Aligning Culture and Branding

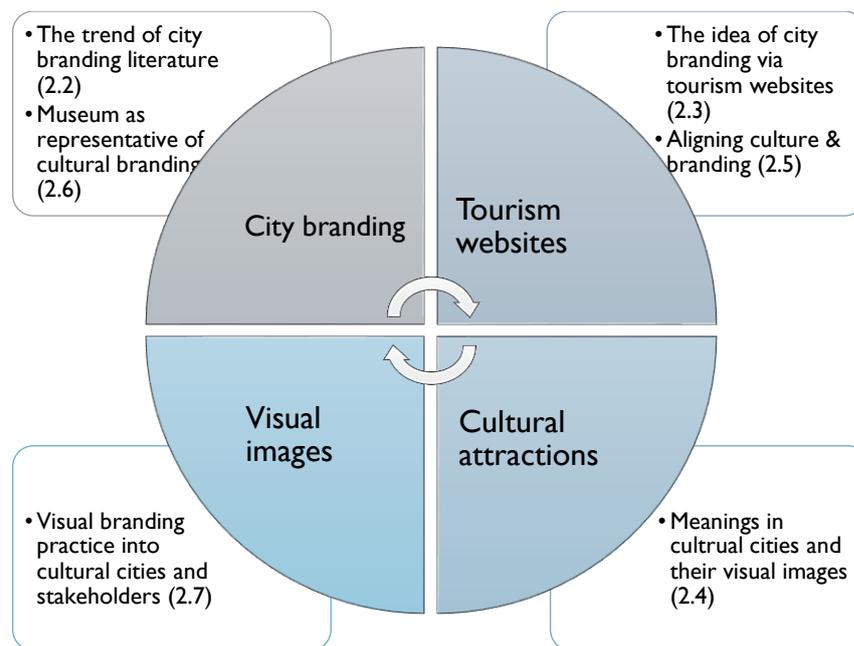
The use of culture in city image will be explored as follows: i) building cultural attractiveness in enhancing city brand; and ii) developing museums to represent as a key, sustainable heritage of cities. In the sub section of 'cultural attractions as designing heritage', economic profitability and impacts of mega-events on cities will be reviewed via their themes and applied means.

## Section 2.6 Museums as Representatives of Cultural Branding

Museums and their exhibitions will be reviewed as a potential space and tool for enhancing city image as follows: i) the importance of museums in global cities' images and projecting exhibitions in museum branding; ii) understanding the role of curators in creative exhibitions; iii) the meaning of curating art exhibitions, such as modern art exhibitions in internationally-significant museums, and the paradigm shift of curating in a postmodern culture; and iv) the emergence of conceptual application of art curation in museum exhibitions in non-art sectors, such as city curation and digital curation.

## Section 2.7 Stakeholders: Cultural Cities into Visual Branding Practice

The relationship between the branding process and applying cultural elements and purpose of stakeholders in the public sector is viewed as follows: i) involvement of stakeholders in planning a brand vision for cities; and ii) the use of cultural factors in promoting cities. Also addressed are: the 'reality' of a city and designing its image by aligning cultural components.



**Figure 2.2** Literature Scope and Area of Focus.

## 2.2 The Scope and Area of Focus within City Branding Literature

The growing body of literature on city branding explains the global phenomenon of branding cities from various perspectives in a diversity of disciplines (Donald et al., 2009: 192; Koller,

2008: 431; Anholt, 2007; Evans, 2003). More specifically, the two major trends in contemporary consumer capitalism are embodied by the international phenomenon of city branding.

First, the global phenomenon of city branding exemplifies the shift from material to socio-cognitive production within the context of city branding. Second, city branding is an example of a wider proliferation of corporate discourse and its genres to the public sector, so that “political entities such as nation-states and cities are now branded” (Flowerdew, 2004). In addition, city branding is the local expression of increased competition in tourism, investment and attracting people to move into a qualified workforce both culturally and environmentally. Koller states that “the trend requires a schema switch in the case of branded cities which are traditionally bound up with physical, tangible locales” (2008: 431).

Therefore, understanding city branding as a global phenomenon and its necessary place in city image is essential for this research to be conducted. Homadovski claims that a “positive and wanted” aspect of globalisation is that it has integrated the spectrum of rapid economic growth to makes all those involved more competitive, as compared to other factors which advocate “isolation, market protection, or gradual restructuring” (2010: 192). Leon suggests that if a city is to become “globally competitive, an integrated approach is essential to increase innovation to sustain and improve the city image” (2009).<sup>4</sup>

## 2.3 The Idea of City Branding and Tourism Websites

### 2.3.1 City brands in global competition

City branding is closely connected with the phenomenon in globalisation where branding stimulates and enhances competition between cities. With every place in the world competing with every other place, there is little chance of being remembered for long enough to compete for continuous attention. The applicability of the concept of *brand* to cities is broadly acknowledged and has become strategic in establishing a positive image of a city. Evans (2003: 421) states the major role of brands enables us to read “each other and our environment of places and products”. Kapferer (1992: 4) contests that brand is “the products’ source [and] meaning”. In *City Branding Theory and Cases*, New York, Paris and Sydney were explicitly researched as successful cases (edited by Dinnie, 2011). One of the

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<sup>4</sup> Nick Leon, president of Design London: “A city must have a) an inclusive social and cultural programme to connect its talent, b) align this with its economic development strategy, c) focus on developing a sophisticated interdisciplinary innovation system, d) ensure integrated infrastructure, and e) underpin this with strategic urban design.”, <http://www.creativecapetown.net/urban-creativity-how-cities-can-hold-onto-their-talented-workers> (2009).

main topics of the cases are covered in: 'Multifarious identity' for New York (Bendel, 2011: 179); 'City image and country image: What are the links?' for Paris (Kapferer, 2011: 184); and 'Creating a brand model for Sydney' (Parmenter, 2011: 199).

Historically, a primary role of the brand was established to identify ownership or origin. The origin of brand comes from 'brandr' meaning to burn; through branding, early people could mark their ownership and distinguish their livestock (cattle) from those of their neighbours (Blackett and Boad, 1999: 2). In the 1960s, the '4 Ps' of marketing was introduced by Levitt, McGregor and E. Jerome McCarthy and its marketing terms were defined including terms of branding, e.g. a symbol or design (American Marketing Association).

In 1986, Ries and Trout extended the definition to argue that the effect of a brand is to create a distinctive positioning in the mind of the customer (Ind and Bjerke, 2007: 23). De Chernatory and McDonald also developed "the meaning by setting out what makes for a successful brand: an identifiable product, service, person or place, augmented in such a way that the buyer or user perceives relevant, unique added values which match their needs most closely" (1998: 20 in Ind and Bjerke, 2007: 23). Kapferer states that "a brand is the good name of a product, an organization or a place; ideally linked to its identity" (2004). Wallace notes that a brand is a "distinctive identity that engenders loyalty" (2006: 1). Kotler and Gertner argue that a brand can be defined as a "promise of value" (2002).

### 2.3.2 Cultural city image

An image of a place becomes a key concern when building a city brand with strategic consideration. Hurt (1971) defined the image of a place as "the total set of impressions of a place", and Bigné et al. state that place image can be described as "an individual's overall perception" (2001). However, the 'true' image of a place does not really exist, because of its complicated layers of culture, social, history, religion etc.; and the argument also applies to the 'true' identity of place is similar. For that reason, arguably, the "dominant view" or "dominant image" corresponds with a place's identity, in accordance with Hall's narrative of the nation (1996: 18). The image of places becomes as "open to production and ephemeral use as any other" (in Govers and Go, 2009: 2; Harvey, 1989: 293).

In urban branding strategy, the creation of a city image has been strategically developed with 'creativity' and 'culture'. Vanolo argues that the place-branding and city-marketing strategies used in recent years often emphasise ideas and stereotypes of creativity and culture to promote attractive urban images (2008: 370). In city-planning and urban-creation

policies, creativity has become a principal keyword, and Florida’s creative class (2002) and Landry and Bianchini’s creative cities (1995) have become popular issues with city policy makers internationally.

Despite the approach coming from a ‘creative’ and ‘cultural’ side, many of the critical issues in city image creation have already been researched. However, it is that it is difficult to “detect what kind of urban images may be attractive and sustainable, especially considering the variability of fashions and stereotypes”: the image-making process for branding cities is mainly dependent on urban policy-makers’ views (Vanolo, 2008: 371).

Furthermore, conscious and unconscious interaction between people and places involves physical and emotional elements. At its simplest form, people make sense of places or construct places in their minds by way of three processes; i) planned interventions such as planning, urban design etc.; ii) the way in which they or others use specific places; and iii) various forms of place representations such as films, novels, paintings, news reports etc. (Holloway and Hubbard, 2001 in Kavaratzis and Ashworth, 2005: 507; Crang, 1998). Therefore, branding places within socio-cultural entities is not an easy task.

Figure 2.3 shows a relationship between the culture and economies of major international cities, in which New York, London and Paris are ranked highly.

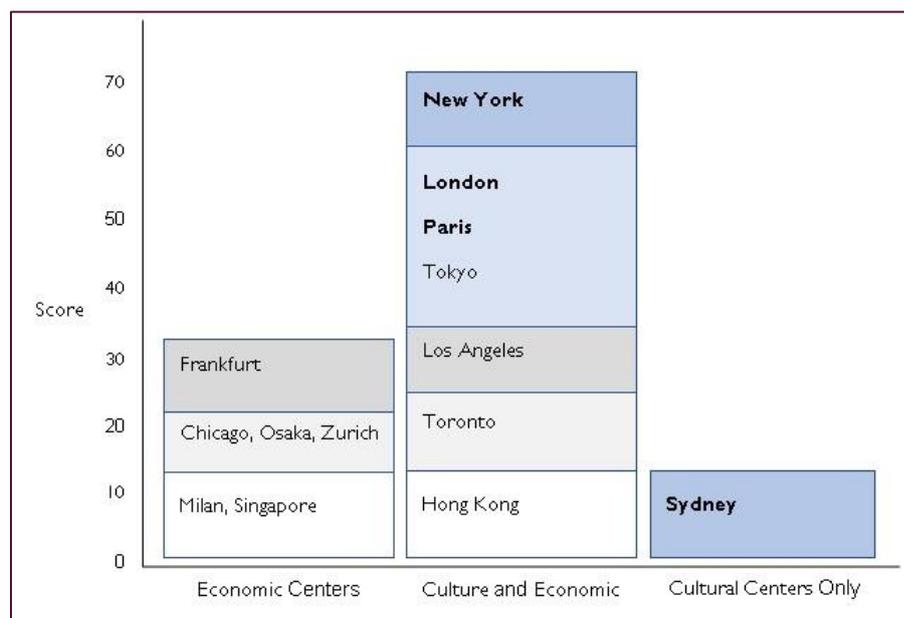


Figure 2.3 Modified from “Leading Global Cultural and/or Economic Centers” (Abrahamson, 2004).

### 2.3.3 Tourism websites as a city image mediator

#### 2.3.3.1 Visual culture in applied design

Since the 1970s, studies of visual culture have been published by many authors from different perspectives including art and design, e.g. W. J. T. Mitchell's (1995a and 1995b) essays on visual culture, John H. Walker and Sarah Chaplin's *Visual Culture: An Introduction* (1997), Malcolm Barnard's *Art, Design and Visual Culture* (1998), Nicholas Mirzoeff's *An Introduction to Visual Culture* (2009). Visual culture can mean all forms of 'art and design' from painting to automotive design (Barnard, 1998: 2-3).

Roland Barthes' *Mythologies* was one of the first pieces of critical thinking on post-war popular culture (1957). His concept revisits cultural artifacts, in particular design and its readability in the visual sense (Huppertz, 2011: 86). Art history expanded its field so that the study of visual culture, photography, and film are now included. Moreover, Cherry states that the debate on art history and visual culture has vigorously increased through this expansion, which introduces visual culture, a wider range of materials and artists, and diverse methodologies:<sup>5</sup> the volumes of visual cultural studies represent a shift in the meaning of art history from "the history of art as a record of the creation of aesthetic masterpieces to their cultural significance for the historical circumstances which produced potential meaning" within the historical contexts of the 1970s and '80s (2005: 4). However, Jenks (1995: 16) claims that the term 'visual culture' signifies painting, sculpture, design and architecture within the academic definition of fine art.

#### 2.3.3.2 Visual communication via tourism websites

Paganoni claims that city branding has expanded from offline to online, and in the new media age, this has resulted in the "allocation of resources for the design and implementation of websites" (2015: 3-4). The background to the expansion of city branding refers to online tourism. Internet tourism has played an increasing role in destination marketing and is useful in decision-making for tourists who lack information about the city they are considering visiting (Bastida and Huan, 2014: 167; Choi, 2007: 118). Dinnie states that the primary role of online city branding is to communicate the city brand identity through sending "more sophisticated and attractive forms of messages":

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<sup>5</sup> Walker and Chaplin place visual culture within 'a confluence of the expansion and contestation of art history, the renewal of the "social history of art", the emergence of the "new art history", and the development of "visual research"' in Britain (in Cherry, 2005: 3).

Consequently, unlike traditional mass media, the website content can be tailored to target different audiences through customizable settings to create a favorable image of the place. Typically, via websites, cities can develop their brands by presenting system of identification or brand design (logos, slogans, characteristic colors etc.), the city's offer (list of attractions, calendar of events, picture gallery etc.). All the items should be integrated to achieve a unique picture of the city. The holistic approach, distinctive features and tools must be applied in order to distinguish the website itself and consequently the city that it is portraying, As Palmer (2002) concludes, to have an electronic presence is not adequate in itself a strategy is necessary to bring that presence close to potential customers (2011: 84-85).

One of the key functions of tourism websites is to provide clear information to tourists instantaneously. With sufficient and reliable sources the city is represented immediately by its cultural attractions. Chio suggests that the use of images in tourism is broadly related to physical and psychological acts, such as sending and receiving visual images via the media Museum (2011): For example, these refer to agents of creating tourism images in media presentation, such as "photographic practices, cultural performances, and even the built environment (e.g. iconic buildings such as Sydney Opera House)" (Ibid.). In this sense, presenting visual images of attractions via tourism websites can be proposed as one of the main elements in creating city image.

Fundamental design elements of websites, which refer to images and text fabricated as a body, have been researched to understand tourism websites as an indispensable communication instrument. In particular, the formation of destination image has been extensively researched due to its significant role as an information source in influencing tourists' decision-making (Choi, 2007: 118). According to Gunn (1972), images are formulated and formed from various information sources in two ways: i) organic images for general exposure (e.g. school books, television programmes and related media); and ii) induced images, which are derived from promotional and marketing materials, such as the tourism industry. Marion and Crowder state that the use of "appropriate" text, such as captions or articles incorporating images provides a clear message from the designer's perspective about the images on digital communications (e.g. websites and blogs) (2013: 132).

### 2.3.3.3 Identification of official tourism websites

In terms of producing cultural images for branding, Hallett and Kaplan state that official tourism websites manage, produce and reintroduce the cultural images of cities through urban spatiality, which impacts on the city's cultural identity (2010: 2). The cultural images of

cities on official tourism websites also influence national identity and the decision-making of tourists in choosing a travel destination, through their discourse with visual images and text (Ibid.). In terms of cultural images, official tourism websites show what types of cultural content and cultural institutions are available based on reliable sources from the city authorities. Bastida and Huan state that government-run official tourism websites are more “comprehensive” in providing details of information than unofficial tourism websites and privately created websites (2014: 167).

#### 2.3.3.4 A challenge from unofficial tourism websites

Furthermore, some tourists, referred to as creative tourists, are eager to find “new and undiscovered places”, and to bring “new meaning and interpretation” to those places.<sup>6</sup> Pappalepore et al. state that, “Tourism can have a valuable role in the development of creative areas” (2010: 219). One of the functions of unofficial tourism websites relates to discovering and introducing lesser-known local attractions rather than repeating the promotion of well-known attractions. Therefore, tourists can visit unique venues and events in cities, and are thus be able to experience different meanings of the cities.

#### 2.3.3.5 The research topics of tourism websites

The majority of literature about tourism websites has been published within the fields of tourism management, linguistics and marketing. In particular, some recent publications discuss analysing tourism activities of official tourism websites and city branding via city websites from a linguistics perspective. These books claim the *design* of tourism websites contributes to tourism marketing in terms of city branding. The following are examples of publications on tourism websites in a number of distinct disciplines: i) linguistics: multimodal text theory and discourse analyses of tourism websites on culture and city branding (*City Branding via the New Media*, Paganoni, 2015; *Tourist Activities in Multimodal Texts: An Analysis of Croatian and Scottish Tourism Websites*, Nekic, 2014; Hallett, 2010)<sup>7</sup>; ii) destination image: influence of tourism website on tourists’ behaviour in destination

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<sup>6</sup> ‘Within this context, creating new areas and icons that are experienced in a passive way is futile. Drawing on the experiences of visitors to off the beaten track areas in London, Maitland reckons that gentrified areas and other tourism consumption possibilities are attractive to tourists only when they are combined with the appeal of the local inhabitants consuming the city in their everyday lives’ (Alvarez, 2010: 172).

<sup>7</sup> The study of tourism websites is important for several reasons from a linguistics perspective (Nekic, 2014: 1-3): i) politically relevant “intercultural communication and multilingualism” (Ibid.); ii) “socially relevant since the tourist sector has been identified as a significant contributor to the EU economy” (Verheugen, 2005); and iii) “possible destruction of cultural diversity in local communities through tourism and travel” (Salazar, 2012: 9).

selection (Chung et al., 2015; Choi et al., 2007); iii) design function: perceptive city image with developing interface design tools (case study of Uganda, Lepp et al., 2011); promotion for culinary culture tourism in East Asia (Horng and Tsai, 2010); iv) tourism websites (Law et al., 2010); v) brand-building elements in US state tourism websites (Lee et al., 2006); and vi) website performance and impact of web usability (Bastida and Huan, 2014; Moral et al., 2014; Wu et al., 2011).

The limited amount of academic research around city image and official tourism website design means that there are significant opportunities for research: i) investigating city image and cultural production based on the content design of official tourism websites; ii) original qualitative research based on semiology approaches; and iii) understanding for meaning-making and the design of official tourism websites.

Level	Strategic brand decisions
Brand contact point strategy	Setting marketing communication objectives Choice of communication target audiences and key stakeholders Choice of means <b>(Mass) media communication</b> Individual or two-way communication Other types of touch points <b>Message strategies</b> Budget allocation Evaluation of message effectiveness
Media communication strategy	Setting media objectives Choice of medium vehicles Scheduling (burst-drip) Budgeting <b>Evaluation of media effectiveness</b>

**Table 2.1** Media Communication Strategy from “Levels and Components in Brand Strategy Management” (Franzen and Moriarty, 2009: 53).

## 2.4 Meanings in Cultural Cities and their Visual Images

The context and implications of visual images are encoded by creators and decoded by viewers (Rose, 2013; Noble and Bestley, 2011). By this open but circular process, visual images obtain a lively and lasting relationship with their *meanings*. According to Sturken and

Cartwright: “an image or object is encoded with meaning in its creation or production; it is further encoded when it is placed in a given setting or context” (2001: 138-139).

Stuart Hall has discussed “three positions that viewers can take as decoders of cultural images and artifacts”: i) “dominant-hegemonic reading: they can identify with the hegemonic position and receive the dominant message of an image or a text (such as a television show) in an unquestioning manner; ii) negotiated reading: they can negotiate an interpretation from the image and its dominant meanings; and iii) oppositional reading: they can take an oppositional position, either by completely disagreeing with the ideological position embodied in an image or rejecting it altogether (for example, by ignoring it)” (Ibid.). Furthermore, most viewers can decode the meaning of cultural setting “regardless of the producer’s intentions” (Ibid.).

Producing visual images with their associated context has been developed due to digital technology. For example, “the development of digital images began to radically transform the meaning of images in Western culture in the 1980s and 1990s”; digital images differ from analogue, photographic images, due to the technology and the diversity of expression and editing, which recreates the image’ (Ibid.). In this sense, Stephen Ward contests that one of the major concerns of “cultural interpretation of place selling” has been with “decoding the promotional message itself, particularly the place image” (1998: 5).

In the same manner, Harvey states that place marketing image can be viewed as exemplars of, for instance, “broader economic and political changes, such as the rise of the enterprise culture of postmodernism” (1989). Furthermore, Donald et al. argue that a city's image often relies heavily on “visual and narrative representations”; for example, a city's image can be built on tangible and intangible objectivities (2009): events and history (e.g. the famous battle of Waterloo), architecture such as the Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao, and different organisations, such as the European Union in Brussels (Ibid.: 174).

In this light, cultures ultimately change and flourish precisely because “the process of communicative coding and decoding”, such as photos depends on “creative transactions between active human beings” (Louw, 2001: 3). More contemporary understanding of postmodern culture was developed through the thinking of cultural critics such as Barthes.<sup>8</sup> He led us to reflect upon culture as a collection of codes or myths, such as Lévi-Strauss’s “set of imaginary resolution to real contradictions”.

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<sup>8</sup> *Mythologies* (1957).

The cultural theorist, Pierre Bourdieu's 'art code theory' in the essay *Outline of a Sociological Theory of Art Perception* (1993) will be explored as an essential reference. With this notion of coding theory in its cultural context, Bourdieu first developed the idea of 'cultural capital'<sup>9</sup> and 'cultural reproduction' in the early 1970s (Robbins: 2005; Jenks, 1993: 116). More recent work on coding culture is explored in Tudor's *Decoding Culture* (1999); Bourdieu's on-going study of 'culture-mediated power relations', as found in *Distinction* (1984), and the study of European art museum audiences, in *The Love of Art: European Art Museums and their Public* (1991) with Darbel and Schnapper, remains one of the most influential academic studies of the "social indices of art perception".

To adopt this art perception theory in visual art, Pierre Bourdieu introduced the coding theory of art that stresses the 'readability' of a work of contemporary art in postmodernism. He noted that the artistic code of 'varying complexity and subtlety' is presented in art work, forming the art capital through either institutionalised or non-institutionalised training of a social institution (1993: 223-224). It is frequently accepted that understanding Bourdieu's cultural code and its art theory influenced recent literature's findings on 'new cultural codes' and their implications.

To explore this concept, Bourdieu viewed curators, artists, critics and historians as the agents and the character of the artist as a producer within the artistic field; galleries and museums, as places to exhibit, as part of the entire set of specific institutions that are "a necessary condition for the functioning of the economy of cultural goods" (1993: 254-259; Lizardo, 2011: 35). Barry advocates that in exhibition and museum design, the conditions to experience the artistic code need further explanation (2008: 311). For example, Bell writes in *Theories of Performance*, that MOMA's Abstract Expressionism for the permanent collection produces meanings as "the logical fulfilment of the original historical scheme" (2008: 490).

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<sup>9</sup> The notion of culture has been characterised as being in an intimate relationship with art, in particular modern art. Habermas states the category of "beauty" and the realm of beautiful objects were first constituted in the Renaissance (1983: 10). Before the 18<sup>th</sup> century, literature, the domain of fine arts and music were treated as a sacred activity for certain purposes. However, the Enlightenment period shifted the cultural realms to become independent activities so 'scientific discourse, theories of morality, jurisprudence, and the production and criticism of art could in turn be institutionalized' (Habermas, 1983: 9). As a result, in the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, an emergence of 'aesthetics' conception' enabled the artist to produce his work to the purpose of 'art for art's sake' (Sturken and Cartwright, 2001: 245). This autonomy of art raised an issue of a new aestheticism, and concept, process, and performance were essential aspects for the majority of modern artists (Ibid.).

In essence, expanding the theoretical comprehension of cultural capital to city image, Kearns and Philo state that all this cultural attractiveness within facilities strengthens city image and builds the value of cultural capital (1993: 10). Krätke contests that 'creative capital' of cities denotes the ability of urban economic actors to produce scientific, technological and artistic innovations on the basis of relational assets that are socially produced within a city or urban region (2011: 3).

#### 2.4.1 Aspects of city image

Harmaakorpi et al. contest that "image usually means the public view formed of a person, company or community, which is often purposefully developed and which is directed at selected target groups" (2008: 173). Kotler defined image and product image thus: "Image is the set of beliefs, ideas and impressions that a person holds regarding an object" (1997: 607), and "[a] product image is the particular picture that consumers acquire of an actual or potential product" (Ibid.: 317). In the same manner, Bigné et al. state that a place's image can be described as "an individual's overall perception" (2001). Imagining an object or a place is experienced as diverse phenomenological experiences.<sup>10</sup> Gartner (1996: 457), based on work by Boulding (1956), summarises how images consist of distinct *cognitive* and *affective* components.

Gartner also asserted that the cognitive component is derived from known facts about a destination and needs to be developed to generate awareness. The affective component is related to "motives in the sense that is how that person feels about the object under consideration" (1996). The latter explains the shift of the tourism marketing focus to emotion or mood (Morgan et al., 2002). In Harmaakorpi's view, these concepts of image are "mental images",<sup>11</sup> (Cambridge Dictionaries Online 2011), suggesting that imagination may not include true attributes of the object (2008: 173).

Setting a certain image of a city as a key driver for branding is complex and challenging, because city image is not only constructed from one single element (Lynch, 1960). The research focuses on city image from a visual and cultural aspect, specifically cultural attractions and their related components. However, behind presenting (from the city) and

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<sup>10</sup> Dermot states that "experiences intuitively seizable and analyzable in the pure generality of their essence, not experiences empirically perceived and treated as real facts, as experiences of human or animal experiences in the phenomenal world that we posit as an empirical fact" (1999: 1).

<sup>11</sup> The definition of mental image is an experience in which you see things which do not exist physically, when your mind is affected powerfully by something such as deep religious thought or drugs or mental illness (Cambridge Dictionaries Online, 2011).

sensing (from the audience) the visibility of city image, understanding general ideas of associated elements of city image will be useful in examining city image in different types of cities.

Regardless of the great number of different approaches to the study of city image, from environmental psychology to urban design, the concept must be understood in the sense that the general meaning and idea of a place are formed by visual images as well as by many other elements. In the 1960s, the urban theorist Kevin Lynch explored urban studies from the perspective of how people came to see the cities in which they lived. He argued that in the interaction between 'self and place', people looked to find *legible images* of their cities (1960; Donald and Kofman, 2009: 195).

From a branding perspective, Anholt argues that when people are comprehensively informed about particular cities, they have well-defined images of them (2007). Lynch states that city image is built with elements such as paths, edges, districts, nodes and landmarks (1960: 46), and these elements are interrelated with each other.<sup>12</sup> People encounter a city as a place through 'perceptions and images' as everyday encounters and the application of place marketing is largely reliant on the 'construction, communication and management of the city's image'.

Another significant aspect of complexity is the impact of city image on national image. Anholt states that city image does not exist as a singular component that can be directly or indirectly linked to national image (2008: 3). For example, Hemment et al. claim that the *Cool Britannia* branding project in the 1990s in the UK is one of the most debated examples of a national image shift (2011: 98). Therefore, understanding the complexity and impact of city image are important in the context of national branding.

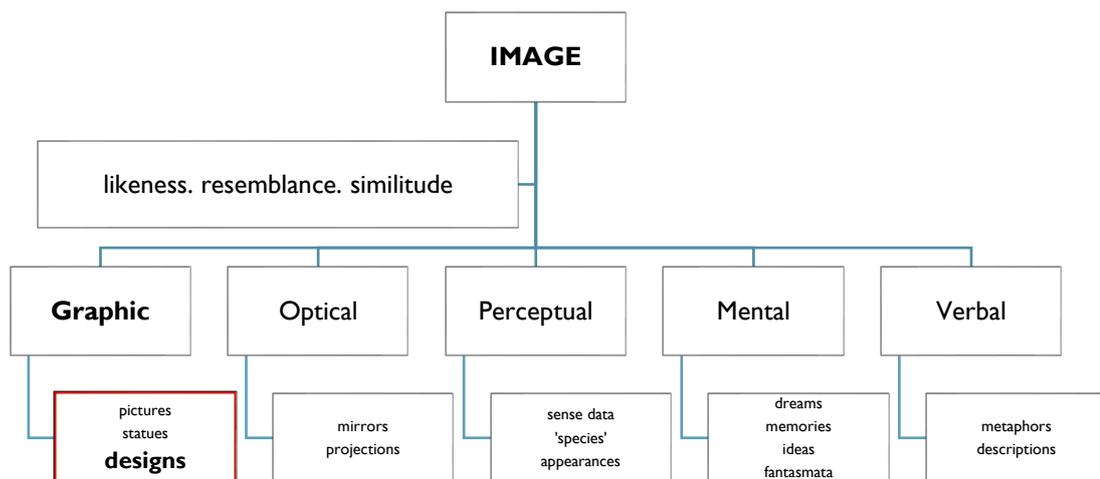
#### 2.4.2 City image as a component of visual identity

The primary aim of city brand is to clarify and differentiate the city from other cities in terms of image and identity (Dinnie, 2011: 93). Whereas identity is seen as an outer world perspective, the concept of image is defined as our awareness of an inner world. In other words, Sokolowski contests that variable factors of images consist in connection between

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<sup>12</sup> "These elements are simply the raw materials of the environmental image at the city scale. They must be patterned together to provide a satisfying form" (Lynch, 1960: 83). 'The shifting image' is important to develop a city image. "Rather than a single comprehensive image for the entire environment, there seemed to be sets of images, which more or less overlapped and interrelated" (Ibid.: 85-86).

the factors and individual identity: “the interplay of memories, imaginations, and perceptions, and the flow of our awareness of interior time” are important constituents of our personal identity (2000: 32). City branding underlies an understanding of the nature of the city whose identity can be encapsulated and subsumed under a single 'brand' or 'image'. In response to this, Kapferer states that “identity necessarily precedes image” (1992: 37): in the same manner, Aaker states that brand identity is a “unique set of associations that the brand strategies aspire to create or maintain” (1996: 68). Branding in cities operates a close and tight relationship between identity and place (Donald et al., 2009: 191). The components of the city brand sufficiently imply a multi-layered mode of communication from the consumer’s side on brand image. For instance, Kavaratzis and Ashworth state that slogans and logos are useful practical instruments in a branding place strategy but they cannot embed a new identity for the place (2005: 508).



**Figure 2.4** Modified from “Family Tree of ‘Images’ According to Mitchell (1986: 10); Used by Kind Permission of the University of Chicago Press” (Bateman, 2014: 15).

### 2.4.3 City identity

A clear, transparent identity is one of the fundamental elements necessary to build a city brand. For example, Govers and Go state that historical, political, religious and cultural discourses construct place identities through local knowledge (2009: 17-18), and are influenced by “national, cultural, natural, social and religious assets”, which become

important identifiers (Morgan and Pritchard, 1998). From a cultural perspective, Evans notes that while city branding seeks to sustain an identity and an image for a city, branded urban entertainment centres can help develop a global reach (2003): for instance, franchised international museums can help some cities to gain an international reputation.

On the contrary, from a social perspective, Hernandez and Lopez state that places are socio-spatial entities rather than static, physical structures (2011: 93) and are constantly being transformed by interactive engagement with people, which involves physical and emotional elements (Ibid.: 93). Lefebvre called cities a “representational space, should be seen as an objective and productive social force, with real material effects, playing an integral role in shaping modern forms of production, consumption, and the collective dreamscape” (1991: 33, 39). Additionally, the trend of city branding is transformed from a focus on ‘tangible, physical locales’ to an intangible, emotional local expression of increased competition in tourism, investment and attracting a qualified workforce (Koller, 2008: 431).

#### 2.4.4 Brand image

The term ‘city branding’ is still indefinable but in general, it is simply the application of product branding to cities (Balmer and Greyser, 2003; Balmer 1998; Ashworth and Voogd, 1990). In this sense, examining multiple definitions of image from a branding perspective allows an understanding of the city image-making process.

The concept of brand image was introduced into the marketing discipline by Gardner and Levy (1955), and since then, “communication of a brand image to a target segment” has been considered an important activity. For two reasons: i) tourists need to imagine a coherent representation and meaning of the city to make it possible to organise information, formulate generalisations and expectations; and ii) to guide their decision-making to choose which cities to visit (Shields, 1991).

Another motivation is related to the notion of image and fully related to the concept of identity. To understand the effects of city branding, and of city reimagining generally, it is necessary to understand what the images of a place are and how they are formed. The context of brand image is not only involved in external and visible elements of a brand such as logos and slogans. The dimensional mechanism of a brand image and how it is perceived by customers constantly develops and invents new strategies in delivering a good brand image. Recent studies on brand image address wider contexts from different perspectives,

from storytelling and perceived brand image<sup>13</sup> to the impact of brand image in marketing in relation to brand identity (Sääksjärvi and Samiee, 2011).

Similarly, research trends in city branding focus on city brand image, in particular the complementary contrast in brand image between nearby or faraway cities. Studies have tended to reflect the growing interest of policymakers in expounding “sound competitive brand positions”, e.g. with a developmental idea of a model of destination branding (Qu et al., 2011). However, Anholt states that the notion of brand image is critically argued: it is brand image that underpins every “transaction between the brand and its consumers” (2008: 3).

The literature also reflects concerns about the possible generalisability and analytical conceptualisation of brand image. According to Biel, brand image is rooted in both hard and soft associations where the former refers to ‘tangible properties’ (e.g. functional or physical) such as brand slogan, and the latter to ‘intangible properties’ such as cultural and emotional design elements (1992 in Kaplan et al., 2010: 1291). For instance, the case study of Manchester’s branding shows the importance of brand image positioning for reimagining the city, which attempts to create an attractive and distinctive international brand with architectural design practice as well as the city’s slogan ‘Original Modern’ being seen as a positive city image (Donald et al., 2009: 63; Hospers: 2008).<sup>14</sup>

All the dimensions involved in ‘experiencing and memorising’ a city is found in the image-making process of city branding.<sup>15</sup> Most cities have long histories and produce certain perceptions and images for the benefit of tourists. From those views, Balibrea states that creating a city’s image can be defined as reimagining the city to present the city’s values. Image is particularly important because a coherent city image enables tourists to imagine a certain picture of the city (2001: 189). City image is remarkably relevant to the tourism industry and potential investors, from economic, cultural and geographic perspectives. From

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<sup>13</sup> ‘Many successful brands communicate with consumers through brand stories. The brand story plays an important part in helping consumers make sense of the brand’ (Huang, 2010: 207).

<sup>14</sup> Manchester’s branding project has been studied from various perspectives in different fields and includes ‘Original Modern: Manchester’s journey to innovation and growth’, Charles Leadbeater, NESTA, Provocation, 11 September 2009. In particular, the mass participation of citizens in a project in Manchester in 2009, called ‘Climate Bubble: Games to Monitor Urban Climate’, which was related to climate change, is an example of adding a new meaning and envisioning a city’s creative image.

<sup>15</sup> For instance, the Normandy Invasion was experienced in one way by those who ‘1) participated in, 2) remembered it, 3) read it as it was reported in the newspapers, 4) write and read books about it later on, 5) joined in a memorial celebration on the Normandy beach, 6) see films taken of the actual event, 7) see movies and TV shows made about it’ (Sokolowski, 2000: 28-29).

this point of view, a recent study on tourism indicates a paradigm shift from the standardised tourism pattern to “creative cultural tourism” focused on ‘experiencing’. Alvarez (2010: 172-173) reviews Maitland’s article (2009) which claims that the traditional boundaries between residents and tourists are fading, and that visitors are now more interested in “experiencing the everyday life of residents in the city”.

Furthermore, “tourism can have a valuable role in the development of creative areas” (Pappalepore et al., 2010: 219). Within this context, designing a new urban landscape by improving the cultural “attractiveness of multisensory ones” (e.g. Dann and Jacobsen, 2002) can also synergise city image development. This phenomenon of new tourism activism is driven by accelerating *cultural branding* in cities.

In summary, the concept of branding has been applied to cities as ‘city branding’ to help support and clarify their image. Also employed for realistic city image-making is the particular concept of brand image stemming from a marketing perspective.

Macroenvironment	Microenvironment	Internal environment
Demographics	Labor market	<b>History/identity</b>
Natural	Financial market	Competences
Technological	Suppliers	<b>Brand orientation</b>
Economic	Trade channels	Vision/mission
Political/legal	Governmental bodies	<b>Culture/philosophy</b>
Ecological	NGOs	Business scope
<b>Cultural/social</b>	<b>Market/competition</b>	Organization
<b>Communicative</b>	Consumer/customers	<b>Image/reputation</b>

**Table 2.2** Key Context from “Environmental Forces that Impact on Brand Strategy Development” (Franzen and Moriarty, 2009: 42).

NB: NGOs (nongovernment organisations).

#### 2.4.5 The conceptual intention in visual design

City image presentation is closely interconnected with visual design through diverse mediums, such as websites.<sup>16</sup> Dinov and Knox (2015: 171) state that “visual design of websites is key to organising meanings on and beyond the page, and provides analysts with a coherent ‘way’ to the data”. Visual design requires a creative concept, structure, and visual

<sup>16</sup> Marion and Crowder state that websites and blogs create an “*excellent communication*” and create digital storytelling (2013: 88-89).

effect in order to construct a completed form of meaningful design (Noble and Bestley, 2011). Within this visual presentation, meanings and contexts of culture within cities can be produced which illuminate the visual art both philosophically and aesthetically.

In this section, two art genres are selected in reference to the active elements of visual design: i) visual art (images), ii) creative writing (text). These two elements present a complex form of creativity and imagination. The composition or scenario and visual or literary style are embodied in the designers'/artists' creativity and imagination. In particular, emotional expression in the visual arts and the storyline in creative writing can be considered as intimate methods of describing a creative process. In this sense, creating a form of design/art can be a part of meaningful cultural productions in city image.

#### 2.4.6 Intentional message(s) of the designer

In general, designers/artists have intentions for their design/art, and tend to deliver these intentions to those experiencing the art without causing offence. Although, Hermerén states that intentions and effects of artists are hard to transfer in the meaning of the art work, both intentions and effects are apparently important parts of the 'communication situation' (1969: 18-19). "It is possible to find out what the artist's intentions were in different ways. The work of art can contain clues to the intentions of the artist, but we can also get information about the intentions of the artist by independent, non-artistic sources outside this work" (Ibid.).

#### 2.4.7 Creative expression

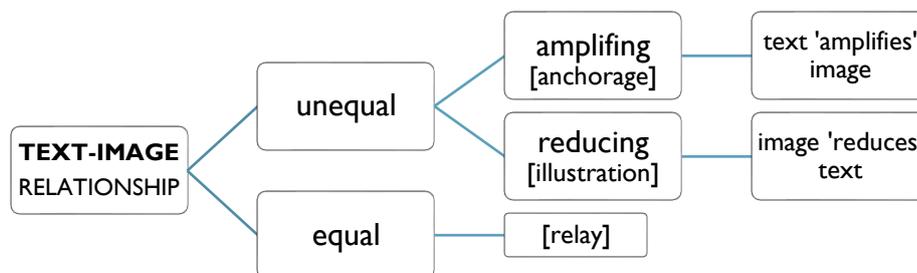
##### 2.4.7.1 Visual arts

The visual arts have been categorised in a broader, and moving spectrum, and this flexible extensionality enables audiences to freely sense artwork's and design's visuality. Tormey defines art as a function of expression and idea, in which artists have recently sought to reduce, in a spirit of purity, one or other argument of these functions to zero (1971: xi). The visual arts, from fine arts (e.g. painting) to applied arts (e.g. graphic design), present the function, role, and meaning of art and design, and enable audiences to sense artworks and design visually. These productions of visual arts can be considered as part of the cultural productions of cities. In particular, the use of visual images in various design communications (e.g. websites) is vital in creating a specific meaning through visual design.

### 2.4.7.2 Creative writing

Creative writing is now one of the most popular cultural activities and educational subjects in Britain. There are many, diverse national and regional networks of independent writers' groups, small and independent publishers, regional festivals and in-residence courses, including the Arvon Foundation and Ty- Newydd (Leicester, 2005: 1). The current popularity of creative writing supported or initiated by cultural policy and its promotions during the 1970s and 1980s was highlighted in the UK (Ibid., 2005: 58). According to Paul Willis's concepts of "symbolic creativity and the grounded aesthetic", creative writing is considered as a social practice and is about the making of meaning (1990, 11).

Figure 2.5 and Table 2.3 present two main theories on relations between images and texts.



**Figure 2.5** Modified from "Barthes' Classification of Text-Image Relations Represented Graphically as a Systemic Network" (Bateman, 2014: 35).

Image-text relations			
Elaboration	Sophistication	The image makes the text more specific	<i>Illustration</i>
		The text makes the image more specific	<i>anchorage</i>
	Explanation	The text paraphrases the image (or vice versa)	
Extension	Similarity	The content of the text is similar to that of the image	
	Contrast	The content of the text contrasts with that of the image	
	Complement	The content of the text adds further information to that of the text, and <i>vice versa</i>	<i>Relay</i>

**Table 2.3** "Overview of the Possible Linking Relations between Visual and Verbal Elements Compiled from van Leeuwen" (Bateman, 2014: 209).

### 2.4.7.3 Connectivity to the research

Understanding the two art genres will be considered as essential component of the web-based research as follows: Chapter 4.0 will explicitly focus on the analysis of visual and text materials of tourism websites of internationally recognised cities and their messages for city branding. Two research points will be traced: capturing the material messages and the attributes transmitted by visual images and associated text; and critical interpretations of the meanings together with design concepts of representational contexts within visual images and text. The main points of the connectivity between the two sections and the research are as follows:

First, the section on visual arts will be used specifically to analyse and evaluate selected visual images on tourism websites. Due to the importance of visuality in characterising a city brand's personality via online media, an in-depth understanding of how to construct a brand theme and positioning strategy from visual design will be extensively articulated.

Next, the section on creative writing will be used to analyse specific text content on tourism websites, which is associated with selected themes of visual images. Through identifying a conceptual relationship in terms of design conjunction between visual images and texts, a further in-depth exploration of brand messages of cities will be carried out.

Theoretically, the emergent visual and text analysis (e.g. *Text and Image: A Critical Introduction to the Visual/Verbal Divide*, Bateman, 2014; *Visual Methodologies*, Rose, 2013) that is linked to the production of meanings through interpretations of visual and text, will be used in the research: identifying implications and core brand messages within the use of cultural attractions via tourism websites' strategic design.

## 2.5 Aligning Culture and Branding

The primary aim and concern of city image-making through a city branding process is to reduce vagueness and strengthen the clarity of the image. Producing an image of a place is the result of various activities and forms conducted by physical and emotional representation, which are able to reconstruct every single character of the place.

Considering this complicated process as the confluence of various cultural, social and historical sources, it is difficult to replicate exactly the image of a place onto another by way of city image-making.

Segmentation and differentiation of the tourism industry drives cultural tourism, and it enhances cultural branding for cities. Recent case studies show cultural strategies to be one of the ways used to rebrand cities in the UK, e.g. London (Kaika, 2010; Sales et al., 2009), Manchester (Leadbeater, 2009; Kennedy, 2009), and Liverpool (Daramola-Martyn, 2009). The reason behind the recent interest of many cities in branding is the ineffaceable effect of an image in terms of delivering a clear idea of a city to tourists. Anholt (2007) notes that when images are actively and internationally created, for instance, with political and economic bases, the terms “image-making”, “image-building” or “image-projection” are used.

### 2.5.1 Primary cultural attractions

City brand image is built by all the tangible and intangible elements tourists and visitors see and feel about the city. Kapferer (2010: 185-186) states that this includes the city’s “prototypical products, its salient communication, and the people we meet”. Florek and Conejo (2007) contend that flagship products function by helping to build “the positive dimensions of the city image abroad”, for instance; “London’s Stock Exchange, the London School of Economics, the Tate Museum, and the original mix of cultures exemplified by Buckingham Palace and Carnaby Street; for Paris, The Eiffel Tower, The Louvre, haute couture temples of luxury brands on the Rue du Faubourg Saint-Honoré”. Promoting images of cities is deeply related to constructing a range of physical cultural attractions, such as museums and shopping malls.<sup>17</sup> These key cultural attractions which function as amenities, reflect some of the major genres of postmodern culture, including architecture, art, literature, cinema, music and fashion (Smart, 1993).

Arnold also mentions that Western art, music, architecture and literature are the standard for a civilisation of high culture. These important cultural attractions have impacted on city image and some of the most important attractions have been considered as the heritage of cities. Building a legible image of cities in terms of cultural attractions is one of the primary reasons underlying the phenomenon of city branding. Shields suggests that the images enable audiences, including tourists, to “organise information, formulate generalisations and expectations, and guide our actions” in their decision-making process on visiting destinations (1991).

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<sup>17</sup> Barry Smart writes in *Postmodernity: Key Ideas*, “the proliferation of shopping malls and consumer culture” identifies postmodern life at the global and local level (1993).

According to Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, heritage is “a new model of cultural production in the present that has recourse to the past” in creating an image of destinations (1998). Specialists like Kaminski and Benson (2013) reaffirm the significance of cultural heritage for tourism development and its various economic impact with cultural theories and practical applications: E.g. Sydney’s heritage consumption for the tourism industry. Moreover, Kirshenblatt-Gimblett states that heritage is closely related to tourism and “the heritage industry produces something new” in developing city image.

The major instruments for developing the heritage industry include museums, exhibitions, cultural centres and arts festivals (Ibid.: 149-156): Cherry states that Britain’s Department of Culture, Media and Sport oversees “museums, libraries, broadcasting, heritage sites and the arts, as well as sport, the lottery, tourism and the leisure industries” (2005: 6-7). Florida advocates that city image can be achieved through investing in “museums, stadiums, urban shopping retail malls, and cultural districts” (2004: 259).

However, some academics argue that Florida has limited the scope for amenities that affect city image in attracting creative people, and includes others, such as advanced communications technology or efficient urban transportation and mobility, which can be explained as a place’s amenities in a wider sense of a city’s attractions. With this cultural attractiveness, a legible image of a city can be identified with its strong cultural identity. Urban branding and creativity have led to a large number of different approaches being taken towards a culturally intriguing city image. The use of creative tools from design drives cultural urban branding, such as rethinking the role and contribution of exhibitions with imagination and community engagement to build up branding, drives cultural urban branding.

Studying cultural aspects with which to enhance a city’s cultural identity and personality has increasingly become a key tool for policy makers conducting a project of city branding. Kotler notes that a brand can potentially possess various levels of meaning: “attributes; benefits; values; culture; personality; and the user (consumer)” (2000: 404). Furthermore, Govers and Go note that cultural heritage with local products, tourism services, infrastructure, education, sports and health care tend to be involved as investments for “on-brand” ideas (2009: 13). For example, in a case study of Dubai: Donald et al. argue that the study examines the effect of city branding and its impact on cultural identity; through a city branding process, Dubai, has come to be identified as a hub for international business, but the city’s original cultural identity has faded (2009: 103). On the contrary, Spirou states that

the transformation of Dubai to a shopping hub with a month-long mega shopping festival restructured the city's identity (2010: 60).

### 2.5.2 Cultural mega-events

Mega-events in culture are one of the most powerful cultural tools to drive tourism competition. The definition of mega-events is based upon "volume (1 million visits), capital cost (DM 750 million), and psychology, e.g. a reputation as a 'must see' event" (Deffner and Labrianidis, 2005: 242; Marris, 1987: 3).<sup>18</sup> Getz defines mega-events as those that "yield extraordinary high levels of tourism, media coverage, prestige or economic impact for the host community or destination" (2000: 210; 1997: 6). Furthermore, Hall advocates "an integral part of the image of a mega-event will also include the marketing of the intrinsic properties of the tourism destination" (1989: 26).<sup>19</sup>

Landry states that mega-events are interrelated with the image of cities, and this interconnectivity between cultural events and cities constitutes an intrinsic component of "place marketing, a statement of intent, and a branded concept that triggers the 'creative milieu' of a city" (2000: 153-154). Thus, according to Roche, mega-events need to be planned strategically, and mega-events are considered as "short-term events with long-term consequences for the cities that stage them" (1994: 1).

Building a unique cultural image as a city's cultural asset through mega-events thus brings "cultural heritage benefit from the impulses of cultural tourism, and shapes the most dynamic components of the tourist sector" in a broad sense (cf. Richards, 1996).<sup>20</sup> One of the biggest differences between these events and traditional mega-events is in the aspect of social meaning and thinking about putting cultural context with creativity into practice in the urban regimes of cities.

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<sup>18</sup> "Cultural planning does not aim primarily to attract visitors, but the provision of a cultural infrastructure, if done on a strategic basis, benefits not only residents, but visitors as well. Place marketing benefits visitors more than existing residents. However, residents, especially those involved in tourism, benefit indirectly if new investments result" (Deffner and Labrianidis, 2005: 244).

<sup>19</sup> "For a city to become more attractive and competitive for residents, business and visitors, planning and design need to be complemented by an integrated marketing policy. A principal characteristic of such a policy is the use of branding devices such as 'intelligent', 'educated', "green" and 'creative city'" (Landry, 2000: 153 in Deffner and Labrianidis, 2005: 244).

<sup>20</sup> Likewise, for many authors (Urry, 2011; Richards, 1996; Harvey, 1989), the phenomenon of cultural tourism also represents a reaffirmation of the properties of the so-called postmodern era, in which a contemporary person's sensation of being separated from one's roots by the phenomenon of globalisation and the empire of the ephemeral, is promoting a search for authenticity and identification in the past and in the vicinity.

For example, the *FutureEverything* event in Manchester seeks social change through active citizen engagement in the form of art curation<sup>21</sup> (Hemment et al., 2011; Olsen, 2012). Both locally and internationally, the event has built up a mega-cultural network through digital reconceptualisations of the social design context. The event founder, Hemment notes, “You will need tools such as events enabling the free circulation of people and ideas, and connecting people at different levels, from grassroots to government and business leaders” (2010).

However, the specific benefits of cultural events for cities are questionable in terms of whose culture and which parts of the city are precisely focused on. Fudge argues that there is an idealistic *imaginative linkage* between cultural development and sustainability in cities. He raises questions about “exactly whose culture it is that is being promoted, which parts of the city benefit, and whether repetition and homogenisation are imposed over the uniqueness of a specific culture” (1991: 31). Therefore, developing creative and unique content for events from a local perspective may be useful in characterising a part of the cultural identity in cities.

## 2.6 Museums as Visual Representative of Cultural Branding

One of the most culturally notable and popular attractions in city branding used to attract tourists is an iconic museum. The museum has always played a role in offering cultural atmosphere, emotional satisfaction and educational and visual facilities through which to experience the city. The popularity of museums in cities means that they can play a role in changing the city's image, particularly from the aspect of tourism (Vivant, 2011; Altınbaşak and Yalçın, 2010). Large museums in particular have contributed to attracting tourists to a city, and the impression and response of tourists have in turn been projected into making a city's image (Altınbaşak and Yalçın, 2010; Côté et al., 2006; Wagner, 1954: 29). Museums are authentic, open and influential representative types of cultural production in the composition of city image. In ‘developed countries’ such as London and Paris, museums are considered to be one of the most socially valued cultural institutions<sup>22</sup> (Pallud and Straub,

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<sup>22</sup> Schuster (2007) observed that museum attendance generates the highest participation rates throughout the cross-national comparison, followed by cinema, reading and sports. However, it is indicated that Britain's visitors to the leading museums as well as United State's young visitors are declining (The Guardian, 2 February 2017).

2014: 359). The growth of museums and visitor numbers to these museums since the end of the 1980s reflects the importance of museums in major international cities.

### 2.6.1 World-class museums

The Museums Association describes a museum “[...as] an institution which collects, documents, preserves, exhibits and interprets material evidence and associated information for the public benefit”. Public art museums in large-scale cities such as London, Paris and New York function as cultural representatives for the cities, e.g. the British Museum, the Louvre and the Metropolitan Museum. Furthermore, Hein (2000) notes that science museums followed art museums in eliciting transformative experiences from their visitors.

Thus, reputable science, history and art museums in international cities, with their scale, architecture facade, abundant collections of objects, and creative themes in the exhibition planning, have grown up as a major influential cultural facility. According to Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, museums are a premier attraction for tourism destinations. Museums are not just simple destinations on an itinerary; they are also a nexus of attractions that are an integral part of natural, historical and cultural sites as a “recreational geography” (1998).

Museums internationally approach the majority of tourists instead of waiting for them to simply arrive: museums have long “epitomised a produce driven ethos, reserving for themselves the prerogative to determine what they want to say and show” (Ibid.). In particular, art museum branding such as that of Bilbao’s Guggenheim is one of the major examples of reimagining a city (Vivant, 2011; Evans, 2003). Other literature ranges from museum marketing (Rentschler and Hede, 2007) to museums in a digital age (Parry, 2009) and tends to reflect the current issues faced by museums including museum branding.

In the same manner, Camarero et al. (2010: 495) state that, “image, brand and brand equity are becoming increasingly important concepts for arts and cultural organisations such as the Tate Gallery, Bilbao Guggenheim or MOMA”: these world-class art museums are prime examples of an internationally recognised and clearly distinguishable museum brand based on “a distinctive and prestigious architecture and style”. In other words, branding a museum with clarity and emotional satisfaction through significant design and unique exhibitions gives it an image and a personality through which visitors can identify the museum’s distinctive style (Wallace, 2006: 1-2).

Therefore, branding museums can positively affect how visitors perceive their identity and personality and, subsequently, how they contribute to sustaining its brand value by accepting and maintaining the reputation. “All museums have an identity, personality, image, reputation, and some degree of fit with the people who will become its family and supporters”, and “smart museums find their identities, articulating their core values” (Ibid.: 2).

### 2.6.2 Museum branding

Museums offer a variety of experiences via diversified marketing channels including tourism websites (Kotler et al., 2008: 31-32). Museums are an integrated entity of brand marketing: visitors are interested mainly in current exhibitions but other facilities and service also reinforce the museum brand. Museums compete not only with other museums, but also with a range of other cultural institutions, from libraries to performing art centres (Ibid.; Wallace, 2006). Kotler’s concept of museum marketing and its strategies are expanded in Wallace’s museum branding.

One of the core strategies in museum branding is building a long-lasting image through encountering the exhibited objects, and whether the role of exhibitions for the museum image can allow a reconsideration of museums as part of cultural branding for a city. In this sense, museum branding may be applicable in part to city branding. Wallace states that “branding pays off when, day after day, exhibition after exhibition, donor after donor, the image remains clear” (2006: 2). Exhibition themes are tried and tested to support the museum’s mission to construct a legible image. “Every time a museum displays an object, it brands itself. Nothing so perfectly identifies a museum as its exhibits.

And it is with these that the branding process begins” (Ibid.: 9). In addition, and like exhibitions that have been identified as an essential branding tool for a museum, a museum’s collections reflect its formal identity. The findings of the literature review indicate that museum exhibitions and their curatorial ability have evolved with the change of art movements, culture and social innovation in Europe and the United States since the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The popularity of private collections accumulated through travel led to a form of exhibition and galleries, and progress in science led to the museums functioning as an authority on the cultural sectors of cities.

The dynamics of modern art movements in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century enhanced the role and value of museums to represent an integral part of the city’s image (Altınbaşak and Yalçın, 2010;

Côté and Dubé, 2006). Within the world-class museums' rapid growth, displaying the objects has been studied and practised by professional curators in terms of concepts, skills and methodologies. In addition, special exhibitions such as 'blockbuster exhibitions' and travelling shows that move from city to city also expand on the museum's mission: exhibitions are curated according to a theme through their collections, and it is these narrations that distinctively reflect the museum's attractive brand image (Wallace, 2006: 9-10; Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 1998: 132). Therefore, distinctive exhibitions with a creative theme can be a vehicle by which to identify a museum's brand image, which may, in turn, enhance a city's rich and vibrant image.

### 2.6.3 Museum exhibitions as curation

In this section, the role and impact of museum exhibitions will be examined. Although there is no specific literature on the connectivity of museum exhibitions and city image, some literature on city image and museums provided the value of exhibitions to museum branding and its image production for cities (e.g. Altınbaşak and Yalçın, 2010; Côte et al., 2006). In this sense, investigating museum exhibitions and curation would be a useful context for understanding museums' role as one of major cultural attractions in cities.

Pearce notes that a museum exhibition represents and reflects the "cultural expression" of Europe in a modern context (1993: 1). According to Macdonald, curating art and science objects for museum exhibitions as a profession emerged more than a century ago with the institutionalisation of museums in Europe (1998). The collections, representation, and promotions of museums have enhanced and advanced curating power methodologically, visually, and culturally. The role and the cultural impact of museums as primary cultural institutions in cities have been strengthened with the emergence of the different types of museums such as history museums, science museums and art museums (Henning, 2006; Pearce, 1993).

In the same manner, Macdonald notes that each type of museum has its own character that requires certain curating methodologies to differentiate the understanding of objects and style on display (1998). Compared to existing museums' volumes of literature that construct a complete theoretical foundation from history to museum culture, the literature of curating still needs to be expanded. In general, existing literature (e.g. Henning, 2006; Macdonald, 1998; Pearce, 1993) on curation covers contexts of display, collection, and exhibition design although some of the more recent literature explores a new paradigm of curation including digital technology or the articulation of social issues.

The impact of curation on culture is intangible but important in its cultural meanings, which value artists, art forms, and museums. Museum curators do not directly participate in creating art but they create a form of art indirectly as a “producer”<sup>23</sup>. Therefore, looking at curating and curators from an in-depth cultural perspective can advance curation itself, in terms of design and design management in this cultural and creative industry.

### 2.6.3.1 Modern art museums

According to Duncan, modern art movements were developed from the 1860s to the 1970s and modern art museums were established in New York such as the Museum of Modern Art (MOMA) in 1929 and the Guggenheim in 1939 to introduce this art phenomenon (1995). More modern art movements, including Surrealism and Dadaism, were shown in museums and opened up whole new possibilities to explore artists’ challenges with their ‘unconventional’ artworks involving aesthetically, socially and philosophically saturated visual images.<sup>24</sup> Furthermore, Duncan states that the history of modern art is a “highly selective history” as it is typically understood in or by society (Ibid.: 102). She argues that modern art is “a cultural construct that is collectively produced and perpetuated by all those professionals who work in art schools, universities, museums, publishing houses, and any other place where modern art is taught, exhibited, or interpreted” (Ibid.).

### 2.6.3.2 The paradigm shift in postmodernism

In general, the display of art objects in museums can be characterised into two types. One is a simple narrative structure in chronological order or according to the character of objects or genres or artists. The other is more creatively designed to break with the typical linear display, and which can allow the audience to participate with the artists’ works and offer them a chance to rethink the importance of interpretation in contemporary art exhibitions.<sup>25</sup> The latter has appeared alongside postmodern art and culture, which reflected a paradigm shift in art. Turner defines postmodern culture as a “playful (in fact, distasteful)” mixing of kitsch culture with “haute couture” (1982: 4). In other words, postmodern styles in a broad sense represent pop culture, but also imitate and reproduce it within high culture. The influence of postmodernism on contemporary art has brought a new aestheticism, and many

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<sup>23</sup> Graham and Cook (2010: 149-156) state that curatorial roles are expanded as producer and communicator.

<sup>24</sup> In 1930s Surrealists and Dadaists including Keisler curated a new form and style of installation design in New York and Berlin (Staniszewski, 1998: 23).

<sup>25</sup> ‘Interpretation is the act or process of explaining or clarifying, translating, or presenting a personal understanding about a subject or object’ (Dean, 1994: 6).

contemporary art exhibitions are also influenced by the postmodern style. Contemporary art impacts on curating, which ranges from non-traditional experiment to playful participation, both visually and intellectually.

### 2.6.3.3 The impact of contemporary art on curation

Desmond notes that throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> and entering the 21<sup>th</sup> century, with the advent of modern and postmodern art forms, “distinctions between the fine arts and the low arts have started to fade” (2011: 148): avant-gardism is characteristic of the ‘experimental’ and ‘innovative’ approach in contemporary art and culture. In addition, Macdonald and Basu argue that contemporary avant-garde artists respond sensitively to social changes, through their approach to their artwork and are “entering into new alliances with new forms of enactments” (2007: 107). In particular, the new media art includes digital art, which is a new field of study to review the interactive relationship and potentiality between the new art form and curating technology. This new media art is a multi-layered hybrid production between art and science. As Graham and Cook state, collaborative art and science projects are associated with new media art (2010: 28).

Most contemporary artists’ themes and expressions are considered as being outside the context of art history. Their pursuit deconstructs a norm of the traditional art form, style and methodology in order to deliver a reinterpreted and recontextualised concept rather than representing art history to viewers. For example, Tang notes that The Big Bang in Centre Georges Pompidou in 2006 referred to the conceptual juxtaposition of classical art’s historical context with diversity and “curatorial play” (2006). In a broad sense, Graham and Cook define contemporary art in postmodern culture as “recontextualizing someone else’s content by displaying [it] geographically, physically, or intellectually” in mixed and matched media (2010: 32).

Additionally, the boom in cultural studies since the 1970s has enforced a rethinking of curating and curators located in a postmodern culture. According to Graham and Cook, the “three defining characteristics of postmodern culture [are]: its existential shifts, its conceptual shifts, and its technological shifts” (Ibid.: 29). Moreover, the emerging contemporary art (or postmodern art) movement implies a paradigm change from ‘system-based’ to ‘concept-based’ art.

In other words, the paradigm shift of art impacts functionally on the role of curators, and intellectually requires in-depth curatorial skills; first, the curator’s functional role is extended

to that of “producer, communicator, cultural imperialist [authorities], project manager, and editor”, and the curatorial roles are apparent, “1) embedded 2) adjunct 3) independent” (Ibid.: 153); second, the intellectual challenges of contemporary curators are essentially, recontextualising, repositioning, reinterpreting, and reintroducing art based on the research of history, aesthetics and creativity to the public through intense collaboration with artists. Finally, with a profoundly professional understanding of contemporary art theory and meaning in practice, curators can attempt to raise “the question of conceptual metaphors of the artworks” (Macdonald and Basu, 2007: 73).

## 2.7 Stakeholders: Cultural Cities into Visual Branding Practice

City branding has finally emerged as a significant area of academic research in marketing (Merrilees et al., 2009). Firat and Venkatesh argue that the application of a marketing strategy in city branding can only be “the conscious and planned practice of signification and representation” (1993: 246). Marketers refine the concepts and ideas of city branding in two ways: in view of the activity of cities, regions and countries; and by treating the place as spatially extended products.

However, Dinnie argues that a sustainable city brand needs to be built in “reality”, rather than “a delusion peddled by mendacious marketers” (2011: 95).<sup>26</sup> Donald et al. state that the idea of the city brand can embody our ideas both of place and of the identities of places, but it also obscures more complex and differentiated aspects, such as the character of place and our relationship to it, rather than encompassed by any brand or image (2009: 197). City brand development requires a vision and strategies by various stakeholders (Gelder, 2011: 36-37; Houghton and Stevens, 2011: 45-53). Gelder also states that city branding requests a clarity of brand vision through applying cultural elements and more to sustain their coherent strategies:

A clear vision for the future of the place and a coherent strategy by relevant stakeholders: tourism, private sector, government policy, investment/immigration and culture/education (2011: 36-38).

Harmaakorpi proposes that one of the ultimate aims of the place branding process is to increase and develop the attractiveness of a place (2008: 170). Another is to increase the engagement between stakeholders and places. Additionally, although branding a place

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<sup>26</sup> “Making exaggerated claims for a city will backfire as soon as target audiences realise that they have been misled” (Ibid.: 95).

throws up difficulties such as creating a legible image, once a strong place brand is developed, it offers benefits to its stakeholders, such as local authorities (Kaplan et al., 2010: 1290; Koller, 2008: 436). One way of doing this is by public stakeholders creating and informing a comprehensive and conspicuous brand slogan for cities:

Public sector planners have long been prone to the adoption, overuse and then consignment to oblivion of fashionable slogans to convince political decision-makers who put a premium on novelty, succinctness and simplicity (Kavaratzis and Ashworth, 2005: 507).

Bendel advocates that creating an effective city brand slogan is important in strengthening city image: i) for New York City, in the 1970s, the brand slogans of the 'Big Apple' and 'I Love New York' enhanced the identity of a world-class city as a capital of finance, business and tourism (e.g. theatre (Broadway), shopping, dining, museums); and ii) for Paris, in 2008, the Mayor requested a brand slogan, such as 'Fluctuat nec margitur' which means "it floats but never sinks" to compete with other major international cities, e.g. New York City (2011: 179-183).<sup>27</sup>

City branding has therefore transitioned from a perspective within the marketing discipline to a branding perspective not only by the extensive "use and success" of product branding theory but also by the developed concept of corporate branding (Balmer and Greyser, 2003; Balmer 1998; Ashworth and Voogd, 1990).<sup>28</sup> Braun concluded in his comparative urban study into the implementation of city marketing, "embedding city marketing in urban governance and creating the right conditions for city marketing management will become key challenges for cities" (2011). For example, major industrial cities in the UK, including Manchester, have transformed the visual identity of the city by the promotion of tourism through the development of related facilities, e.g. the National Football Museum in Manchester, thus reaching some interesting conclusions.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> "In 2008, Paris lost against London for the hosting of the 2012 Olympic Games, Bertrand Delanoë, Paris Mayor emitted a diagnosis according to which he had a better objective 'product' (the proposal itself) but the Paris 'brand image' was not as sexy as that of London" (Kapferer, 2011: 184).

<sup>28</sup> Additionally, insights into, and analysis of, corporate branding theory have been examined to develop a theoretical aspect of city branding in recent years (Braun, 2012: 259; Kavaratzis and Ashworth, 2005). For instance, Hankinson's (2010) 'model of places as relational brand networks' in twelve UK cities and Balakrishnan's seven unique characteristics of a destination, have been developed. However, Braun argues that despite the many critical issues in city branding that have been developed by Hankinson and Balakrishnan, the field is still in confusion about the 'concept' and the implementation' (2012: 259).

<sup>29</sup> Kavaratzis and Ashworth contest that urban planners use three main techniques for branding cities i.e. "personality branding, flagship construction and event branding" (2005: 513).

Therefore, reexamining the positive and negative perspectives of branding theory applicability as well as the solid or fluid positioning of stakeholders in city branding could offer new empirical guidance for city branding in the coming years.

## 2.8 Chapter Findings

This chapter began by introducing the idea of employing city image as a driving factor in city branding. Four key topics identified interrelationships among city image, branding and cultural productions. These topics will be used in developing key themes throughout this research and will be presented in the Discussion Chapter as follows:

### Branding practice into city image creation

Adaptation of product branding theory to cities has developed the idea of legibility of city image. Unlike products, cities are composed of layers of attributes in constructing an image. The global phenomenon of city branding has driven how to enhance and change a city's image to appeal to broader audiences. The ultimate aim of city image creation is to distinguish cities from other cities, which strengthens the city's visual identity. The literature of some case studies, e.g. Manchester, show how less-recognised cities, in terms of internationally-successful cities, have transformed the city image with branding and design practice. These cases of reimagining cities open a discussion on two major topics: i) how internationally-successful cities such as London have sustained their cultural image and reputation; and ii) whether second-tier cities have to pursue global competitiveness in cultural image enhancement.

### Reinforcing primary cultural attractions

The literature identified culture as being and having always been, considered as one of the key engines in changing city image with regard to its multiple layers of attributes and semantics. Major cultural productions of cities, such as museums, have been regarded as an essential tool in constructing a city image. These key urban cultural productions help to build cultural attractiveness in cities, through promotion via the media. Productions such as museums, shopping malls and sport stadiums are leading components in structuring a nexus of visible and cultural attractions in global cities. The importance of the cultural attractions as core heritage for the cities has also been discussed. Among the central attractions in cities, museums were identified as leading attractions in Europe. The value and reputation of international museums, such as Tate Modern, involve the branding practice that is called

museum branding. The framework of museum branding including exhibitions has expanded the meaning and function of museums for city image to attract tourists. The findings shape further research context, such as what types of cultural productions exist and play a role in enhancing cultural city image. Since cultural productions involve design practice that features in physical appearances and contents, this finding will be useful in developing the context of city image in this thesis.

#### Museums as a representative urban cultural attraction

Iconic museums in cities have played a role in leading cultural attractions, and practising the concept of branding for museums can strengthen a city image. Since exhibitions are one of the central elements in forming and creating the identity of museums, investigating exhibitions through the lens of curation was developed in this chapter. Evolution of museum exhibitions has changed the concept, methods and themes of curation, throughout the changes in art movements. Disruption of traditional curation, such as display as organisation of objects no longer being the only method of curation, has contributed to innovative thinking and implementation of museum exhibitions. The fundamental idea of curation composed of preservation, selection and display has been adapted by various non-art fields including city curation. Two subsequent topics emerged as follows: i) how museum exhibitions represent the constant change of art movements to the public; and ii) the meaning of the emergence of curating in cities, such as how cities select and present their cultural productions in reinforcing their images.

#### Meaning production in visual presentation

A clear city image in terms of cultural activity involves design that is related to creating a visual identity of cities. Major elements include visual images and text referring to messages by various stakeholders (e.g. designers). The design of visual presentations of city image brings forth potential meanings through encoding and decoding the design context. Visual culture includes visual arts/design and creative writing. Comprehension of coded meanings in visual design links to understanding what cities are likely to deliver as messages.

Marketing channels for cities including tourism websites can be regarded as one good example in understanding the interplay of city image production between a sender and receiver. This finding will be used in developing a series of case studies on global cities' image coding via official and unofficial tourism websites in a further stage of this thesis.

## 2.9 Evaluation

### 2.9.1 Identifying gaps in the literature

From the findings, a mapping exercise to structure research questions around the topic of the thesis was formulated using the city branding keywords most closely connected with the application of culture, including: i) culture-driven city branding via tourism websites, ii) use of primary cultural attractions in aligning culture and city branding, iii) iconic museums and their impacts on city branding, and iv) visual meanings in message production. The majority of the literature was explored from a linguistics perspective; the scope of the context was mainly limited to reflect 'design' for socio-cultural, political or tourism contexts. In this sense, the main gaps in the literature to develop this research were identified as how visual design functions (e.g. architecture or exhibition themes) enhance city branding. The gaps, therefore, have been addressed by constructing various topics from a visual design perspective:

- How can intermediate cities such as Manchester distinguish themselves from global cities (e.g. London or Paris) to be recognised as culturally strong cities?
- What are the meanings of visual presentational design of cultural city image, through branding via major tourism websites?
- How do specific types of cultural attractions and their design features function to drive a culturally vital city brand?
- How do museums and their characteristic design elements play a role in impacting on visual city branding?

From gaining insight into the questions above, a theoretical basis for formulating research questions was developed. Looking at the examples from international cities to answer the above questions in terms of city branding and image construction via the design of tourism websites can be useful in filling the gaps within the literature.

### 2.9.2 Research connectivity to the next chapters

This interdisciplinary literature review on city branding and its core findings as a discussion theme will frame the theoretical basis for developing the further chapters within this thesis. As Chapters 4.0 to 9.0 will focus on analysis of city branding of selected international cities through the design of tourism websites, the essence of each topic in the literature will provide supporting references.

### 2.9.3 Limitations and further study

The recent study on city image offers an expansion of the perspectives in analysing city branding strategies. For example, some very recent publications (e.g. *City Branding and New Media*, Paganoni, 2015) suggested that city branding could be observed from quite different angles than the precedents (e.g. textual messages in linguistics). However, in understanding the city image, the perspectives of these advanced academic references seemed to be not so different from the customary discipline-specific approach. This research, therefore, will attempt to articulate visualisation of city image on a promotional medium (website design) and search for more specific and realistic topics around city image corresponding to the use of cultural productions.

## 2.10 Summary

Overall, the literature has addressed city branding ranging from extensive branding via tourism websites, use of cultural attractions, brand reputation of international museums, and message creation through visual design. From the arguments and discussions about topics within city branding and cultural attractions, multiple case studies of London, Paris, New York City, Amsterdam, Sydney and Manchester were developed. Through examining the case studies, commonalities were revealed among the leading cities in shaping the city brands through the use of cultural icons.

For example, some cities produce their distinguished cultural images through well-built and preserved cultural assets and practices. Iconic cultural institutions and facilities, e.g. art museums and festivals have significant impact on their image. Making a positive and legible image with cultural productions (museums, shopping malls) has been considered as one of the key branding strategies for local authorities in cities (Evans, 2003: 402).

Recent paradigms of city branding focus more and more on cultural aspects to make visible differentiation in a sophisticated but fixed manner between cities. New and incorporated paradigms of making a city's image from city branding to urban cultural branding have evidently opened a new and multi-layered structured approach. Specifically, this chapter has demonstrated that the branding of global cities such as London, has incorporated cultural strategies such as expanding its museum culture to enhance the scope of city branding (Elderkin, 2011).

On the contrary, the literature on Manchester did not specifically address how the city successfully transformed its former industrial visual identity to a modern and culturally

dynamic image. Regarding the city's architectural design and its performance in repositioning itself as a newly defined cultural destination, it is essential to know why and how the post-industrial city has progressed its redefined brand concept, and by whom, acting as stakeholders.

From the findings in Chapter 2.0, four central topics on city branding were identified with a focus on building a culturally vital brand personality. First, the phenomenon of how city branding impacts on most international cities. Confronting the fierce competition, almost all cities seek to create and promote their culturally attractive side for branding the cities. Second, the types and characteristics of primary cultural attractions mainly reflect the cities' visual heritage and introduce their design products. Third, iconic museums in the cities function as the most necessary and popular cultural amenities in presenting the cities as a culturally attractive venue. Lastly, the context of visual design directly and indirectly delivers an intentional message or a further meaning from the producers of the design. The meaning production through the design of tourism websites supports what to deliver as brand messages and how to construct a visual identity for cities.

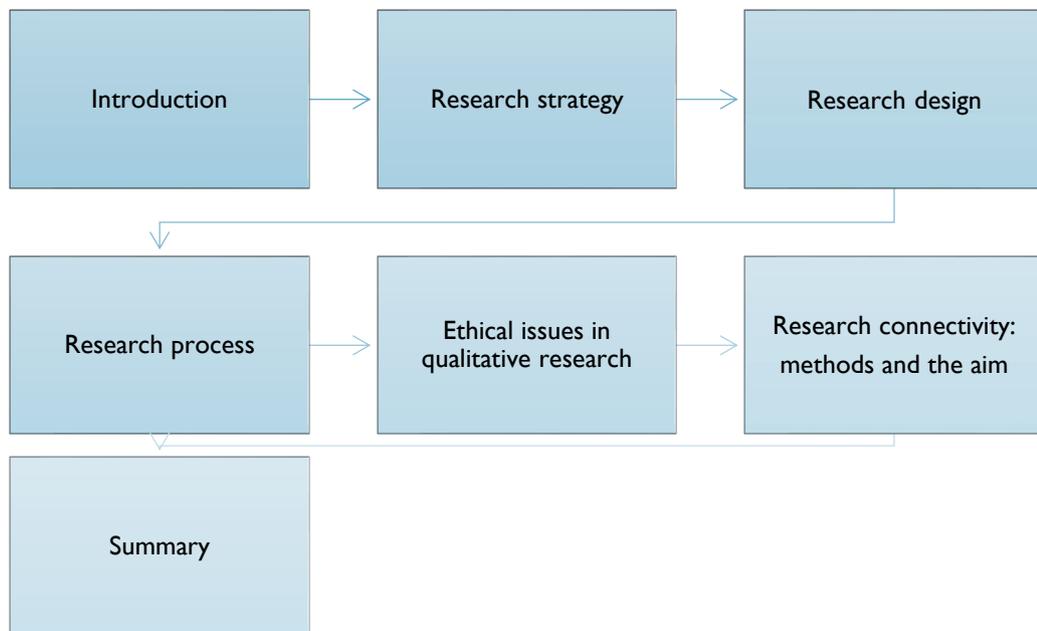
In essence, the study on international city branding broadly covered its connection and relationship with cultural strategy development and well-planned visualisation through the media. As the term 'design' has been widely used and technologically applied to city branding in both highly successful city brands and emerging city brands, it is interesting to question the meanings of visual features of the designs as a key and powerful method of giving a visual personality to a city brand.

A contextual mapping of city branding from the key findings of the literatures was developed as follows:



**Figure 2.6** Contextual Mapping Exercise.

### 3.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY



**Figure 3.1** Chapter Map.

Qualitative research is about meanings, not numbers.<sup>30</sup>

### 3.1 Introduction

For the primary objective of determining and constructing a better relationship between city branding and visual design, this thesis study requires a rigorous adoption of methodology, and therefore, this chapter presents a detailed discussion of the research philosophy, strategy, and approach method for that reason. The methodology discussion relies mainly upon the research process necessary for the data collection and analysis of the tourism websites. How to identify and explain details in meanings of city branding, and utilisation of cultural attractiveness through the lens of visual design will also be discussed. Considerable importance will also be placed on the formulation of interview questions and interview data validation, because the principal research target is approached using the question and answer method.

### 3.2 Research Strategy

Prior to developing the proposed research methods for this research, it was necessary to explore the various types of research strategy. Robson (2011) presents two possible approaches— fixed and flexible — for shaping the research design:

- A fixed strategy tends to be associated with number-based data for quantitative research where there is a pre-specification concerning how to process the research. It is necessary to ascertain whether your research aims to, or is able to, provide pre-specified and scientific data, before deciding on this particular strategy.
- A flexible strategy is often regarded as research that uses a qualitative-based approach. Data used and produced from this strategy are typically non-numerical, and usually in the form of words. If a researcher aims to produce a fluid structure with meaning-focused contents as an outcome, a flexible strategy is more likely to be appropriate for the research.

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<sup>30</sup> Braun and Clarke (2013: 20).

In the relationship between a type of data and the research strategies used, there is a considerable amount of work before a researcher decides on specific methods. Robson (2011) states that while a flexible strategy-based research can include a series of quantitative data collection, a fixed strategy-based approach hardly includes any collection of qualitative data. This is because a fixed strategy is more likely to produce, and is based upon, the solid collection of scientific data, such as a statistical sampling of surveys or experiments.

In the development of the research approach, identifying the study findings from the literature in Chapter 2.0, where there is an interconnected dimension of city branding via visual design, was considered to narrow down the types of research to those employing a flexible strategy. Therefore, a flexible strategy was chosen for this research in order to obtain broader outcomes in constructing in-depth topics on city branding via the design of tourism websites. It conveyed multiple background stories in progressing branding by aligning cultural attractions via visual design.

### 3.3 Research Design

This section, addresses the qualitative research approach employed for this study. In developing the research methodology and potential research methods, a number of existing methodology theories in relation to the actual research were replicated. As outlined in the aim of the research (Section 1.4.1, p. 27), the ultimate and expected outcome of this research is to conduct an interdisciplinary study in understanding various and specified aspects of cultural city branding via the design of tourism websites. To satisfy the aim of the research, a qualitative research approach for an in-depth understanding was selected as a basis for the research process rather than a quantitative research approach for generalisable findings.

#### 3.3.1 Research framework

##### 3.3.1.1 Research questions

As the theoretical nature of this thesis is based upon a qualitative research approach, the research questions aim to construct the scope of potential meanings within given specific contents (i.e. tourism websites, city branding). Hennink et al. contest that the research question represents that which the researcher most wants to explore and that research questions possess various qualities; they can be general or specific, descriptive or explanatory and they can be formulated at any stage of the research process (2011: 25). Furthermore, Miles et al. state that research questions present the “facts” of the most

important and interesting aspects of inquiry that the researcher wants to explore. Additionally, Lewis (2003: 47) states that a coherent study design between research questions and the methods is linked to generating reliable data.

Examination of the research questions was prominently required prior to choosing an appropriate methodology and a method. Three research questions were formulated based on the key findings in the literature in Chapter 2.0 (Section 2.9.1, p. 68). The main purpose of the analysis is to address the research questions: i) investigating the design of tourism websites in global cities to identify examples of primary attractions in visual context and the meanings of the context in city image production; and ii) interviewing experts in Manchester to find detailed answers in the real world, specifically: why the city seeks to be recognised as a cultural city; which attractions play a role in representing the city as a culturally curious venue; and who the collaborative stakeholders are in city branding of tourism websites.

#### The scope of the questions

To specify the scope of the questions, the following requirements were considered: that “feasibility, clarity, connectivity to existing research or theory, potentiality of making an original contribution, capability of collecting data and reflectivity of interest to the researcher” should be implicitly examined in formulating research questions (Lewis, 2003).

Miles et al. (2014: 25) state that research questions represent the central aim to exploring a topic: “Research questions represent the facets of inquiry that the research most wants to explore. Research questions may be general or particular, descriptive or explanatory”.

Hennink et al. (2011: 33) also claim that research questions function as a guide to undertaking all tasks in the research process: “Research questions are questions that you propose to answer through data collection. They guide all other subsequent tasks in the research process”.

#### Qualitative and quantitative

In comparison to a quantitative research approach in relation to research question formulation, Braun and Clarke (2013: 44) support the point of research questions in terms of guiding a qualitative study: “Quantitative research suits with clear and fixed research questions; in qualitative research starts, you also start with a research question, which guides design, but it can also evolve and become refined as a study progresses”.

Furthermore, Marecek (2003) states that applying research questions to qualitative research

tends to ask questions of 'how' rather than 'why'. Because a general objective of qualitative research is to identify meaning-making based upon the meanings of experiences and its relating questions, Braun and Clarke (2013: 51) claim that questions of 'why' are "being more common in quantitative psychology".

For this thesis, three questions were formulated that were developed before the literature review and then refined before data collection began on the web-based research and the case study. The aim of the research questions was to identify and understand details in meanings of city branding as they relate to the use of cultural attractions via the design of tourism websites. The research questions for this study have been defined (Section 1.5.1, p. 29) as below:

**RQ01:** How does the design context of the tourism websites enhance a city's branding?

**RQ02:** How do the visual designs help to construct a city brand's personality?

**RQ03:** How do the design features of museums act as a vehicle for city branding?

### 3.3.1.2 Research propositions

In defining the term proposition, Oliver (2010) argues that it functions as "a statement which links to two or more 'concepts'". It implies that a proposition is of equal weight as to a hypothesis, in which there is no judgement on the utilisation of a proposition to conduct a research. For qualitative researchers, applying propositions rather than hypotheses is more appropriate to acclaim the core aim of the research in defining meanings beyond the topic. Hennink et al. clearly state that point:

In the positivist paradigm, hypotheses are formulated on the basis of existing theory and literature and are then tested empirically. The hypotheses are very much part of epistemology of positivism: They are closed statements which one can decide to be true or not true. This approach goes against the main principles of qualitative research (2011: 42).

As noted in Chapter 1.0 (Section 1.5.2, p. 29), a series of research propositions were constituted from the research questions in the main context of the literature framework. Primarily, the research propositions aim to enable the investigation of the research questions, which connects data collection and analysis. Thus, the texts of the propositions are presented as simple clear statements. The research propositions are thus as follows:

**RP01:** The strategic design of the tourism websites contributes to city branding.

**RP02:** Visuality of cultural attractions has been essential for city branding.

**RP03:** Use of cultural attractions for branding relates to production of the designs.

**RP04:** Museums function as the key design feature of city branding.

**RP05:** The visual context on tourism websites enhances cultural brand personality.

### 3.3.2 Views on interpretative meanings

Since the primary aim of the research questions in this thesis is to be answered by meanings in the paradigm<sup>31</sup> of cultural city image-making through the design of tourism websites, the interpretive paradigm theory will be chiefly adopted to explore this research. To answer the research questions, a qualitative approach and its related methods will be systematically utilised. According to Hennink et al., qualitative research is a broad term to be explicitly defined and one that addresses a wide range of philosophies and techniques (2011: 8-9). It is also stated that, in a broad sense, qualitative research allows researchers to examine “people’s experience in detail”, by using a particular set of research methods such as in-depth interviews, focus group discussions, observations, visual methods, and life histories or biographies (Ibid.).

One of the distinctive features of qualitative research is that the methodological approach enables researchers to identify issues from the perspective of the researchers’ study participants, and “understanding the meanings and interpretations that they give to behaviour, events or objects” (Ibid.). This refers to the interpretive approach, which emerged in response to the positivist<sup>32</sup> facts and quantitative-based approach. Snape and Spencer claim that qualitative researchers usually seek to “understand subjective meaningful experiences” (2003: 7). Therefore, a qualitative research approach is appropriate for conducting this research to provide substantial and specific contents in answering the research questions.

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<sup>31</sup> There are various definitions of ‘paradigms’: i) “models or frameworks for observation and understanding which shape both what we see and how we understand it” (Babbie, 2007: 32); ii) a “net that contains the researchers epistemological, ontological and methodological premises” (Kuhn, 1970).

<sup>32</sup> The positivist paradigm is generally seen as “the scientific approach to research. It forms the foundation for the natural sciences and for experimental research and quantitative studies in social science” (Hennink et al., 2011: 14).

### 3.3.3 Research approach

#### 3.3.3.1 Qualitative research

Definition of research design refers to the planning of a research journey in a logical sense.

Yin states that it is a sequence of logical connections between stages of the research process:

In the most elementary sense, the design is the logical sequence that connects the empirical data to a study's initial research questions and ultimately, to its conclusions. Colloquially, a research design is a logical plan for getting from here to there (2014: 28).

The first stage of research design is to select a research approach either from qualitative or quantitative or mixed. Hennink et al. define it thus:

The purpose of quantitative research is to quantify a research problem, to measure and count issues and then to generalize these findings to a broader population. Extrapolating the findings of quantitative research is possible due to random sampling of respondents, which provides a study of population that is representative of the general population (2011: 16-17).

In contrast,

The purpose of qualitative research is to understand or explain behaviour and beliefs, identify processes and understand the context of people's experiences. The people in this study population are referred to as 'participants' as they are seen as participating in our research and discussing and telling their story in an interview or focus group discussion (Ibid.: 17).

#### 3.3.3.2 Inductive approach

In the application of existing literature or theory to a work of research, inductive and deductive approaches have evolved. Bryman (2008) states that the two major approaches have been typically aligned with qualitative and quantitative research approaches. Reynolds (1971) states that the inductive approach refers to a synthetic-based research in constructing a theory; and the deductive approach can be described as an analytic-based research in developing a theory. Furthermore, Hennink et al. elaborate on the theoretical differences between the two approaches:

[deductive reasoning means] using existing literature or existing theory to deduce or develop a deductive conceptual framework (2011: 42).

[To describe inductive reasoning] When conducting in-depth interviews, you begin to learn more about the key issues of the study after the first interview and use this knowledge to make inductive inferences which lead you to go deeper into the issues in a next interview (Ibid.: 42-43).

This research will be conducted based on an inductive approach using a combination of a series of web-based studies and an interview-based case study with its associated methods.

Due to the nature of studies on city branding within the context of this research, there is unclear philosophical and theoretical evidence to explain the phenomenon of cultural city image creation; instead, the literature showed that the issues of city branding emerged due to branding practice and economic competitiveness among cities. In undertaking the research, two types of research were systematically developed: i) a web-based study from a global city's perspective to provide contextual data of the design of tourism websites; and ii) a case study from a post-industrial city's perspective to offer experiences and viewpoints of reconstructing a city image in Manchester through interviews with experts.

The purpose of these two sets of research is to provide rich and reliable data, and to triangulate findings from both research on website design and from the knowledge, empirical experiences and opinions of people in practice. To answer the research questions, I will focus on: i) observation, interviews, archival research/document analysis and interpretation; and ii) integrating and synthesising the findings from the combination of the research in constructing substantial and relevant themes for discussion. In terms of connections between the two studies, the web-based study provided sufficient material to provide insight that led me to: i) refine my research focus and questions for the case study of Manchester; and ii) understand how the international city brands succinctly utilise and create their own ideas in thematic branding technologies based on their prime visual culture via the design of tourism websites, which framed a contextual basis for comparison with Manchester.

### 3.3.3.3 Types of research

This section gives a theoretical grounding to the types of research and how they are broadly applied to a specific research based upon the main purpose of the research.

In general, three main categories of research are used to explain types of qualitative research, which link to the objective of the research (Yin, 2009; Neuman, 2007): i)

exploratory of a new topic, ii) descriptive of a phenomenon, explanatory, and iii) explanatory of why something happens.

Exploratory research aims to accomplish more explicitly formulated questions that further research enables it to answer. Yin (2009) and Neuman (2007) state that exploratory research tends to focus upon the 'what' of the research. Neuman also claims that a "creative and open-minded" approach is essential to develop exploratory research. While Gibbs (2007) claims that the pro of the research type is that it is inventive, Neuman (2007) states that the con of the research type is that it is difficult to provide definitive answers. In general, exploratory researchers employ a qualitative research technique to collect various sources of information and data.

Descriptive research enables researchers to provide the specified details of a certain situation, such as social setting. Zikmund (1999) states that the potential outcome of a descriptive study is a precise picture of details of the situated subject. In terms of data collection, the research type applies to most data-gathering techniques. Explanatory research focuses on 'why' questions to identify causes and reasons for a study topic. As this type of research is further investigation of a certain topic, it is built upon exploratory and descriptive research (Neuman, 2007). Yin (2014) states that explanatory research potentially leads to the utilisation of qualitative and quantitative research approaches, individually or together.

For this research on city branding from cross-disciplinary perspectives, multiple aspects of all three types of research can be considered. As the research characteristic cannot be defined as a single and simple description, a combination of elements of exploratory, descriptive and explanatory research can be utilised. For example: in explanatory, 'what' is the relationship between city branding and the visual aspects of cultural attractions; in descriptive, 'how' refers to the visual design of tourism websites enhances city brand personal; and in exploratory, 'why' asks about museums function as a prime visual feature to represent a city as a cultural venue.

#### 3.3.3.4 Developing research methods

Traditionally, there are a number of possible approaches to carry out research from a flexible strategy approach in conducting a qualitative research. Robson (2011) suggests three types: a case study, an ethnographic study and a grounded theory study. Similarly, Creswell (2007) presents five ways of carrying out a qualitative research: narrative research, phenomenology,

grounded theory, ethnogeography and a case study. The more commonly discussed of these are:

- A case study addresses the explicitly developed research on the basis of intensive and detailed knowledge about a single, unique and contemporary case or a small number of related multiple cases (Yin, 2014).
- An ethnographic study typically seeks answers about behaviour, actions and interactions of people as individuals or a community within a specifically situated socio-cultural context through a method of recorded observation (Hennink et al., 2011: 170).
- A grounded theory study aims to generate a specified theory to provide a set of fluid guidelines in understanding “human behavior, social processes or cultural norms” (Ibid.: 206). It offers a theoretically explicit analytical rigour, which integrates inductive and deductive approaches (Ibid.).

A case study was carefully selected as a primary study to conduct this research, taking into account the series of research questions in Chapter 1.0 (Section 1.5.1, p. 29) and the criteria outlined by Robson (2011) and Creswell (2007).

To provide substantial answers to the research questions, two types of research were designed for a solid conceptual framework. The first, a pilot study, is a systematically cross-analysed web-based study on tourism websites of international claimed cities branding for a contextual framework. The second, a primary research, is a series of semi-structured interviews with experts for a case study in Manchester branding, providing practical and detailed answers that can fill any gaps of the web-based study. With the two systematically approached bodies of research, a more comprehensive and deeper structure of the discussed themes for this research was construed.

### 3.3.3.5 Structuring the research design

#### Stage 01: a web-based visual study for a pilot study

Due to the primary aim and objectives of this research being to examine international cities and their branding via tourism websites, reviewing the design of tourism websites of selected cities was chosen to build a substantial foundation to conduct the primary research.

In Chapter 2.0, the literature of tourism websites on city branding showed that researchers used a type of web-based research to explore various topics within that subject, from socio-politics to tourism trend in cultural studies.

The majority of literature used surveys (e.g. visual brand identity, users' responses on city image) via qualitative analysis (e.g. visual analysis for meaning making, tourist behaviour). Specifically, some research was conducted through surveys, collecting a sufficient amount of data and statistics in proving the result of the research in numbers (Lee et al., 2006); some researchers from linguistics used and focused on their knowledge-based textual and visual analysis to provide contextual in-depth meaning (Nekic, 2014). These approaches and methods are useful and important in constructing researchers' purposes for their understanding and claims about city image via the design of tourism websites.

In this research, the focus of the web-based study is to provide general ideas on how the international city brands use their cultural schemes and design features in enhancing their brand personality via the online medium. The main function of the web-based study for this research is to identify central themes of city branding via multiple topics of visual representations, and how the branding themes and visual approaches help to compose and to refine the cities' cultural images. Therefore, the pilot study with the use of research technology on tourism websites can contribute to carry out substantial data to perform the case study of Manchester branding.

#### **Stage 02: a case study for a primary research**

The single case study for the field research will provide a substantial and detailed context to answer the research questions. The theoretical basis of this research showed that a topic of cultural city branding is a global phenomenon and the literature presented a number of case studies on the topic from across several disciplines. Therefore, this research can be defined as a 'case' and a case study method was selected. According to Miles et al., a case can be defined "as a phenomenon of some sort occurring in a bounded context" (2014: 28). Yin states that a case study is a method of empirical inquiry. The two most frequently used explanations of case study are: i) investigating a contemporary phenomenon in-depth as a case study within its real-life context; and ii) because a phenomenon and its context are not always "sharply distinguishable in real-world situation", there are different methodological approaches that become relevant 'features' to a case study (2014: 16-17).

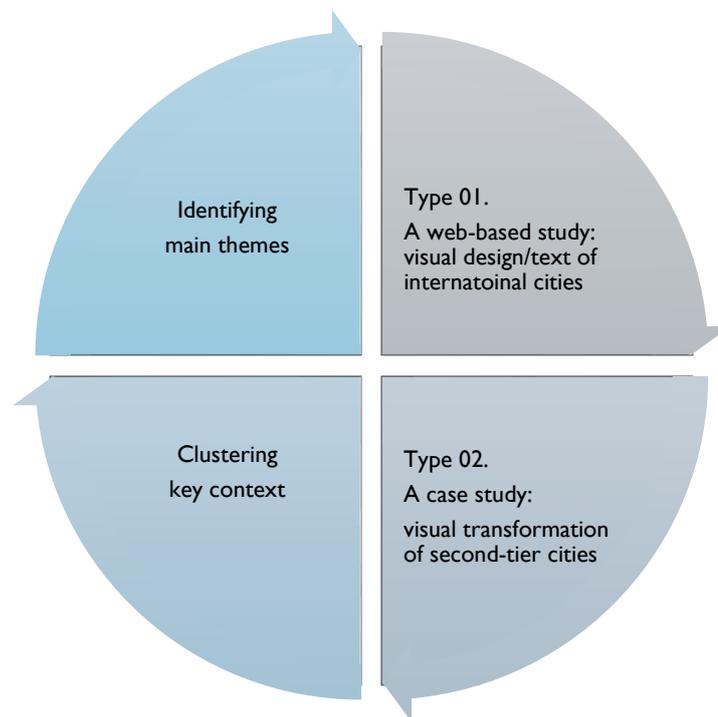
Five rationales for a single-case study are given as follows: i) representing a 'critical case in text' leads to building a formidable theory with a clear set of propositions and producing significant knowledge contributions; ii) representing an "extreme case or unique case"; iii) "representative or typical" case in everyday or commonplace circumstances; iv) "revelatory case": if a researcher observes and analyses a previously inaccessible phenomenon; and v) "longitudinal case": studying the case from two or more different angles at a time (Yin, 2014). The second rationale can be related to this case study as unique, diverse topics and issues were used to develop meta-themes of city branding in Manchester. Also, Yin states that a single case study is required for a "strong argument" in justifying researchers' choice for the case (2014: 63-64). Furthermore, Yin claims that a single case study can be criticised for reflecting "fears about uniqueness or artifactual conditions surrounding the case". In comparison with a single-case study, a multiple-case study design can "produce an event stronger effect" (Ibid.: 62).

Based on the theory, I chose a single-case study of Manchester instead of a multiple-case study for three reasons: i) Manchester has been studied as a successful example of changing its city image from industrial to cultural, both nationally and internationally; ii) Manchester's architectural practice, football-driven heritage and digital innovation in the arts to reinvent their cultural identity (Hemment, 2011: Donald et al., 2009); and iii) the findings from the literature imply that there are various factors for branding concerning the need to change the city's image. These can be identified through multiple interviews with professionals who engaged in Manchester's branding practice.

#### 3.3.3.6 Connection between the pilot study and the primary research

This research aims to cluster the results of the key findings from the two bodies of research to provide substantial data in shaping reasonable answers to the research questions: i) a web-based study for the pilot study; and ii) an interview-based case study for the field research. In order to examine issues and visions of the city in the context of branding, professionally researched real data is needed, which was not sufficiently illustrated in the literature. The web-based study was intended to explore how internationally-successful city brands, such as London, produce their cities' brand messages via the content of their tourism websites. To understand why and how they promote and structure the specific content on the websites, the one-to-one interviews in Manchester function to provide details in answering the web-based research.

Thus, research connectivity between the two types of research is as follows: the purpose of each set of data in the web-based study and the case study was to provide a critical point of view on brand and cities' images. The main topic of the research aims to gain keen insights: i) in the web-based study, into how global cities present their culturally exciting scenes through text and visual design of their tourism websites; and ii) based on the analysis of the web-based study, the next issue in the field research was, how less successful or second-tier cities, e.g. cities that have a reputation and history as an industrial city, try, struggle and transform their old image into a culturally attractive city in competition with other cities.



**Figure 3.2** Connectivity between the Two Types of Research.

### 3.3.3.7 Selecting analytic methods

In the development of the research design, two systematically designed methods, a web-based visual study for the pilot study and in-depth interviews for the case study, were utilised as follows:

Based on the research on specific methods in existing literature, I decided on methods that would be most appropriate to this research, which are presented below and discussed in more detail in the following section:

- (1) In the pilot study, I chose a method of visual and textual analysis based on the scientific analysis of the content of tourism websites, then constructed a meaning and implication from the visual and text content. To provide substantial data in constructing in-depth context, statistics were gathered from a series of web-based analysis of selected cities was conducted. Although this is not a quantitative-based research using some aspects of quantitative research can strengthen the argument of the thesis (Robson, 2011).
- (2) In the case study, eleven in-depth interviews were chosen with selected professionals in Manchester (ten in person and one via email). The interviewees have contributed to city image production in practice and have a deep knowledge of Manchester's issues and visions of city image. The set of data from the experts in Manchester's branding in practice and academia enrich and provide knowledge and fact-based real stories of the city's image-making. Based on the data from the interviews, I was able to construct why and how cities need to be culturally popular city in their branding via a unique and strong content on their tourism websites.

#### Stage 01: web-based study

A series of critical analysis of internet-based qualitative data was used to undertake the research. In Chapter 2.0, the literature on city branding via tourism websites showed that content of tourism websites can be interpreted as brand message production. It is considered as reflecting part of the cultural side of city branding through the design of visual context: Nekić (2014) states that textual and visual content of tourism websites produce messages as a part of the key components in constructing meanings of websites. Dinov and Knox also comment on the function of web design in creating semiotic meanings, which relates to visual city branding via the online media that:

Webpage design is the interface through which users navigate through the web, usually exploring a webpage at a time and relying on the interactions of various semiotic resources (e.g. text, visual images) to make navigation choices, orient themselves, and make sense of the information presented within and across webpages and websites (2015: 173).

Therefore, I chose a web-based visual study to investigate the design of tourism websites in terms of supporting the city brands. For this section, the methods consisted of: i) web analysis to collect data on how internationally distinctive city brands compose their city's cultural side via the visual context of official and unofficial tourism websites; and ii) analysis

of website design to identify how the contexts of the official and unofficial tourism websites help to construct a city's visual characteristics.

### Current issues

As one of the key findings in Chapter 2.0 showed, communication of cultural aspects of a city via tourism websites and investigating visual context and associated textual content of tourism websites are important in exploring the research topic. A web-based research is based on understanding current issues, knowledge and information through communications between people individually or community-based members via the internet (Anderson and Kanuka, 2003: 22). Researchers in social science collect data via websites or specific internet communities, such as consumer behaviour research. Through search engines via the internet, researchers can access a large volume of data for their specific research. Since the majority of tourism websites present visual images and textual information of attractions and events of cities, website research was used for studying the main issues of branding global cities.

### Stage 02: in-depth interviews

In-depth Interviews with professionals relating to the research subject in Manchester were used in conducting the single-case study. The purpose of in-depth interviews was to collect deeper knowledge about real issues both in the related fields of practice and academia and to gain insight into issues around city image-making in a second-tier city. For the interviews, the methods consisted of: i) semi-structured, individual interviews to collect data; ii) systematic interview coding methods to find topics; and iii) synthesising the topics to draw a contextual framework of Manchester's city image. According to Brinkmann and Kyale, interview is the most commonly used method of data collection in qualitative research (2015). Yin defines interviews as providing one of the "important sources of case study information" rather than "structured queries" (2009: 196). Furthermore, interviews help to convey research questions into meanings and messages, which form primary themes to be discussed within the topic. King and Horrocks contest that research questions for a qualitative interview study should focus on its "meaning and experience" instead of "causal relationship or generalised patterns of behaviour" (2010: 26).

## Identifying meanings

The method of in-depth interviews in terms of producing meanings and special knowledge relating to the research topic supports this research in identifying and interpreting meanings and implications within the case studies. In contrast, according to Hennink et al., focus group discussions are more concerned with the community perspective, rather than collecting individual narratives (2011: 111). Since this research seeks professional and more detailed answers from an individual expert's perspective, one-to-one, in-depth interviews were selected to conduct the research rather than focus group discussions.

## E-research

In contrast, the main purpose of quantitative research is to explain "observed phenomena". To understand these issues of a phenomenon, "concepts need to be quantified" (Jones, 1999: 33). Surveys (e.g. questionnaires, e-surveys) are another frequently used method in research, although they are generally quantitative in nature; for example, the purpose of surveys is to make planned comparisons based on figures such as census of population (Sapsford, 2007: 10). According to Anderson and Kanuka, e-research allows the researcher "to make an accurate prediction of the characteristics of a large population by investigating the behaviour of a smaller subset of that population" (2003: 146).

## Elite interview

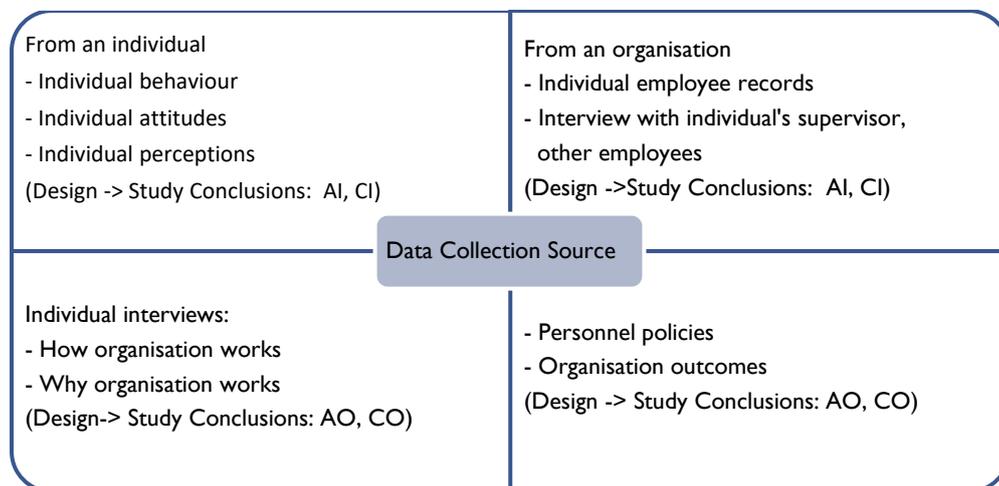
As the topic of this research required professional and experienced viewpoints and knowledge, a type of elite interview conducted in person was chosen. Elite interviews with elites refer to interviewing with "leaders or experts in a community, usually in powerful positions" (Brinkmann and Kvale, 2015: 171). The benefit of elite interviews is in obtaining professional viewpoints while the difficulty is in gaining accessibility to the interviewees. However, conversations and answers from the interviews provide substantial data for in-depth understanding about the research topic:

Experts may be used to being interviewed and may more or less have prepared talking tracks to promote the viewpoints they want to communicate by means of the interview, which requires considerable skill from the interviewer to get beyond. Elite interviewees will tend to have a secure status, so it may be feasible to challenge their statements, with the provocations possibly leading to new insights (Ibid.: 172).

Similarly, Yin states that during the process of interviews, conversations between interviewees and a researcher offer "essential sources or case study information" (2009:

196). According to Hennink et al., an in-depth interview is a “one-to-one method of data collection that involves an interviewer and an interviewee discussing specific topics in depth” (2011: 109). Hesse-Biber and Leavy attest that the in-depth interview is described as a “meaning-making partnership” through the conversations between interviewers and their interview participants; this means the interviewer and interviewee can “co-create knowledge and meanings” in the interviews (2011: 128). In order to gain high-quality and significant answers from interviews with experts, interviewers should study and be knowledgeable about the topics of the interviews (Zuckermann, 1972). Brinkmann and Kvale claim that:

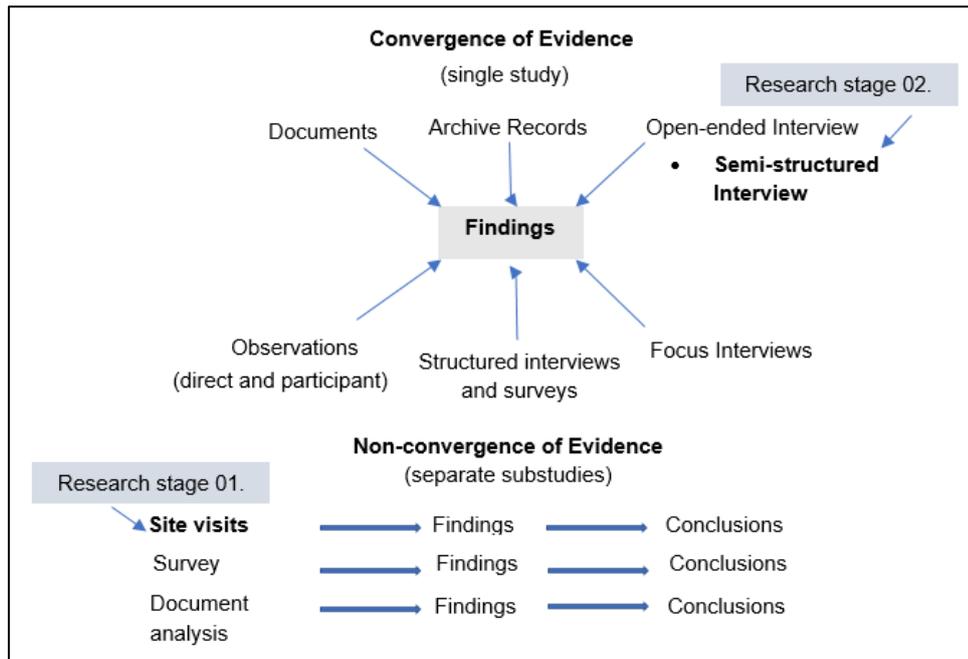
The interviewer should be knowledgeable about the topic of concern and master the technical language, as well as be familiar with the social situation and biography of the interviewee. An interviewer demonstrating a sound knowledge of the interview topic will gain respect and be able to achieve an extent of symmetry in the interview relationship (2015: 171).



**Figure 3.3** Modified from “Design versus Data Collection: Different Units of Analysis” (Yin, 2014: 92).

NB: Type and focus of research design and study conclusions.

AI: About individual; CI: If case is an individual; AO: About organisation; CO: If case is an organisation.



**Figure 3.4** Modified from “Convergence and Non-Convergence of Multiple Sources of Evidence” (Yin, 2014: 121).

## 3.4 Research Process

### 3.4.1 Rationale for city selection 01: a web-based study

The cities selected for the web-based study were Amsterdam, London, New York City, Paris and Sydney based on: i) academic references, ii) city brand index, and iii) personal experiences in practice.<sup>33</sup> For the field research, Manchester was selected due to its design practice in transforming its industrial-driven image to that of cultural leader based on its cultural heritage.

#### Academic references

London’s theatres, cultural districts, historical religious impact and tourism (Kaika, 2010; Sales et al., 2009); New York’s new branding after the 2001 World Trade Center attack (Greenberg, 2008); Paris’s alternative art and place development (Vivant, 2011); Amsterdam’s city marketing through promotion of cafés (Kavaratzis and Ashworth, 2007); Sydney’s heritage and tourism development (Watt and Mcguirk, 1996).

<sup>33</sup> Miles et al. (2014) state that author’s experience in professional work can be part of the criteria in selecting a case.

## City brand index

Additionally, Simon Anholt's contribution to city branding in publications and via the authority of the Anholt-GfK Roper City Brands Index™ helped the author to frame the research and understand the cities' competitiveness in branding and the requirements of city image-making (Paganoni, 2015). According to the City Brands Index, there are a number of criteria for measuring city rankings, and the cultural side is one of the essential barometers. London, New York, Paris, Amsterdam and Sydney have been frequently ranked within the top five city brands in the index since 2006, when it was first established.

## Personal experience in practice

Prior to commencing the PhD study, the author's experience in researching city branding and the official tourism websites of the three cities for the project called Seoul tourism strategies development in 2011 was influential in gaining an understanding of the related topics of the cities.

### 3.4.2 Rationale for tourism websites selection

As the primary research focuses on official tourism websites, the selected unofficial tourism websites were employed as a comparison. The majority of cities have an official tourism website as an official communication channel for the city, while a number of unofficial and privately produced tourism websites also generally exist. The author chose one official tourism website and several unofficial tourism websites to provide a variety of data to construct a comparative analysis between the two kinds of tourism websites. Therefore, one official and several unofficial tourism websites were used for the case study.

A number of unofficial tourism websites for the five cities were researched on Google, and three examples for each city were selected for analysis. Other examples were excluded based on suitability to the criteria. The criteria for selecting the unofficial tourism websites were as follows: i) a standard form of tourism websites, not blogs or other forms of social media to compare with the official tourism websites; ii) a website that shows commonalities with and differences from the official tourism websites in terms of constructing the categories and selecting the main examples. Using this logic, Time Out (<http://www.timeout>) was chosen for all five cities because of its authority and reputation for giving tourists a wide exposure to real local culture. Also, Time Out was available for over 107 cities across 39

countries (26 January 2015 record, Time Out London), giving some consistency across the city analysis; and iii) in order to give a balance to the comparison analysis,

	Official tourism website	Unofficial tourism website
Amsterdam	<a href="https://www.iamsterdam.com">https://www.iamsterdam.com</a>	(1) <a href="https://www.timeout.com/amsterdam">https://www.timeout.com/amsterdam</a> (2) <a href="https://www.amsterdamtourist.com">https://www.amsterdamtourist.com</a> (3) <a href="https://www.localamsterdamtours.com">https://www.localamsterdamtours.com</a>
London	<a href="https://www.visitlondon.com">https://www.visitlondon.com</a>	(1) <a href="https://www.timeout.com/london">https://www.timeout.com/london</a> (2) <a href="https://www.londontown.com">https://www.londontown.com</a>
NYC	<a href="https://www.nycgo.com">https://www.nycgo.com</a>	(1) <a href="https://www.timeout.com/newyork">https://www.timeout.com/newyork</a> (2) <a href="https://newyorktours.onboardtours.com">https://newyorktours.onboardtours.com</a> (3) <a href="https://www.wheretraveler.com/new-york-city">https://www.wheretraveler.com/new-york-city</a>
Paris	<a href="https://en.parisinfo.com">https://en.parisinfo.com</a>	(1) <a href="https://www.timeout.com/paris">https://www.timeout.com/paris</a> (2) <a href="https://www.bonjourparis.com">https://www.bonjourparis.com</a> (3) <a href="https://www.parisdigest.com">https://www.parisdigest.com</a>
Sydney	<a href="https://www.sydney.com">https://www.sydney.com</a>	(1) <a href="https://www.au.timeout.com">https://www.au.timeout.com</a> (2) <a href="https://www.greatersydney.org.au">https://www.greatersydney.org.au</a> (3) <a href="https://www.localsydneytours.com">https://www.localsydneytours.com</a>

**Table 3.1** Selected Tourism Websits.

### 3.4.3 Data collection 01: a web-based study

The data were collected via the internet by saving webpages (e.g. html files) and screen capture. According to Dinov and Knox (2015: 172), there is no single, best way to collect webpages for data analysis, but these two basic methods are generally used.

The data were collected during two-time periods: i) the data of the official tourism websites were collected from May 2013 to November 2013; and ii) the data of the unofficial tourism websites were collected from June 2013 to November 2013. Originally, I had intended to research and focus on just official tourism websites in conducting my research. However, as the research progressed, e.g. data analysis of the content of the official tourism websites, I realised that collecting data from unofficial tourism websites would be relevant and would affect the construction of the research. For example, when observing and analysing the textual context of the main categories in promoting museums on the official tourism websites, I wondered how unofficial tourism websites construct their content in museum promotion. Therefore, after spending a few months researching the official tourism websites, I decided to also start collecting new data from unofficial tourism websites.

In conducting the web-based study, selected visual images and written texts were employed as the key data for the analysis. For the preparation of the data, understanding how combining the use of visual images and texts as key data is necessary. In general, written text is the main field of data recording, e.g. notes or transcripts of recorded interviews. Notes can be used as the fundamental basis for a contextually-informed description that illustrates “a situation, an issue, a process, a phenomenon, or even a thought process” (Marion and Crowder, 2013: 28). In the same way, qualitative researchers are increasingly using visual materials as a form of field research notes (Miles et al., 2014: 98). Marion and Crowder state that:

Start thinking of images in a parallel manner: as visual field notes. Just like any other field notes, the images you generate from observations, interviews, and the participation are data that you can go back to, review conjunction with them, they can be invaluable research data (Ibid.: 28).

In order to ensure consistency of the context from the data, this research is based on the data from the specific periods above. By viewing the websites over these time periods, I noticed that the content, particularly that of the official tourism website (of some cities, not all), changed due to seasonal or particular event periods. For example, Visit London frequently changed images and categories compared to other cities. During the data collection period, a set of tables was created to develop topics such as attributes for visual analysis, based on the original content from the official and unofficial tourism websites. Searches for tourism websites were conducted as follows:

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## Searches of tourism websites

### Step 01: official tourism websites

I used terms such as ‘New York City’ and ‘official tourism website’.<sup>34</sup> The Google research shows that most cities have one official tourism website, which is managed by the city’s official organisation, e.g. the Tourism Board’s Head Office or Division of Tourism.

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<sup>34</sup> For New York, two official tourism websites exist: i) for New York State ([www.iloveny.com](http://www.iloveny.com)), which is managed by New York State Division of Tourism; ii) for New York City ([www.nycgo.com](http://www.nycgo.com)), which is managed by NYC & Company, the official destination marketing organisation of the five boroughs of New York City. I chose New York City because this research specifically aimed to investigate the Central New York area, which consists of a vast number of attractions.

## Step 02: unofficial tourism websites

I used terms, such as 'New York City' and 'tourism' or 'attractions'. The aim for this part of the research was to find additional and distinctive content of unofficial tourism websites for each city. Three steps were taken to select them:

- (1) A few of the top-ranked tourism websites on the first page of Google's search results for all five cities were selected.
- (2) The websites' contents were examined to establish how they were different from the official websites, which reflects the series of the questions above.
- (3) For unofficial tourism websites, a site common to all five cities (e.g. Time Out) was mainly chosen for data collection for the five cities, and, in some cases one or two additional unofficial tourism websites based on a Google search were chosen to add supplementary data.

### 3.4.4 Data analysis 01: a web-based study

Since the main subject of this research focuses on aspects of the visual design on official tourism websites, a comparison analysis was conducted only in the sections of visual analysis. Dinov and Knox claim that visual content and its context are key components in constructing the meanings of websites:

Webpages are multi-semiotic (employing a range of semiotic resources such as written language, speech, image, colour, layout, music and movement) and typically also multi-channel documents (e.g. visual, aural and increasingly also tactile communication) (2015: 171).

For the analysis of text, a similar method was used for the official and unofficial tourism websites, because text analysis was conducted to provide a supporting context to strengthen the analysis of visual images. However, there was a slightly different focus in the analysis of the text material on the two types of websites: i) in the official tourism websites, analysis of examples of text was in the main menus (e.g. must-see, shopping) and promotional text on the first page on the websites; and ii) in the unofficial tourism websites, analysis was of examples of promotional text that incorporate visual images on the first page.

In the web-based study, comparison analysis of visual context was conducted, and the theory of textual comparison analysis was utilised. According to Hennink et al., comparison analysis can further "refine these issues by clarifying what makes each issue distinct from

others” (2011). They also state that comparison allows researchers to explore issues of research topics both in the early and later stages of research. In the early stage, comparison enables the researcher to identify “patterns and begin to notice associations in the data”. In a later stage, comparison analysis allows him/her to define “categories of codes when developing explanations from the data” (Ibid.: 243). In the development of the analysis, the theoretical basis of relationship between image and text was utilised (Norris and Maier, 2015; Bateman, 2014). The following is an example of the analysis in chronological order:

- (1) Selecting a visual image on the front page of the two websites, one official and one unofficial.
- (2) Analysing the visual design elements in the selected images to understand the construction of visual communication, e.g. representation of the themes etc.
- (3) Interpreting the potential main messages from the analysis in terms of identifying main cultural features in the cities.
- (4) Observing further implications from the main messages in examining possible meanings beyond the visual context in a city’s cultural identity.

### 3.4.5 Types of analysis 01: a web-based study

In addition to comparison analysis, three types of analysis were used to critically examine the five cities: i) visual analysis, ii) textual analysis and iii) coherence between text and visual images. Based on the three forms of analysis, cross-synthesis was conducted of the meanings and implications of the design of the official and unofficial tourism websites. The analysis focused on visual analysis because the author sought to identify meanings and implications through observing visual aspects of the tourism websites on city branding. Noble and Bestley advocate the research point of visual analysis as follows:

Design literacy or visual literacy in design practice is a fundamental concern for those involved in the creation of visual communication (2011: 26).

#### 3.4.5.1 Analysis of the data of the visual images

The aim for the analysis was to examine the contextual and visual readability of the websites, in terms of constructing the cities’ legible cultural identity. Based on the findings from the visual analysis, comprehending meanings beyond the visual design of tourism

websites is vital in constructing findings and themes in this research. Noble and Bestley state that this method is a fundamental process in graphic design:

Through the creation of more fluid and open visual messages, the designer can attempt to engage the reader in a dialogue, to empower the receiver in the construction of meanings of form within a message (2011: 135).

In design practice, website design is a field of graphic design that visually communicates through the use of visual literacy<sup>35</sup> and “enables the design to communicate effectively” (Ibid.: 26). Visual communication has been studied from a semiotics perspective both in social science (Rose, 2013) and graphic design (Noble and Bestley, 2011). Studies of visual communication aim to examine how “cultural signposts” are embedded in the visual context and how viewers perceive, interpret and comprehend the meanings and messages of the visual design (Ibid.).

Therefore, this analysis of the visual images critically examines messages and meanings of the visual images on official and unofficial tourism websites, which connects to city branding. A comparative visual analysis of the official and unofficial tourism websites was conducted, using a particular theme with subsequent themes as the main attributes. The followings are the themes and categories in identifying the city brands for the visual analysis for the web-based study in Chapter 4.0 (Section 4.3, p. 123). The analysis was conducted based on the following steps:

- (1) Identifying a feature of the main visual images on the front page of the websites (e.g. British Museum).
- (2) Identifying associated text material which supports the characteristic of selected visual images (e.g. a promotional heading for Amsterdam’s ‘Museum at Night’).
- (3) Cross-matching with the main text on the websites (e.g. frequently cited examples of attractions in main categories on the menu, e.g. interior design features of the British Museum).
- (4) Constructing a main theme based on the analysis, and contextualising the themes in branding context.

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<sup>35</sup> Noble and Bestley state that “design literacy or visual literacy in design practice is a fundamental concern for those involved in the creation of visual communication” (2011: 26).

(5) Categorising a key design feature in terms of a branding concept.

Major branding themes for the international cities on their official and unofficial tourism websites:

- Theme 01: museum-driven visuals (London, New York City, Paris, Amsterdam).
- Theme 02: supreme design (New York City, Paris).
- Theme 03: new visual identity (Amsterdam, Sydney).

Major categories for the international cities on their official and unofficial tourism websites:

- Category 01: expansion of iconic features approaches (London, New York City).
- Category 02: coherence of exclusive appeal approaches (Amsterdam, Paris, Sydney).
- Category 03: value-adding approaches (Paris, New York City).

Malamed states a visual image (picture) is not just “a two-dimensional marked surface” that “reflects a designer’s intent” as well as “signifies information” (2011: 20). In the quote, the designer’s intent can be interpreted as the main message(s) of the design. Based on the theory, examining the main message of a certain visual text on the tourism websites integrates the following themes and constructs a main context for the analysis.

#### 3.4.5.2 Analysis of the data of the textual context

The analysis was conducted as follows:

- (1) Identifying main categories on the menu of the first page of official tourism websites (e.g. ‘Must-See’).
- (2) Identifying major examples of most frequently cited attractions on the menu (e.g. Amsterdam Fashion Week under the category of ‘Must-See’).
- (3) Creating a table of the categories and key examples of the official tourism websites of the five cities.
- (4) Reallocating similar and differing titles of the categories in a series of tables (e.g. ‘Museums’ and ‘Galleries’ in ‘Musuems’).

- (5) Use of statistics to identify most frequently cited examples of attractions in each city, based on categories (e.g. 'Museums', 'Monuments', 'Shopping').
- (6) Defining the main context of promotional text, which associates with either the categories or the examples (e.g. 'Museum at Night' in text and as a visual image on Amsterdam's website).

In this analysis, one official and two or three unofficial tourism websites were explicitly analysed to identify implications and associated messages of textual content. Textual context for this analysis means the menus of the websites and the examples cited on the menus. Observing diverse aspects of the textual context on the websites can provide supporting materials in understanding how the websites design their content in written text, and how the written text is incorporated with the visual images. From the results of the analysis, contextual readability of city image was examined. Analysing texts addresses two topics: i) providing examples presented in the content such as primary attractions, ii) interpreting key meanings of textual content.

#### 3.4.5.3 Coherence of the analysis between visual images and texts

Examining connectivity and gaps between the textual and visual images on the official and unofficial tourism websites was an important final step in the analysis of data for the web-based study. Through the analysis, coherence of the textual and visual design of the websites will be discussed. According to Dorst, a good and readable design requires a coherent content:

Coherence describes to what extent a design is unified, the extent to which it is free from inner contradictions, and can be perceived as a whole (2006: 49).

In this way, how the design components of the official tourism websites are coordinated with fluid and coherently designed concepts and methods of visual presentation will be examined. The method of analysis was conducted as follows: i) in the section of textual analysis, primary data were collected in the form of messages based on frequently cited examples on the main menus of official tourism websites; ii) in the visual analysis, data from the main messages were collected based on the use of visual images; and iii) how the concept of textual and the visual images were connected to each other and how they created a similar meaning in representing the city's image were examined.

For example, London's official tourism website revealed both textual and visual content stressing the core attractions of the city, e.g. global museums. In this sense, the textual content and visual images on London's website are clearly matched. From the results of the analysis, a core brand message was identified and its related themes were processed. Specifically, major categories of cultural attractions and their textual presentations including frequency of promoted examples on the menus of the websites were explored.

The aim of constructing main messages is to identify the major context of intentional branding messages and their implications and how the content portrays the cities' best image to be recognised as a cultural city.

#### 3.4.6 Rationale for city selection 02: a case study

Two conditions were particularly important in selecting the field research city. First, an in-depth reading of the reviewed literature was necessary. Then, a city is looked for that is recognised as being particularly English from its historic and aesthetic viewpoints. Lastly, a city that has potential for a future design is considered. Manchester seemed to fulfill all these qualifications, and fortunately the city is located not far from Lancaster.

In fact, Manchester has become known for its historic tourism during the past decade, which means its brand reputation and audience awareness of its design value is also recognised, for example, Manchester's architectural practice in rebranding and digital-driven art curation (Hemment, 2011; Kennedy, 2009). Furthermore, Manchester is equipped with a wide variety of strategies of specialists whose interest, intuition and planning experience influence the city culture and city brand. That is the rationale behind this study consisting mainly of the interviews with them. Nevertheless, in comparison to the five selected cities, Manchester has not yet achieved a highly esteemed international city brand. Even so, the city's clear understanding of its mission to pursue the visibly popular cities in the tourism market and visual brand image has produced a positive outcome.

In fact, new development and investing in design for its primary cultural facilities have accelerated the city's recognition (BBC News, 3 December 2014). For instance, Manchester became the third-most popular tourism city in the UK for international visitors, after London and Edinburgh in 2012 (932,000, London 15 million, Edinburgh 1.25 million) (BBC news, 21 May 2013). According to Marketing Manchester, digital tourism promotion and its strategies are important for Manchester. Over 2 million visitors per year have used the official tourism website, [visitmanchester.com](http://visitmanchester.com) (Marketing Manchester, 2014: 18).

### 3.4.7 Data collection 02: a case study

#### 3.4.7.1 Preparation of the interview guide

A key requirement of the interview guide is flexibility in the development of qualitative approach interviewing. Unlike the fixed interview questions employed in quantitative survey research, qualitative researchers should be able to smoothly respond to various issues that emerge in relation to the research topics (King and Horrocks, 2010: 35). Therefore, a qualitative researcher needs to design a well-established form of interview guide that outlines the central topics the researcher mainly aims to address. The main criteria for developing the interview guide are as follows (Ibid.: 36-37):

- Identify clear topics that can frame the research objective and questions. A researcher can consider his/her personal experiences within the research scheme from other sources: existing literature, experience from others and related informal work.
- Decide which lists of topics are going to be covered in either all or selected topics. It is suggested to make a comprehensive interview guide reflecting on the aims and methodology of the study, instead of through a minimalistic perspective.
- Choose a type of question that fits with the qualitative approach. Patton (1990) classifies six types of questions that can be used in a qualitative interview: i) background/demographic, ii) experience/behaviour, iii) opinion/values, iv) feeling, v) knowledge, and vi) sensory.

#### 3.4.7.2 Formatting qualitative interview questions

An interview guide lays out the questions in two styles. King and Horrocks explain that,

One is to formulate full questions, written in proper sentence form. The opposite approach is to just include short phrases or single words as reminders of the topics to cover (2010: 38).

Willig (2008) states that there are pros and cons in both types of interview questions. In the case of full questions, the advantage is that the researcher can carefully think about the formulation of the questions, whereas, the disadvantage is in the difficulty in conducting a conventional form of discourse. The condensed format is the mirror image of these points.

On the basis of the considerations above, this research adopts both focused and conventional interview questions. This is because the topic of city branding within this research reflects the complexity of issues that are connected to cultural ideas, image building and marketing tactics of various stakeholders.

### 3.4.7.3 Participant recruitment

The participant recruitment process was done in two stages: the first decides the study population, which is connected to the research disciplines; the second is to identify appropriate strategies from the study population (Hennink et al., 2011: 84). In quantitative studies, data are typically collected from large numbers of participants randomly selected from a wider population. In contrast, qualitative studies are not measured by generated findings through a broader population and, therefore, do not use random recruitment (Ibid.: 84-85). The purpose of qualitative research is to obtain a detailed understanding of a specific phenomenon and its related contexts. Therefore, a qualitative researcher will use a purposive recruitment approach. This often requires a small number of participants, because in-depth information, knowledge and variation in experiences are beneficial in producing substantial research outcomes.

For the development of strategies for participant recruitment, five commonly used methods were examined: local gatekeeper, formal and informal networks, snowball, advertisements and research-based recruitment (Hennink et al., 2011: 91). As this research is carefully designed to collect satisfactory, deeper and meaningful data from experts, a strategy of research-based recruitment was chosen to compose comprehensive and rich topics for the subject. I modified the local gatekeeper and research-based approaches to find the best participants via the internet, information from local residents and literature.

Based on these given recruitment strategies, I created the following criteria, which define the characteristics of expert interviews in this research: i) identified primary disciplines and mentioned cultural organisations in the literature; ii) acclaimed industry positions and reputation of organisations; and iii) a job position and responsibility at a high level (e.g. director in marketing) in their organisations.

#### 3.4.7.4 Identifying interviewees

For the main interviews, the data were collected during the period from June 2014 to November 2014.<sup>36</sup> All eleven interviews were with experts either at the manager/executive position and senior level academics: ten were conducted in-person in Manchester and one via email.<sup>37</sup> To provide supporting material, follow-up interviews were carried out from June 2014 to December 2014 via email. The data from the seven follow-up interviews were arranged thus: museums (2), official tourism website (1), unofficial tourism website (1), branding agency (1), theatre (1), museology in university (1).

The criteria for selecting the interviewees were based on their expertise in their respective fields, which includes work and research in and about museums, city branding, urban design, architectural practice and innovation.

Table 3.2 and Table 3.3 summarise the purpose of categorising the interviewees: Table (3.2) justifies why practitioners and academics were chosen for the interviews and how they can contribute to this research to answer the research questions. Table (3.3) summarises the interview participants to identify them in terms of professional experience and to show that the interviews were undertaken with various leading experts related to the research topic in Manchester.

	Practitioners (eight interviews)	Academics (three interviews)
Expected outcome(s)	Providing real stories and specific strategies for content development	Offering insight into historical and cultural background of Manchester
Knowledge contribution	Supporting contextual data from the literature and the web-based study	Framing arguments complementary to the data from the practitioners

**Table 3.2** Justification for Two Categorised Groups of Interviews.

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<sup>36</sup> Research period: i) the web-based study from May 2012 to April 2013. In total, I wrote fourteen versions for the web-based study in the period; and ii) the main interviews from June 2014 to November 2014.

<sup>37</sup> I attempted to contact potential interviewees in Manchester via email seventy-seven times, with forty-two contact points from thirty-one organisations from that period. The reason for email contact was to keep an official record in written communication as clear evidence of this research progress.

Interview code	Interviewee	Sector	Team/ Department	Data used in meta-analysis	Used in detailed analysis
IV_01_ official tourism website	SA	City promotion and tourism marketing	Digital marketing	Yes	Yes
IV_02_ museum	TM	Creative industry (exhibitions, events)	Marketing	Yes	Yes
IV_03_ museum	MN	Creative industry (science, industrial)	Festivals	Yes	Yes
IV_04_ unofficial tourism website	PH	City promotion and tourism marketing	Editorial	Yes	Yes
IV_05_ branding	AS	Branding agency (products, regions, organisations)	Management	Yes	Yes
IV_06_ theatre	JG	Independent theatre (plays)	Press and Communications	Yes	Yes
IV_07_ museology academia	KA	University (education, research)	Museology	Yes	Yes
IV_08_ business academia	JA	University (education, research)	Business	Yes	Yes
IV_09_ urban design academia	ND	University (education, research)	Urban Design	Yes	Yes
IV_10_ museum	AK	Creative industry (exhibitions, events)	Press and PR	Yes	Yes
IV_11_ library	MS	Library in part of the University brand	Marketing and Communications	Yes	Yes

**Table 3.3** Summary of Interview Participants.

NB: \* The data are based on the interviewees' employment period at their current organisations. (sources: Linked In and conversations during the interviews 2014); The interviewee number 9 had worked in Manchester for over ten years in the past, but currently, belongs to an organisation in Lancaster.

## Interview Guide

Time: 30 minutes / Mode: face-to-face

**Outline Questions:** the questions consist of two forms: i) pre-structured common questions before the interviews; and ii) improvised questions during the conversations with the interviewees (IP).

Questions	Category of topics
<b>Group 01</b>	<b>Stakeholder</b>
What's your role in this organisation?	Official role
What is the role of your organisation relating Manchester's image?	City image
How does your organisation support the Manchester brand?	Brand engagement
How do academics contribute to the city's branding? (IP)	Brand enhancement
<b>Group 02</b>	<b>City image</b>
What are the four key terms associated with Manchester's image?	Perceived image
What image of the city is presented in official/unofficial tourism website?	Media presentation
<b>Group 03</b>	<b>Primary attractions</b>
What are the primary attractions in Manchester?	Key players
What are the popular cultural attractions in Manchester? Would you say they are the primary attractions in Manchester?	Term definition
<b>Group 04</b>	<b>Design</b>
Who are the members of your team that come up with content for Manchester's official/unofficial tourism website? [probe for roles and names] What are they actively promoting?	- Team structure - Key content
How does your team make decisions about the website design? (IP) How does your team make decisions about the exhibition theme? (IP)	Decision-making
How do you select the content and visual images? (IP)	Content development
Do you have a guideline for your website design? (IP)	Guidelines
What is the role of architectural design in promoting the city's image?	Role in city image
How do the exhibition themes in museums support the city's branding? (IP)	Content
<b>Group 05</b>	<b>Branding</b>
How is the city's brand different from product brands in terms of the branding procedure and its impact? (IP)	City branding procedure
What does the term "high-profile" mean for your theatre? (IP)	Reputation
What is your strategy for improving the library to support Manchester's branding?	Strategy development

**Table 3.4** Interview Guide.

### 3.4.7.5 Exploration and representation of the data

Prior to preparing the final document on the basis of the central findings from the interviews, a stage of data exploration provides a readable framework for summarising the findings into systematically constructed topics. I modified and created my own technology based on the guidelines of Miles et al. (2014: 121-159):

- A description of a data summary: a single form documenting basic information about the interviews and the participants: interview number, name of the organisations and teams, job title, date, time and location.
- Writing up the transcripts: understanding and writing the recorded words to establish essential and credible written material.
- Interim case summary: formalising a single form of presentation in explaining the central ideas and findings.
- Cross-checking the transcripts with the interviewees: confirmation with some of the interviewees to avoid any textual errors in my transcripts.
- Decoding the key words: understanding and defining the core terms and explanations.
- Grouping the key words into topics: gathering commonalities, differences, exceptions or new subjects from interviewees' stories.
- Categorisation of the matrix of the topics: grouping and interconnecting the words of the different topics to develop a main storyline from a macro perspective.
- Clustering the categorisation: auditing and rearranging the topic categorisation to ensure the given texts are a logical progression of the findings from the literature or the web-based study.
- Constructing a theme: refining the most essential stories and reconstructing a main theme to consolidate a message and its implications within the theme.

#### 3.4.7.6 Validation of the interview data

The purpose of data validation in qualitative research is to confirm the value and relevance of the study. Miles et al. (2014: 313) state that validity is a contested term among certain qualitative researchers, with contradictions regarding its definition. Some methodologists strongly reject the application of a validation to qualitative research, as it is normally seen as a quantitative construct with its “predictive” components. Others continue to use the term because “it suggests a more rigorous stance toward our work” (Ibid.).

For the validation of the data, the transcripts of the interviewees’ email responses were reviewed. A form of matrix table on the connectivity of each major topic explicitly navigated through the work process. From the validation based on the interconnected stages of this research, implicitly structured textual material was produced. A sample of the validation table is as follows: Data from the eleven main interviews were validated from November 2014 to December 2014 via email. The total number of respondents was eight: tourism marketing agency (1), museum (2), branding agency (1), theatre (1), museology in university (1), urban design in university (1), library (1).

#### 3.4.8 Data analysis 02: a case study

This exploratory, empirical study of Manchester’s branding is based on a semantic understanding of content analysis from interview transcripts. The overall approach for the analysis is semantic analysis of texts to contextualise themes from the interviews. Bauer and Gaskell stated that:

Semantic procedures focus on the relation between signs and their common-sense meaning – denotational and commotional meanings in a text; semantics concerns the “what is said in a text?”, the themes and valuations. Words, sentences and larger text units are classified as exemplars of predefined themes and valuations (2000: 134).

##### 3.4.8.1 Types of analysis 02: a case study

For contextualising issues to develop themes from the interview transcripts, a coding analysis method was used. In analysing key topics and synthesising each topic in terms of cultural city branding, the thematic points of the content analysis connect to image-making.

A definition of code in general qualitative research is a form of short written text, which assigns a summative attribute for a part of visual or language data.<sup>38</sup> Miles et al. state that the function of coding in a qualitative study is to trigger analytic thoughts and capture “the researcher’s thinking into a coherent set of explanations” (2014: 99). Saldaña describes that:

A code in qualitative inquiry is most often a word or short phrase that symbolically assigns as summative, salient, essence-capturing, and/or evocative attribute for a portion of language-based or visual data (2013 :3).

Charmaz (2001) defines coding work as the “critical link” between collected data and their potential “explanation of meaning”. As the aim of conducting in-depth interviews is to delve into potential meanings and implications in relation to specified topics, application of coding work was utilised in this research. Brinkmann and Kvale state that “meaning interpretation” of interview transcripts encompasses a variety of approaches for the field of a qualitative data analysis:

The interpretation of the meaning of interview texts goes beyond a structuring of the manifest meanings of what is said to deeper and more critical interpretations of the text (2015: 235).

In the use of a code for qualitative research, it is essential to understand the difference between the qualitative data analysis and semiotics approaches. Although there are some similarities a code in qualitative research is a more researcher-driven interpretation. Thus, the decision to apply a code for this part of the research is appropriate, as the aim of this research is to identify potential and in-depth meanings from the author’s interpretation.

### 3.4.8.2 Coding process

This process was developed by selecting inductive codes. Identifying inductive codes through the interview transcripts essentially involves ‘seeing’ the issues raised or implied by the participant him/herself; “It sometimes helps to ignore the interviewer’s question and focus on the participants’ words, to identify their issues” (Hennink et al., 2011: 220). Most thematic analyses are enabled with many codes. This coding data analysis process is a systematic foundation for offering quality and value to this research (Bauer and Gaskell, 2000: 141). Open coding analysis was used to critically examine the context of the interview transcripts (Miles et al., 2014; Saldaña, 2013).

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<sup>38</sup> The types of data consist of “interview transcripts, participant observation field notes, journals, documents, drawings, artifacts, photographs, video, Internet sites, email correspondence, drawings and so on” (Ibid.: 3).

**Textual Data → Identify Codes → Develop Categories (categorisation)**

**→ Link Categories (Conceptualisation) → Develop Theory**

- Hennink et al. (2011: 263).

The following types of coding were used in the research process. The open coding process focused on understanding the context of the individual interviews. Four coding methods were used throughout the coding process: (1) in vivo coding; (2) descriptive coding; (3) holistic coding; (4) sub-coding: in categorisation, (1), (2), (3) elementary coding, (4) grammatical coding:

- (1) In vivo coding: Identifying the key information and knowledge from the interviewees
- (2) Descriptive coding: Identifying the key issues and new codes of themes from each section of in vivo coding
- (3) Holistic coding: Summarising basic themes or issues as a whole in each section of the topic.
- (4) Sub-coding: Grouping a similar story and dividing it into main and sub topics.

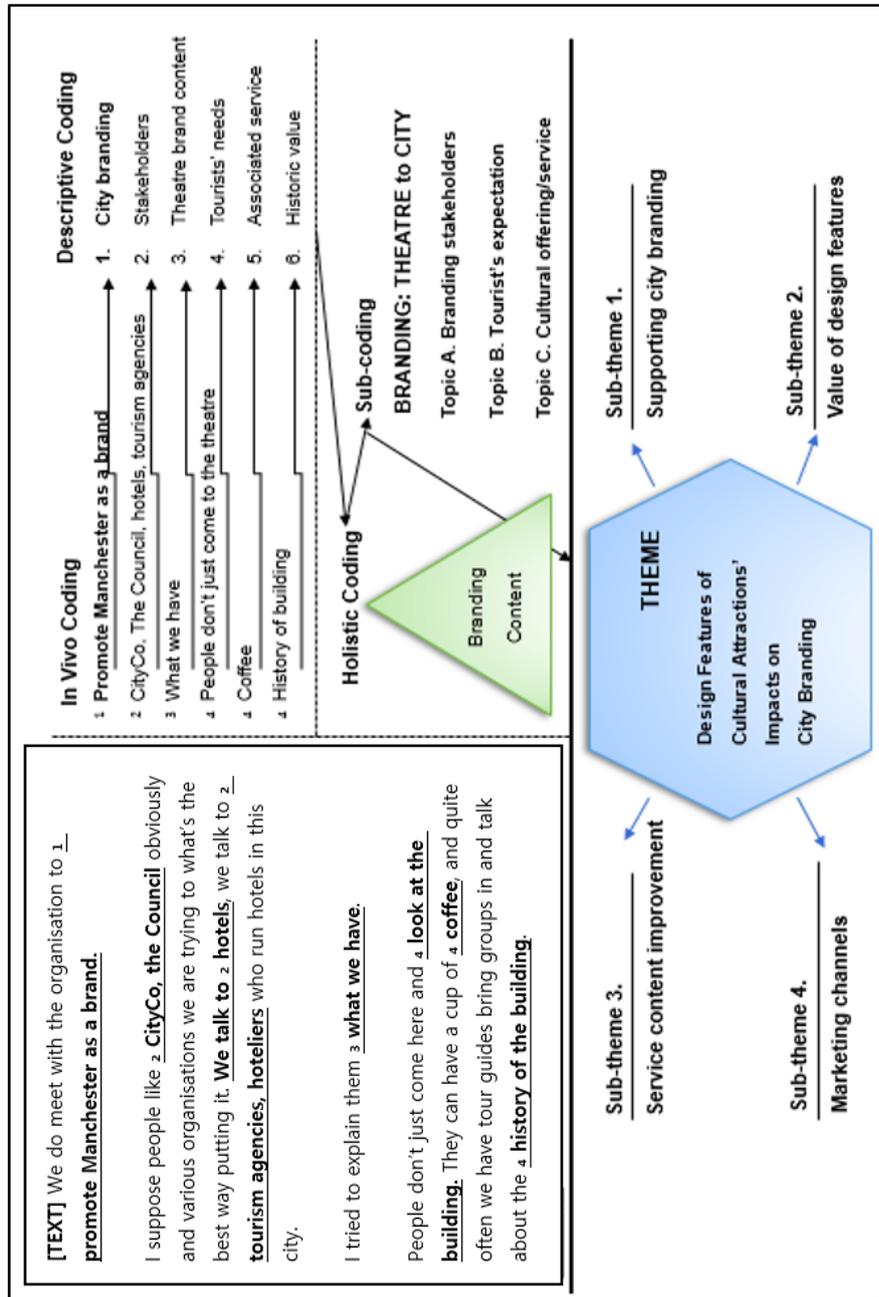
After repeating the work with the selected coding methods for each interview, the codes were systematically categorised to formulate a series of interconnected themes. To develop a scientific and logical coding process for mapping out the themes, Saldaña's coding theory was adopted and modified. Saldaña explains his creation of a systematically designed theory as "categories of categories" (2013: 250-252). The following stages of theme construction were developed from the results of the systematic coding work:

- (1) Mapping codes: Anfara (2008: 932) states that coding work illustrates detailed content of the analysis "to bring meaning, structure, and order to data".
- (2) Theme contextualisation: based on the results of the coding process, a number of key contexts from the interview transcript were identified. The key contexts were extracted based on repeated text, emphasis of the interviewee and relevance of the subject to the research.<sup>39</sup>

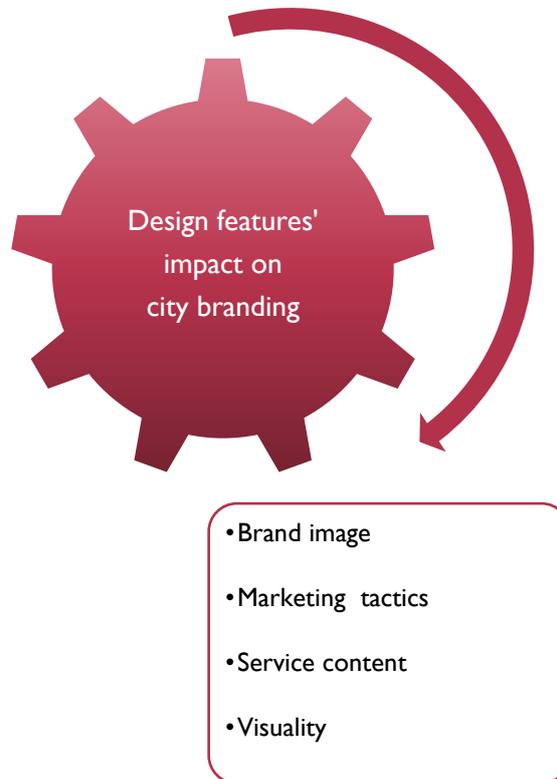
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<sup>39</sup> "One of the criticisms of qualitative research from some quantitative researchers is that, if that's the case, then our analyses are simply 'made up' and don't tell us anything meaningful. However, this is emphatically not the case" (Braun and Clarke, 2013: 20).

Figure 3.5 and 3.6 present a sample of coding process from interview number 6, and a matrix of main and sub-themes based on the result of the coding work.



**Figure 3.5** A Sample of Coding Analysis from Interview Number 6.



**Figure 3.6** Key Context on Design Features of Cultural Attractions in City Branding based on the Result of the Coding.

### 3.5 Ethical Issues in Qualitative Research

Before conducting interviews using a qualitative research approach, there were several considerations that needed to be implemented:

Defining ethical requirements of qualitative research becomes more complicated, broadened, uncertain and nuanced, because of the fluidity of the research (Brinkman and Kvale, 2015; Lincoln, 2009; Price, 1996). The key consideration of the codes of ethics is to ensure the researcher is fully aware that any misinterpretation of the participants' raw data is linked with the production of unethical research outcomes (Miles et al., 2014: 59; Braun

and Clarke, 2013: 64). The importance of the ethical code for qualitative researchers is iterated as follows:

Ethics covers our relationships with participants, with academic communities, and with the wider world in which we conduct research, as well as our research practice. Psychology prioritises a deontological approach to ethics, where ethicality tends to be judged on the basis of our process—how we conduct our research—rather than (just) on our outcomes—judging ethicality based on outcomes would be a consequentialist approach (Brinkman and Kvale, 2015).

Miles et al. claim that qualitative researchers should consider all aspects of ethical issues to minimise production of unethical results (2014: 58-68). A few of the main ethical requirements are (Ibid.):

- ‘Worthiness of the Project’ examines the main value and significance of the research in relevant domains, rather than production of publications.
- ‘Competence’ addresses adequate preparation of the researcher on the basis of academic training, professional experience and knowledge.
- ‘Research Integrity and Quality’ requires well-defined standards and practices in conducting a credible research without scientific fraud.
- ‘Honest and Trust’ examines how the researcher informs the participants of his/her authentic identification, not presenting misleading identification to approach specific groups or participants.

This research involves interviews, and, therefore, ethical issues regarding interviews were particularly considered. Prior to the interviews, a consent form and participant information sheet were provided to each interviewee. A consent form is one of the ways of verifying ethical regulations and agreements between a researcher and an interviewee, which prevents potential risks in conducting interviews; others include informing participants about anonymity of the interview, the use of data and other relevant information. Brinkmann and Kvale state that informed consent entails informing interviewees of the purpose, and features, and any possible risks or benefits from the research project (2015: 93). To guarantee the ethical issues, the author created and used a consent form that was fully approved by the ethics committee at Lancaster University. The consent form included

information regarding: i) confidentiality and anonymity of interviewees, ii) the use of interviews in the author's publications, iii) the right of withdrawal of interviewees, and iv) encryption of interview records within a certain time as stipulated in the university guidelines.

### 3.6 Research Connectivity: Methods and the Aim

Examination of the relationship between the research aim, questions and methods used to analyse the collected data enable the research methodology to be evaluated. Figures 3.4 and 3.7 demonstrate the development, applicability and connection between the research purpose and overall research design.

### 3.7 Summary

This chapter discussed the broad, inductive approach I took in developing this piece of research. The methodology I used to be qualitative research, which articulates a flexible research strategy to gather conventional data. To answer the research questions, I used a series of internet research studies of tourism websites, together with in-depth interviews with experts for the case study.

The research methodology and methods described in this chapter were extensively utilised in the following chapters (4.0 to 9.0). In the web-based study, multiple examples from the five international cities' tourism websites were critically analysed. In conducting the study, the cross-analysis was implicitly focused on key meanings of the visual design features of primary attractions on the websites in city branding. The results of the findings in the study were rigorously examined as to how they contribute to answering the research questions.

The field research in Manchester as a single case study was proactively conducted to delve deeper into identifying the potential answers to the research questions. For the case study, a series of interviews with experts in creative industries, branding agencies, official and unofficial tourism websites and related academia was thoroughly explored. In short, the flexible, conventional and interconnected applications across the combined methods at each stage in the research process produced the multiple dimensions of the research design.

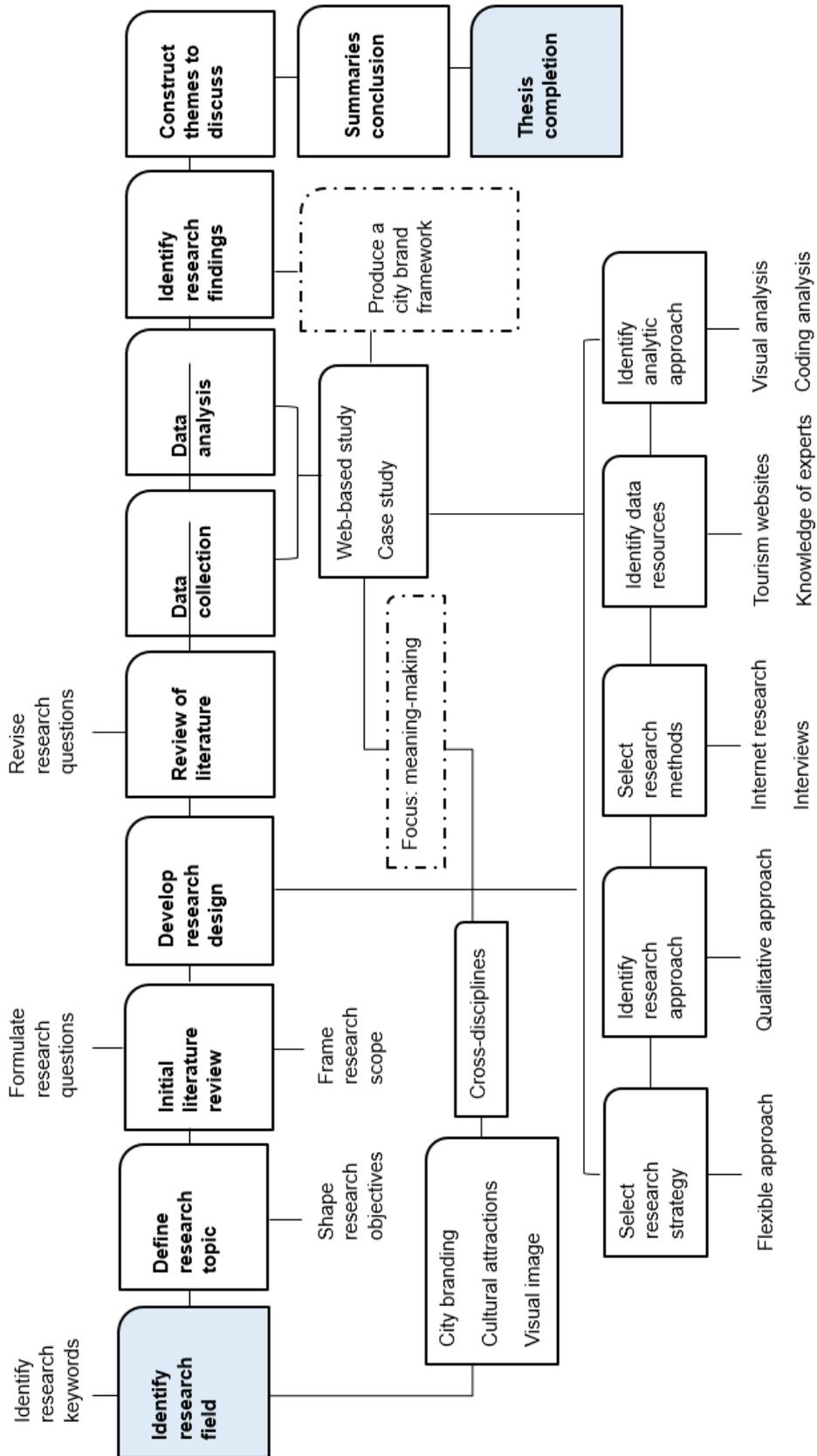
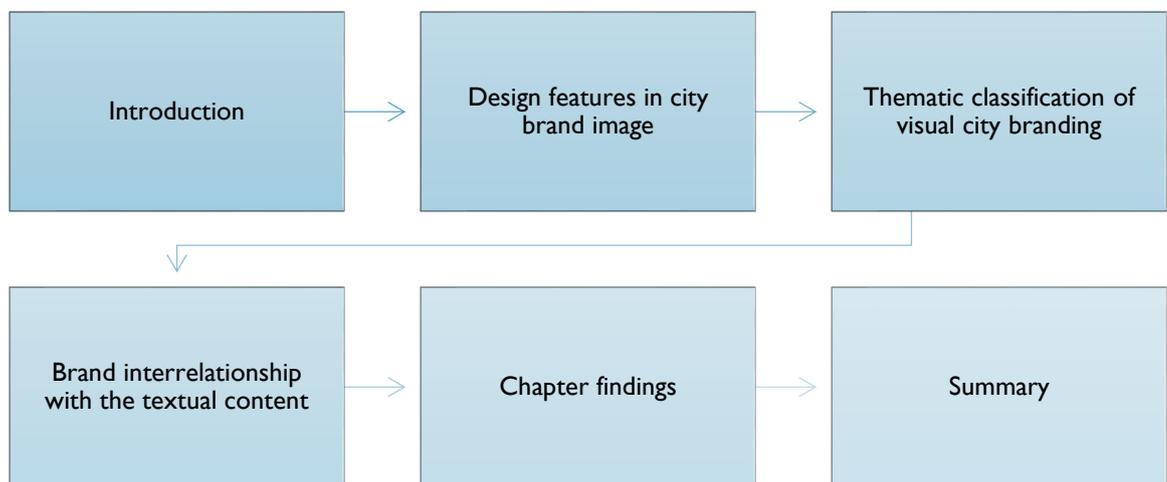


Figure 3.7 Research Process.

## 4.0 THEMATIC CITY BRANDING VIA THE VISUAL DESIGN



**Figure 4.1** Chapter Map.

All images are both encoded and decoded.<sup>40</sup>

## 4.1 Introduction

After reviewing the literature and setting up a methodology, the task of this chapter is to draw out the international city brands' current contexts mirrored by their tourism websites, especially their presentation of attractiveness. This will be largely a background study but one that will inform the principle aim of this thesis. Intended as a comparative overview, it is composed of three main parts. First, the design features of the five cities will be explicitly analysed through visual representation of the official and non-official tourism websites. Second, the assorted design themes embedded in each tourism website will be classified to demonstrate the extent of the brand power. Lastly, it is necessary to consider the interactivity between these elements: cultural design of the city, tourist attractions, and whether the website textuality is visual or not.

### 4.1.1 Rationale for city selection: design-initiative city brand culture

The first part of this chapter consists of some design culture research into Amsterdam, London, New York City, Paris and Sydney. The decision to select them was not because of their visual design significance, their complex and sophisticated design concepts and the amount of design literature for each city. The reason these cities were chosen is that they clearly exhibit many of the virtues of city design personality more than other cities.<sup>41</sup>

City design personality is assigned globally to web-based knowledge. It is not always tourists who are targeted and attracted by the city brand's popularity. However, the tourism websites function as a mirror to the contemporary city image. Thus, if the city's website works positively it can ultimately produce the visual culture personality of the city brand. To grasp the visual elements within a limited web-based research, certain generalised criteria of those cities are established, such as design patterns. The similarities and differences of the

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<sup>40</sup> Sturken and Cartwright (2001: 56).

<sup>41</sup> Information about the city's cultural features is not studied independently in this research. It is investigated as a background to effectively conduct a specific field research. In that way, the questions about the global cities remained separate and general.

design system are also considered. Observing the conceptual visuality and reading its potential message serve to help understand comprehensive visual attractiveness beyond individual design characters.

#### 4.1.2 The focus of the research

The main objective of investigating the selected cities is to identify a cultural personality of the city brands according to the integral visual design of their major tourism websites. To implement the research, a series of web-based studies and a field research with interviews were designed and complemented each other. For the web-based research, five cities; Amsterdam, London, New York City, Paris and Sydney were selected, based on criteria from the literature. The five cities are divided into two groups in terms of historic tourism popularity, brand reputation and audience awareness of the cities' iconic designs. The first group comprises London, New York City and Paris. The second is made up of Amsterdam and Sydney. The two bodies of the study found a pattern of similarities and differences in the cities' tourism website design through observing the structure, and analysing visual concepts and potential messages.

Rationally selected cities based on evidence in the literature and associated references support the following criteria:

##### Criteria 01: design leadership in branding

The core findings on the topics of visual design for (re)branding cities indicate what are the most relevant design products that enhance and upgrade brand position in terms of a city's reputation in the international market. In the literature concerning major cities, success factors for the distinctiveness of the design addressed the role of image-making for brand influence. In this respect, well-preserved cultural heritage is the most important. Curated and frequent promotion of the heritage via the media acts as a key driver in city brand competition. The essential findings for the cities are:

**Amsterdam's** reconceptualisation of city marketing through redesigned venues and landmarking local cafés (Kavaratzis and Ashworth, 2007); **London's** strength in theatres, cultural districts, and historical and religious impact (Kaika, 2010; Sales et al., 2009); **New York City's** success in fashionable brand identity design, accumulation of design infrastructure and new branding after the 2001 WTC attack (Greenberg, 2008); **Paris's** symbolic monumental design, luxury fashion brands, romantic image promotion and alternative art and place

development (Vivant, 2011); **Sydney**'s emphasis on the Sydney Opera House, cultivation of ethnic heritage and tourism development (Kaminski et al., 2013; Waitt and Mcguirk, 1996).

#### Criteria 02: brand authority with the cultural side

Following the three top city brands, the emerging cities of Amsterdam and Sydney have had acclaimed their competitive cultural factors acclaimed as being comparable to those of London, New York City and Paris:

- **Amsterdam:** Amsterdam is the capital and most populous city of the Netherlands, although it is not the seat of the Dutch government, which is in The Hague. Amsterdam was ranked 3<sup>rd</sup> in innovation by 2thinknow in the Innovation Cities Index in 2009, and as the 2<sup>nd</sup> best city to live in the world by the Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) in 2012. The brand identity of the city has been an example of successful branding, in 'I amsterdam'.<sup>42</sup>
- **Sydney:** The city is a consistently high-ranking world city brand in terms of quality of life and culture. From 2006 to the present, Sydney has been internationally ranked in the top five city brands with London, Paris and New York.

Founded on the rational approach of selecting cities based on the literature, three central themes were followed that provided a comprehensive framework within the fundamental scope of visual cultural design for city branding:

#### Theme 01: museum-driven visuals

**London, New York City, Paris and Amsterdam:** A historic collection of iconic art museums dating from the late-19th century acts as a key visual icon design to sustain the cities' brand value. Alongside the fame of the museums, their management strategy to launch their franchises on different continents greatly reinforced their profitability. Relying on branded museums, the cities utilise their focus on museums and their design features as part of their major heritage asset.

#### Theme 02: supreme design

**New York City and Paris:** Producing iconic architectural styles, in well-known monuments, functions as an indispensable marketing tool. Visualising the physical beauty together with

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<sup>42</sup> Permanent Mission of the Netherlands to the UN, 2013.

aesthetics and engineering via the media portrays the cities as models of striking visual appeal in their cityscape. Examples of this type of design, such as the Eiffel Tower in Paris, illustrate the city's design force in historic meaning and concept as well as in visual technology and representation in branding.

### Theme 03: new visual identity

**Amsterdam and Sydney:** No matter how these cities contributed to international trade as an economic hub, industrial innovation and authentic design, their visual impression to general audiences is younger than the histories of London, New York City and Paris. Consequently, the two emerging cities have significantly developed their best landscapes and cultural assets to shape a new and progressive identity in culture and design. Constructing a distinguished contemporary style of architecture for museums and multi-functional arts facilities has assisted their new challenge in city marketing. Arranging the design features via media promotion transmits their new brand message as creative and modern.

## 4.2 Design Features in City Brand Image

### 4.2.1 Introduction

The purpose of this section is to identify the core design features of primary attractions used for the brand image of the international cities, and how to prove the significant contribution of their official and unofficial tourism websites in that aim. The attributes of the comparative analysis have been selected to show representative visual themes and the secondary implications of their promotional texts. From the results of the cross-analysis, an acceptable concept and meanings for branding individual cities through the website's agency will be addressed.<sup>43</sup> The main objectives are: i) compare coherence and gaps in the visual content and their implications between the official and unofficial tourism websites; and ii) synchronise the official and unofficial versions in shaping a vital cultural characteristic for the cities' branding. As a result of the analysis, the five leading city brands at the international level will be contextualised by way of connecting the features of the key design products to a readable story of brand message.

### 4.2.2 Contextual pattern of city design features

As a result of the comparative cross-analysis, the five cities are divided into three groups. The grouping is made along the city's design configuration and design orientation. With the

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<sup>43</sup> Son (2014) 'Hyperlink network system and image of global cities: Webpages and their contents'.

same format of material, such as visual representations, promotional texts and contents of categories, each city creates its own specific themes in its branding concepts. The results of the analysis fell into the following categories:

- Category 01: expansion of iconic features approaches (London, New York City).
- Category 02: coherence of exclusive appeal approaches (Amsterdam, Paris, Sydney).
- Category 03: value-adding approaches (London, New York City).

#### Category 01: expansion of iconic features approaches (London, New York City)

Two cities take an 'expansion of iconic features' approach. Due to the expansion, London and New York convey the contrast between clarity of traditional high-culture (e.g. art and museums) and unidentifiable originality of sub-culture (e.g. clubs and films).

In driving cultural design production, these cities are among the most influential places utilising historic and popularised attractions. The dominant themes on the official promotion reflect their longstanding and widely recognised attractions. In contrast, the introduction of non-art-driven local culture has also significant attractiveness via the unofficial tourism websites. Internationally- promoted Hollywood films are as equally as appealing as lesser known choices on the unofficial sites. Thus, it is reasonable to say that the unofficial websites can function in two ways.

One is to attract more creative tourists who want to know the authentic culture of the cities coming from unknown local values. The other is to offer an opportunity to enjoy local culture, such as going to a cinema or theatre. In both cases, the expansion of attractions involves informative local design which reveals cultural heritage and designed style. The venues of theatres or clubs present design in the cities in terms of their architectural sense and related design and service attributes.

Thus, the attempt to create a broader portfolio of attractions probably contributes to experiencing the richness of the visible and invisible design in the cities. For the idea of branding, the cities can develop a large scope of cultural topics: from their strong bases of art-driven and high-culture city promotion to a more common form of entertainment, such

as club events with a specific target. The following details examples of London and New York City:

In London's official tourism website, the context of visual theme connects to a representation of an assortment of historic and formal places. The selected images for the website are focused on: i) the signified, representing the architectural style of the historic buildings and inside of the museums; ii) the signifier, consisting of the historic building, museums, and a figure of the Royal Family as an exhibition theme; and iii) the meta-code of the visual images showing the dominance of museums, history and heritage as images of two different types of popular museums. In comparison to the official visual coding, the unofficial tourism website chose a specific scene of the club event as a holistic visualisation.

Overall, London's official and unofficial tourism websites present strong creative assets of the city in unique ways. The main examples of the official tourism website stress international, popular and familiar attractions over the long term; museums, the Royal Family and historic venues being the key drivers that have shaped London's cultural identity. All these primary features are London-based global brands and have been constantly exhibited via the media through major events and exhibitions. In particular, the use on the website of traditional (British Museum) and relatively new (Tate Modern) iconic museums links to London's dependency on museums to sustain a culturally powerful image.

In connection to branding, a large number of iconic cultural attractions were established in New York City from the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century onwards.<sup>44</sup> In this sense, the visual themes and their message articulate and manifest the modern design culture in the city brand value. The primary focal point of New York City's official and unofficial tourism websites' emphasis in their visual design can be designated as event and performance-driven culture. Although this is one part of the city's cultural offerings and of the key drivers in attracting tourism, the coherence and consistency in placement of the images attempts to portray the city's design heritage (Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts) and ongoing development in events at the major cultural institutions and sport facilities.

While the official tourism website delimits its frame base to the iconic cultural context, the unofficial tourism website has no limit for expanding its concept of attractions. For example, the images of the world-famous cultural institutions on the official tourism website are

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<sup>44</sup> Greenberg (2008) claims that distinctiveness of New York City's rebranding is described as a '1970s legacy'.

interrelated with two important elements in New York City's cultural industries: i) the performing art centres are closely connected with their exhibitions, events and themes, and introduce new genres through contemporary arts and music; and ii) New York City has an excellent reputation with regard to creative industries, artists and designers, including the art, music, media and design industries of the city. In comparison, Time Out New York's visual theme of a unique and eye-catching stage performance at a club delivers a message of New York City's 'diversity-driven' content development.

In summary, mobilising and activating various visual elements of the iconic design features connects to what and how the cities consider their best visual products for intensified promotion. The reputation of the iconic cultural attractions reflects the design capability and its visual impact at the international level. Also, the invisible possession of a number of qualified, inherited design features strongly guides the framework of design for these cities. The strategic visual design and its expression on the official websites iterates the pride of the iconic designs and sustainability in branding. In comparison to the official intentional messages with the primary design icons, suggestive themes can lead to a rethinking of the value of the hidden cultural heritage as another design potentiality.

#### Category 02: coherence of exclusive appeal approaches (Amsterdam, Paris, Sydney)

A thematic coherence was confirmed on the official and unofficial tourism websites of Amsterdam, Paris and Sydney. In describing the cities' visual representation, these cities highlight their prime driver more than other cities. The websites deliver an easily acceptable brand message in putting the highlighted place into more readable visual storylines. However, the visuality does not belong to a fixed concept; it is sought everywhere from museum-driven (Amsterdam) to natural environment (Sydney).

Articulating the concepts of imaging the cities by utilising a coherent identity on the official and unofficial channels produces a clear knowledge of the places. Showing a similar topic of information about the cities eventually contracts a single and readable image about the cities. The principle of a consistent presentation style in Paris's official and unofficial marketing helps to deliver a strong message about the city. From the cityscape to fabric production, the whole city is seen as a nexus of design and creativity. The coherent design spirit on the websites enhances the primary features by characterising the city's identity through repetitive and continuous approaches.

Such consistency of presentation is not limited to a single subject. In the case of Paris, the official and unofficial tourism websites show the equal significance of Paris gives to its cityscape and its fashion design. While the official tourism website highlights the nighttime scenery with the new lighting design of the Eiffel Tower, Time Out Paris presents an assortment of Parisian fashion garments. The selected images for the website are: i) the signified, representing the typical style of architecture and the quality of textiles; ii) the signifier, also consisting of monument and fabric; and iii) the meta-code of the visual images showing the iconic meaning of the individual monument and design infrastructure and heritage in the textile industry.

Furthermore, a strong inclusiveness in design and brand capital exists in the theme concept of Paris's official and unofficial tourism websites. The coexistence of the Eiffel Tower and Paris Disneyland as primary examples of Paris on the official tourism website reflects: i) that the city seeks to benefit economic gains from its locally-based heritage as well as from the franchised attraction coming from America; and ii) that the website creates a slightly confusing message to audiences in terms of the perception of local identity, but it also conveys the message that the city is admitting the imported brand to enrich Paris's identity, thus rendering it an integral part of the city image.

The main content of the unofficial tourism websites does not deny the consistency principle in creating the Parisian image. It presents a more focused and segmented concept of the city image via the themes of major textual examples. On the unofficial tourism websites, familiar arts, film and fashion are represented via museums and Paris-based global fashion brands. However, the visual image of various colourful fabrics on Time Out adds a new aspect to the city image. The single, eye-catching image suggests how the design of tourism websites can provide and expand the creative design aspects in design concept and visuality.

In designing and creating a visually appealing cityscape, everyday objects were respected. Street design in metropolitan European cities has been studied in the context of urban planning and design. The building plan of the systematic, aesthetic appearance of Paris is directly related to the urban design policy of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The time of "strategic beautification (*l'embellissement stratégique*)" in Paris explains the impact of urban growth in transportation and consumption of architectural design and a series of public monuments.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> Highmore (2005: 32-33).

The use of cultural assets imposed as modern architecture, introduced in immigrant history that makes the city all the more distinguishable from the other cities in the analysis.

A symbolism of design consistency is shown by the website's adoption of the city's most renowned architecture. The motif of the official tourism website's brand logo is of the Eiffel Tower, which reiterates the solid status of the monument in representing the city. The visual brand identity (e.g. logo and slogan) of Paris is clearly shown at the top of the screen on the official tourism website. In comparison, Time Out does not show any official city brand logo or slogan. But expressive and meaningful images of fashionable fabrics can be understood as an opportunity to develop strategic city branding by turning to unconventional forms of cultural attractions.

### Category 03: value-adding approaches (London, New York City)

In contrast to London's official tourism website, the unofficial tourism websites suggest that the city has also developed a number of cultural productions with distinctive and thematic genres, such as films and small museums. These features may not have been positioned as key attractions as much as the primary examples on the official tourism website. However, their attempt to introduce the value and importance of small and non-iconic museums and digital film technology has a value to be considered as a complementary part of the main cultural heritage of London's branding. It is a brand working at value-attaching to the culture often regarded as value-deprived.

Though the unofficial tourism websites like Time Out do not match the prestigious icons, such as the British Museum or Big Ben, it probably exercises a more open and horizontal communicative force than the celebrated icon-centric screen of the official tourism website. The design and components of the brand identity screen clearly state the city's brand communication. The website's employment of diverse and well-loved cultural/tourist attractions in London is connected to the city's branding mind. This can be considered as one of the value-attaching intentions.

In comparison, the representational concept of New York City's official tourism website takes another path. It shows the emphasis placed on the written text. With a modest number of fragmented and less clear background images, it tells in detail about the city's cultural meanings. Although the official tourism website does not present a legible visual image of cultural attractions or related the events, the text alone convincingly informs about the city's primary attractions in art events and sport. The selected images for the website are focused

on: i) the signified, representing the city's important and renowned performing art cultural facilities and an iconic sports event; ii) the signifier, consisting of the venues and buildings of cultural events and a sports fixture; and iii) the meta-code of the visual images as a sign of the dominance of contemporary multi-purpose art and cultural institutions, and a traditional baseball game in New York City.

In New York City's case, it is interesting to compare the unofficial tourism website in this aspect. The unofficial clearly focuses on a vivid and impressive scene of a club event by showing the performer and the striking stage design. The contest between the official and unofficial attributes in constructing a key promotional topic can be read as each side's particular value-attaching concept and execution.

Overall, the key contents of the official and unofficial tourism websites elaborate broad and diverse themes of the arts, creative industries and entertainment of the city. The main examples on the websites reflect how eagerly the city has constantly developed numerous attractions based on the city's locality and its multicultural character. The variety of examples in different themes provides a sense of the massive physical scale of the city and the innumerable number of nationalities of its residents.

The primary examples of the attractions with detailed sub-themes and storytelling also represent the growth of entertainment and creative industries in the city. More diverse attractions, such as clubs, mirrored on the unofficial tourism websites address the uniqueness of small events as part of the cultural production in the city. These themes accumulated in developing attractions present two directions: i) substantial resources and materials of cultural and creative business capital in the city; and ii) targeting both wider and niche audiences whose interest is in exploring historical values as well as current and unfamiliar trends within a city.

## 4.3 Thematic Classification of Visual City Branding

### 4.3.1 Introduction

The results from the cross-analysis identified a type of branding strategy and its pattern of each of the five international cities. In this section, six types of thematic visual city branding were classified, based on their focused cultural context in shaping the visual identities of the cities:

### 4.3.2 Types of thematic visual city branding

- Theme 01: museum-initiative durability (Amsterdam/London-official)
- Theme 02: one story (Amsterdam-official/unofficial)
- Theme 03: dual recognition of creative originality (London-unofficial)
- Theme 04: stimulation throughout style (Paris-official/unofficial)
- Theme 05: performance-energy as a core instrument (New York City-official/unofficial)
- Theme 06: multiple experience (Sydney-official/unofficial)

#### Theme 01: museum-initiative durability (Amsterdam/London-official)

The concept of museum-dependent branding in the official tourism websites of these two cities confirms the function of museums as arts-initiative authorities in the position of the city brand.<sup>46</sup> Arranging the image of iconic museums side by side with the symbolic heritage of the Royal Family is a constant reminder that the city regards their museum assets as being equal to its royal heritage. In the same manner, the choice of museum as a main story for Amsterdam connects to the trend of night tourism for museums, just like the London-based national event of 'Museum at Night'. The brilliant tone of museums on Amsterdam's official branding shows that the presentation of museums helps to conceptualise the city's attention to the artistic environment. The promotional text clearly refers to the branding idea for Amsterdam: "Museums after midnight—Discover Amsterdam's museums in a contemporary new light—after dark!" Thus, the two readable examples of their museum-based themes definitely incorporate the brand interaction between a city and museums.

#### Theme 02: one story (Amsterdam-official/unofficial)

The coherence of selecting visual themes, such as the city's night scene, reflects an international trend of attracting night tourism. The common message from the two selected images was which aspect of framing arts-initiative that city branding has taken. This is not at

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<sup>46</sup> "Artistic cultural environment is a part of important urban attractions for tourism", Page (1995: 44).

all transparent. However, to the receptive mind it is seen as very sophisticated. Although the illustration technology does not explicitly demonstrate the form of the content via the official website nor via Time Out, a main brand message states that arts and museums are for the forward-thinking city as always, and here it can be linked to night culture. Articulating the visual of night scenery with the promotional texts of the two websites directly informs that kind of museum-driven city branding: the official tourism website's "Museums after midnight" and Time Out Amsterdam's, term of "world-class art" in "20 great things to do in Amsterdam-discover world-class art, fabulous flea markets, and how to eat herring" reveals a brief description of the city as a growing competitive brand to London or other museum-driven cities. Whether it was an intentional design or it happened accidentally, the consistency of subject-making builds an imaginative idea about the city image.

#### Theme 03: dual recognition of creative originality (London-unofficial)

The unexpected and ambiguous visual theme of the international film for London via Time Out explicitly provides information about the hidden heritage of the city. As London has a strong inclination to sustain its historic and popular attractions, such as Big Ben, the branding theme implies a contrasting but interactive message. Presenting an intense scene of an internationally- promoted film, like a 3-D science fiction thriller, may not reflect the accumulated cultural images of the city in a monochromatic tone. The text of such a visual theme indirectly delivers dual messages on branding impact. One is that the promotion of an international film as common culture potentially targets wider audiences. The other is an expansion of primary content for branding the city, from classic and typical heritage (e.g. palaces or museums) to digital-driven technology and the production of creative artwork thanks to that sort of technical invention. However, it raises a brand confusion in terms of design originality. Even though the production of the film is not entirely made in London nor does the film storyline have anything to do with London, the idea and project of a dual message is interesting for a website for its message strategy.

#### Theme 04: stimulation throughout style (Paris-official/unofficial)

Historically, Paris represents the design field more than any other city and has produced vast amounts of acclaimed design products from fashion to monuments. The reputation of style leadership based on their solid infrastructure and branding technology at the international level are flexibly connected on the website's screen. The selected visual images of the symbolic Eiffel Tower and fashionable fabrics stimulate emotional attention. Repackaging

the core visual features of specialised design products with the contextual emphasis of the originality reinforces the brand reputation as a design initiative-led cultural environment in the city. From a design perspective, an assemblage of the large features of the illuminated cityscape embracing the monument and the close-up of artistic textile patterns, support the city as a highly-refined brand. This type of design-focused presentation for city branding can be seriously regarded as a new stage in profiling cultural schemes for international cities. Therefore, Paris's attempt at brand positioning in the field of design has implications beyond the meanings of the visual themes.

#### Theme 05: performance-energy as a core instrument (New York City-official/unofficial)

New York City's very distinctive geographic scale and social structure make its visual culture widely varied. From various cultural origins, a unique modern content is employed as part of a valuable cultural heritage. Development, expansion and integration of the complex and various components in the cultural field have produced their authentic international arts and sporting events, which define one of the peculiar aspects of the city. Unlike the other cities within this research, New York City's main visual content consists of graphic emphasis of the words instead of specific images of attractions. The representation method with the typology in the limited colour scheme amplifies the central attractiveness of the city. The textual and visual design strongly and clearly defines the city as a performance-driven cultural space. With the contextual design, the theme addresses a strong presence of the main cultural attractions, e.g. the Lincoln Center.

#### Theme 06: multiple experience (Sydney-official/unofficial)

Sydney's websites clearly demonstrate the visual identity with the contrasting theme of the natural environment and the metropolitan urban sense. The iconic promotional image for the city with the panoramic view of the landscape combines with urban facilities in its cultural offering. In a sense, the visual theme of the unique cityscape geographically and aesthetically reiterates the concept of 'experiencing' the city brand. The slogan of "Experience Sydney in 360 Degrees" presents the outstanding natural environment, multi-ethnic history, and sophisticated creativity. Due to the vast and well-preserved nature, Sydney has developed a uniqueness in design and culture in constructing its redefined identity at the national level.<sup>47</sup> Basically, a carefully-designed visual theme of the tourism

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<sup>47</sup> Worden, S. (2009) 'Aluminum and Contemporary, Australian Design: Materials History, Cultural and National Identity', *Journal of Design History*, Vol. 22 (2), Oxford University Press.

websites functions as a guideline to inform a clear and comprehensive city image. Positioning the basis of visual components in shaping a city brand, which involves a notable brand logo and the historic monumental design as a prime theme supports this consistency. With the repetitive exposure of primary contents functioning as the official landmark, the new value in small cultural themes from the unofficial version can be a distinguished visual identity.

## 4.4 Brand Interrelationship with the Textual Content

### 4.4.1 Introduction

To identify the connectivity between the visual context and the frequency of promoted examples of attractions on the official websites, the following points support the content. From the analysis mentioned above, there is a coherent relationship between the analysis of the text and the frequency of the main categories. Based on the statistical results, a number of topics were identified. Due to the scientific purpose of the research within this topic, an individual finding for each city will be addressed as follows:

### 4.4.2 Frequency

Based on the statistics of the most frequently cited examples of tourism/cultural attractions found throughout the official tourism websites, two topics emerged as follows:

(1) The most promoted cultural/tourist attractions on the official tourism websites are:

**Amsterdam:** the Rijksmuseum, followed by the Anne Frank Museum, I amsterdam and Amsterdam Fashion Week; **London:** Greenwich, the Victoria & Albert Museum, the British Museum, the Natural History Museum, the Science Museum and Hyde Park; **New York City:** the Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, Central Park, Prospect Park, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Empire State Building, the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), Statue of Liberty National Monument, Delacorte Theater and SoHo; **Paris:** Disneyland Paris, the Louvre Museum, the Arc de Triomphe and Versailles; **Sydney:** the Sydney Opera House, the Queen Victoria Building (QVB), The Rocks Discovery Museum, the Sydney Dance Company, The Ritz Theatre, the Museum of Sydney, and the Strand Arcade.

(2) The most promoted cultural features of the official tourism websites are:

**Amsterdam:** national design (Dutch design), museums/galleries, historical figures' residences and the city brand slogan (brand identity); **London:** museums/galleries, shopping,

architecture, entertainment facilities and celebrities; **New York City**: arts and event attractions, specific districts, museums/galleries and symbolic monuments/buildings; **Paris**: entertainment resorts, museums; **Sydney**: museums/galleries, shopping, performing arts centres and architecture/buildings, monuments and historic venues.

#### 4.4.3 Implications

In Amsterdam's websites, the main message from the analysis of the frequency of categories and the examples is 'the value of local design, national brands and city brand'. A few themes in the menu on the official tourism website guide the city's brand value with design vibrancy and the main messages of the text are connected. On balance, the main message in the analysis of the text and the analysis of frequency of categories of cultural/tourist attractions and their examples appear to address museums and the city's design and its shopping districts and the use of its brands as transformational places with a theme.

In London's, the topic is explained as 'the richness of the history and cultural liveliness'. Although a few themes in the introductory headings indicate a combination of the city's cultural vibrancy with old and new, the emphasis of the main message of the text is the iconic cultural heritage. On balance, the main message in the analysis of the text and the analysis of frequency of categories of cultural/tourist attractions and their examples appears to address the city's heritage of museums, shopping and historic/cultural districts.

In New York City's, the key story shows that New York City emphasises museums, shopping, entertainment facilities and monuments. The main message of New York City's official tourism website uses the cityscape and the intensive cultural liveliness of the city to reflect the urban attraction development in the context of modern cultural heritage. Both the main messages from the analysis of the frequency of categories of cultural/tourist attractions and their examples appear to address the city's design of cultural attractions with a variety of themes.<sup>48</sup>

In Paris's, there is a supporting relationship between the analysis of the text and the frequency of the main categories. The clear statement was 'the abundance of the cultural heritage and the popularity of global brands'. The main message of the text is the combination of iconic cultural heritage and contemporary international brands. On balance, the main message in the analysis of the text and the analysis of frequency of categories of

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<sup>48</sup> Gorden (2003) 'Urban interfaces: Building images in the 20th century American city'.

cultural/tourist attractions and their examples appear to address the variety of the city's local and iconic heritage and the infusion of global brands of entertainment facilities.

Sydney's present a contradictory relationship between the analysis of the text and the frequency of the main categories. The promotional text of '*Sydney in 360 degrees*' in the visual image presents the city's two-fold characteristics of beaches and cultural facilities. On balance, the main message from the analysis of the frequency of categories and the examples is 'the diversity and multi-cultural activity with varied themes'. A main message from the introductory heading indicates a broader sense of cultural atmosphere in experiencing the city's modern cultural facilities. Therefore, there is a gap between the main message in the analysis of the text and the analysis of frequency address the city's cultural character.

## 4.5 Chapter Findings

Based on the analysis, the key findings are as follows:

- The key attractions and their design value for the international cities indicate a framework of central design heritage in branding, e.g. architecture and fashion.
- The active utilisation of city-based designers for the international cities connects to the building of a competitive strategy as a design originality in the authentic and creative infrastructure.
- Producing specialised designs and their sustainability requires brand creation for the designs, from museums to transportation cards.
- The impact of architecturally dominated branding offers a guideline for some cities, which involves being culturally transformed, as with Manchester.
- Categorising specified themes in constructing visual text in enhancing the city brands suggests a flexibility and modification of branding technology.

### A discussion theme: design features and their impact on city branding

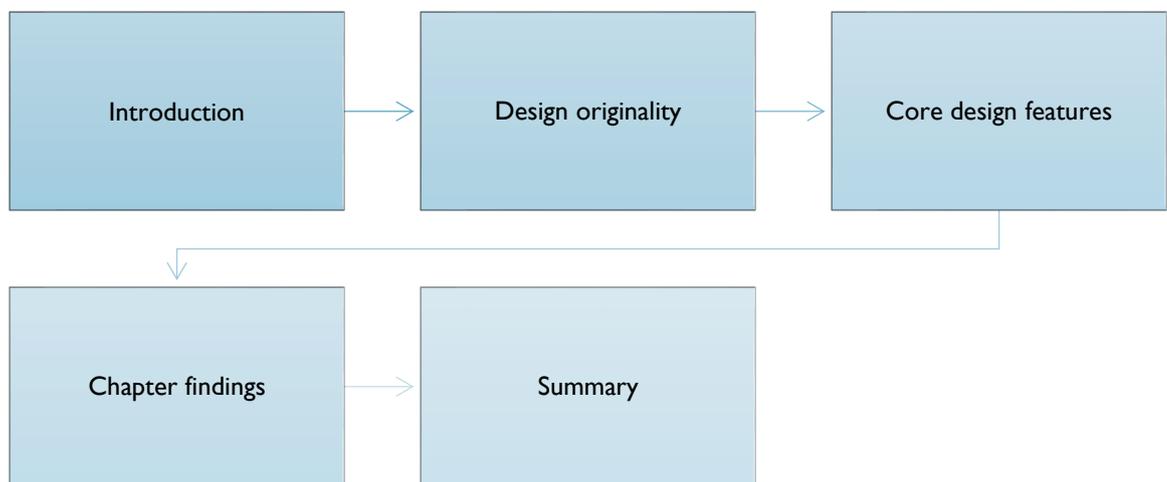
The international city brand strongly shows how the cities see design value as enhancing their brand personality at the high-profile level. Their active use of features that reflect a number of core design products and related attractions confirms the positioning of design as a key driver for city branding and cultural heritage. Conceptualising, presenting and delivering a clear message with the use of visible content in design from architecture to transportation illustrates the next level of city branding. Beyond the design features on the

websites, the cities (re)construct or (re)shape their best visual features, which reflects the significant value of design culture in the cities.

## 4.6 Summary

In the analysis, the design of the official and unofficial tourism websites of the five international cities functions as image construction, which consequently influences the direction of city branding. The representation of primary attractions directly and indirectly involves the key design attributes of the attractions and related programmes. The visible themes and their implications contribute to the delivery of a brand statement from the cities iconic or lesser-known venues or performances through the introduction of essential cultural amenities. In terms of the types of marketing transmitted, officialising a range of central design productions under the title of 'Must-See' from arts to shopping via the official channel firmly establishes the key design assets in the cities. Within this context, the insight into the cities' brilliant culture from Time Out and other unofficial tourism websites is discussed as an opportunity to enhance the subtle identities of the city brands. This creative process can contribute to identifying the city's brand characteristics as a style leader. However, by not stressing a visual design product and the historical value and impact of the cities can be seen to develop differentiation strategies by using practical methods in branding cities via the visual windows of the website media.

## 5.0 VISUAL DESIGN FEATURES IN CITY BRANDING PART 01



**Figure 5.1** Chapter Map.

Real Londoners, French fashion designers, Dutch design, Sydney's designers and Tiffany.<sup>49</sup>

## 5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the use of major design capital in shaping a city brand identity. The main topics of which consist of: i) city-based design originality, ii) core design features, and iii) meanings and visions from the visual design in branding.

## 5.2 Design Originality

In this section, the primary subject of the research aims to examine how the international cities strategically distinguish themselves from one another by utilising the conceptual expression on originality of their core design features. The sub-topics incorporated with the main subject are: i) identifying allocation of local design and local designers to stress the cities' concerns about the origin of the design products; ii) observing how to apply global brands' reputation of the design products and how the brands' influence penetrated into the cities' originality; and iii) establishing core design products of the cities in terms of representing the cities' acclaimed industrial productions in design.

### 5.2.1 The use of the term 'city-oriented' design/designers

Understanding local design and designers as an essential part of cities' cultural pride was identified from the design categories on the official and unofficial tourism websites.

Amsterdam, Sydney, Paris and London all emphasise the terms 'design' and 'designers' to iterate their design value as the cities' originality. Interestingly, the cities with smaller populations and less complexity like Amsterdam and Sydney, emphasise design input in their official tourism websites and mention their design competence more than the other three cities in the research.

As a part of city branding, Amsterdam's official tourism website focused on national identity:<sup>50</sup> Dutch Design and its brands are mentioned briefly but impressively in the

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<sup>49</sup> The central terms of design originality from the analysis of the official tourism websites of the five cities.

<sup>50</sup> Anholt (2010); Worden (2009); Kavaratzis et al. (2005); Balmer et al. (2003).

category of shopping. For instance, the term 'Dutch' is used to indicate the relationship between the city brand and the national brand (e.g. Dutch Cheese, Shopping for Dutch Design, Dutch designers in 'Fashionable Amsterdam'). From these examples, it is clear that the national brand embraces the city brand within the context of design in Amsterdam.

Paris's emphasis on fashion designers as a national capital supports a soft national identity for France, such as 'French Fashion Designers' in 'Shopping'. Sydney's official tourism website also categorised local design in the title 'Sydney Designers' and their fashion brands. Lists of the fashion brands with the names of designers on Sydney's website accentuate their design creativity and its uniqueness for branding Sydney.

In comparison to New York, Paris and London, the brand of Amsterdam's and Sydney's designers have not to date been popular, despite the value and the impact of the local design products. The main message of the website about Sydney Designers, is that brand storytelling of designers can be considered as a developing sign of tourists' interest in the city.

Through the visual promotional texts, the Paris and London websites articulated a strong statement about their premium design. In-depth promotional text clearly implies design leadership in terms of Paris's originality. The description of the texts addresses the fact that the architectural design reflects historical evidence, cultural excellence and aesthetic sensibility for the city as much as for the nation: "Institutional buildings are more than just a symbol of the attachment of Parisians to their institutions or their public buildings. They also reflect the history and elegance of French architecture" (under Monuments); "For an intake of culture, the ultimate in dramatic art is on offer in Paris" (under Shows).

### 5.2.2 Brand exchange of the design originality

The cities use both global and local brands to promote themselves. Globalisation has impacted on these cities, and they consider the familiarity and popularity of global brands from museums (e.g. Madame Tussauds) to fashion (e.g. H&M) within tourism.<sup>51</sup> For example, Paris's legendary luxury brand reputation in fashion means that successfully promoted local brands can help the city's creative image and its cultural identity.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> Florek (2013); Park and Rabolt (2009).

<sup>52</sup> Florek and Conejo (2007).

However, encountering similar global brands everywhere may not be desirable, and it is difficult to identify what the cities' authentic cultural identities are. The influences of global brands in branding cities identified a few categories of type of attractions. These internationally-popular brands construct key drivers for promotion of the official tourism websites. Examples of the franchised brands in museums, thematic entertainment facilities and everyday products were identified across Paris. Those popular venues are listed in the Top 10 Attractions (subcategory of Must-See). Paris's most focused promotion favoured Disneyland, so the reputation of the thematic park as a world's entertainment facility plays a role in branding the city. The name of Disneyland on the website was positioned in the categories of both Theme Park and Event and Shows.

The coexistence of the Eiffel Tower and Paris Disneyland as primary examples of Paris reflects a shift of landmarks. The implementation of internationally-successful brands in driving tourism reflects: i) that the cities seek sustainable economic benefit from franchised brands from abroad; ii) that the emphasis of the brands creates a slightly confusing message to audiences in terms of the perception of local identity; and iii) launching global brands conveys how the cities adapt the imported brand to enrich and become an integral part of the cities' visual attractiveness. Also, in Paris, the iconic brand of ice cream, Häagen-Dazs is listed as one of the primary attractions under the name of the Häagen-Dazs Boutique. From a design perspective, the title of Boutique differentiates the brand image from everyday dessert to stylish concept.

### 5.3 Core Design Features

The objective of the research in this section is to identify a scheme of central design features of primary attractions. Based on the visual and textual research of the international tourism websites in Chapter 4.0, a number of essential visual designs and their features were identified as follows:

#### 5.3.1 Premium architectural design

Heritage architecture and monuments are surrounded by places, streets and other architecture, in which the major popular tourism destinations are interconnected. Sensational heritage design has shaped the cityscape of major international cities. For example, the majority of iconic monuments built between the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries have been used as visible landmarks in identifying the cities. In order to preserve these meaningful

designs, there are approximately 200,000 protected monuments in the European Union (EU), and 2.5 million buildings of historical interest.<sup>53</sup>

The historical value and visual impression of the design of the architectural heritage highlights the cities' ownership of the designs. Some examples of historic architecture and symbolic monuments support this claim according to the investigation in Chapter 4.0. Overall, the official tourism websites are focused more intensively on the iconic architecture and monuments than on other small-scale ones. Streets and shops surrounding the architecture or unknown heritage buildings are rarely illustrated.

The examples of London, Paris, New York City and Sydney support these contexts as follows: In London, the long-term reputation and exposure of historic buildings and public design signature frame the city's design character. Via the media, the best examples of the design are Big Ben, the British Museum and red telephone boxes. The visual images and promotional texts from the official tourism website verifies the designs as the city's most valuable attractions. The description from the promotional texts states the designs are the icons of London and local residents: i) "London's Story" as a theme in displaying comprehensive design heritages in visualising the city; and ii) "London Icons: From Big Ben to the red telephone box, find out which London icons real Londoners prefer and why".

In phrase ii), two brand messages are implied: a) visual designs from historic architecture to a telephone box stand for the most iconic and valued design features in the city; and b) those design products represent the uniqueness of the city and the awareness of London residents of their historic design environment. From the view point of iconic design heritage, emergence of a contemporary architectural style adds a new version of London's visual identity. In comparison to the historic architectural designs, the futuristic Swiss Re building and the unique Monument at Tate Modern have not been widely mentioned or shown on the website. Those latest editions of the showcase of the city's design can be considered as a modern aspect of London because contextual compatibility in architectural style creates the dynamism of the cityscape.

In the sense of design heritage, Paris's visualisation of the official website clearly stated the role of the monument for the city. The authority consigned to the Eiffel Tower was represented within the cityscape and the city brand identity.<sup>54</sup> The prevalence of the visual

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<sup>53</sup> European Commission (1998).

<sup>54</sup> Florek and Conejo (2007).

themes of the tower delivers a brand message about the city's prominent design. In terms of connectivity between the iconic design and city brand identity, the motif of the official tourism website's brand logo reiterates the official status of the Eiffel Tower for Paris. Relatively, Sydney's and New York City's official tourism websites did not definitively present the visual representation of their symbolic design features.

Instead, Sydney's websites create non-visual marketing of Sydney Opera House, and New York City's website similarly takes the Lincoln Art-Performing Center for art's sake. For New York City, the promotional text highlights the city's internationally-successful performing art centre and its well-established seasonal programmes. The dominant promotional text of the official tourism website strengthens the city's vibrancy and energy in terms of event-oriented attractions. For example, '*Inside Lincoln Center*' introduces specific event programmes (e.g. opera, jazz, ballet). The content of the text connotes direct and clear information, which narrates a series of events at the major cultural facility to attract wider audiences, specifically UK visitors (e.g. the image of UK flag in the background). The essential must-see designs of the city, e.g. Statue of Liberty, National Monument and the Empire State Building were identified as the most promoted attractions. Similarly, Sydney's most recognisable visual icon, the Sydney Opera House, was utilised in the categories of Must-See to Dining, Fashion and Shopping throughout the official tourism websites.

In the case of London and New York City, the official tourism websites recommend linking their distinctive brand meanings with famous and historic places, and with residential areas in the city centres. Both cities have constructed and developed magnificent classic architectural styles (e.g. Georgian, Art Deco) without neglecting contemporary styles for residents (e.g. postmodern). The contrasting visual experiences can form a unique brand value for memorable city branding: i) walking around West London under the title of 'London Postcodes' via London Town; and ii) touring inside stylish and eclectic apartments via Time Out New York. In New York, viewing a night scene under the title of 'New York City the Lights Tour' via Boarding Sightseeing connects to the architectural scenery. From a perspective of condensed visuality in cities, developing a tourism product with the theme of lights relates to the transformation of architectural design from day to night.

### 5.3.2 Fashion heritage

The fashion industry in international metropolitan cities has constructed an interactive function and system between business and culture in driving the city's economic profit. Consumption of fashion in major international cities, such as New York City, London and

Paris engenders local and international influences on everyday design and city branding. Because of this apparent influence, these cities have been broadly recognised as global trendsetters in fashion style and styles of other items.<sup>55</sup> The expansion of the fashion infrastructure for a more enriched city branding increased, together with the need for designers and branding participants, and, consequently, associated physical space, such as shops, departments and shopping districts, appeared.<sup>56</sup>

As the fashion business assumed more economic and cultural importance, the leading trendsetters such as London, Paris and New York City invested vast amounts of promotion into their fashion attractions regarding them as a major part of branding. The categories of fashion products include clothes, jewellery, fabrics, cosmetics and related brand names and institutions. As a result, the cities have quantified and qualified lasting assets from the fashion industry. Because fashion heritage, degree of skill and high and popular culture all define the city branding identity, it became natural for most of the five cities's tourism websites to utilise their fashion infrastructure to enhance their branding.

Most of the examples of fashion for city promotion were identified from the websites as follows:

Over the last centuries, Paris has enjoyed a world-class reputation in tourism with its value-added historic places, architecture, department stores and museums. In particular, symbolic monuments have played a role in city branding, and they still impact on the city's vibrant cultural image through their history. From the design perspective, these iconic cultural assets are not Paris's exclusive design property in the context of city branding.

For example, French fashion design has been an important industry and primary cultural export item since the 17<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>57</sup> A number of international fashion luxury brands have been produced only in Paris and their designers have contributed to developing the resulting luxury industry: this lesser valued heritage has been developed within a modern urban culture, and contribute to the sustainability of the city's cultural meaning. It seems that the way to enhance the city's brand image can be found anywhere. Practitioners in city branding and in official tourism websites have many, as yet undiscovered, rich sources with which to exploit cultural attractions and develop a niche heritage.

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<sup>55</sup> Greenberg (2008).

<sup>56</sup> Williams et al. (2011); Jansson et al. (2010).

<sup>57</sup> Heller (2007).

The unofficial tourism websites apply the city's strength in cultural sectors to construct their content of fashion design and accumulated knowledge and practice of cosmetics and style creation. From the attractions in the categories and promotional texts, production of luxury fashion brands, cosmetic knowledge in Paris's authentic style, and aesthetics of fabric design were identified. First, striking images of a well-coordinated collection of fashionable fabrics on Time Out Paris marked the city as a rich venue for fabric design. Second, an emphasis on the French fashion industry: from fashion events to beauty styling information under the title of 'French Fashion Designers' in Shopping: Bonjour Paris iterates Beauty Secrets of French Women; Paris Digest highlights Paris fashion from iconic French brands to lesser known French fashion brands (e.g. local brands).

The themes of fashion and beauty categorically affirm the strength of Paris as an international hub for specific products. Due to the sustainability of global brands across fashion and make-up, such as Chanel or Dior, there is a coherence between branding the city and these categories. The global French fashion and cosmetic brands often use visual images of Paris (e.g. The Eiffel Tower) for their advertisements. This means there is correlation between the iconic visual design and fashion brands in terms of branding Paris.

In comparison to Paris's fashion statement, Amsterdam prefers a broader sense of fashion development for the city. The official tourism website iterates a successful visual transformation of district design and events of local fashion.<sup>58</sup> From the analysis, a couple of local brands of fashion design in the Red-Light District have been an important cultural attraction on the official tourism website. However, a lack of information about the brands and shops lessens tourists' interest in the city's design attractions. The unofficial tourism websites can devise a strategic content design, for instance, by introducing the young, new brands of Amsterdam. Consequently, the new challenge for the official tourism website is to emphasise the city's primary cultural attractions such as the Red-Light District and other unknown areas of design. The titles of the main category and promotional events, e.g. Fashionable Amsterdam, Amsterdam Fashion Week support the city's fashion field as a core branding tool.

Unlike the general description of fashion in these two cities, New York City's official website provides specific information about the city's cultural history using a storytelling technology to cover the fashion attractions of the city. The jewellery brand, Tiffany's broad influence

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<sup>58</sup> Lee (2013).

from a sales venue to film culture suggests how cities can utilise a brand of good design in city promotion. The international brand reputation of Tiffany was utilised as one of the primary attractions in representing the city's success in fashion design and its related culture. The example of Tiffany on the official tourism website was ranked at number 11 after SoHo, the major shopping district. Tiffany's brand shop is located in the central area of the city, which represents the icon of luxury jewellery design in New York. The design reputation and brand value construct a dual-function attraction: i) Tiffany & Co. for jewellery sales and the surrounding shopping streets; and ii) the venue for shooting the celebrated Hollywood film, *Breakfast at Tiffany's* in the 1960s.

### 5.3.3 Entertainment: TV programmes, films

Entertainment production and popular programmes via the media have had tremendous impact on the representation of international cities such as New York City and London. One of the major industries driving the economy and cultural influence of the cities is the entertainment business.<sup>59</sup> Developing a solid infrastructure and long-term know-how of entertainment products via TV programmes and films has been one of the key branding tools for the cities. In terms of design, TV and film programmes clearly deliver the best visual scenes of the cities. All elements of a city's design on the programmes, such as architectural and fashion style through viewing houses, institutions, shops or people's characters, construct the city's most visually appealing, as well as everyday, images. The carefully designed visual outcome of major entertainment exports from the cities can be an instant visual method of presenting the cities' design culture to international audiences.

The official tourism websites of London, New York City and Paris demonstrate how the cities apply their popular entertainment programmes in their promotion. Major examples of the programmes filmed in these cities drive a creative tourism stream for international audiences who are already familiar with the cities via the media. First, New York City's official tourism website iterates the well-established environment of entertainment business in the city through interesting programmes: e.g. TV Show Tapings. The long-term history and world-wide popularity of TV dramas, such as *Friends*, was developed as a tour of TV-shoot venues. The website also promotes one of the great broadcast companies in the world, NBC, as an entertainment attraction.

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<sup>59</sup> Evans (2003).

Unlike New York City, London does not use and capitalise on TV entertainment as a key tourism category; the filming location of Sherlock Homes (BBC TV series) is the only example that is used as an attraction. One of the functionalities of TV programmes in terms of culture is to promote the major attractions, architecture and lifestyle of the city. For example, the Swiss Re building (also known as the Gherkin) designed by Norman Foster has been featured in TV dramas, films and other popular programmes in the UK, e.g. the Apprentice; the Swiss Re building's "spectacular high-tech image acts as a distinctive icon within London's skyline".<sup>60</sup> Tourists, therefore, can gain a legible visual impression of London through touring studios and places from the TV programmes.

With regard to the entertainment business for city branding, Time Out Paris articulates Paris as a destination of film heritage through a brief history of French films under the title '50 Best Films Set in Paris'. Descriptions of the selected films with a stunning visual image explain how the city has developed its impressive venues for filming great films. Displaying the visual images of the films in the capital city in France presents a visual perspective of city design, in terms of architectural venues, shops, cafés or streets.

From a technology aspect within the entertainment production, Time Out London selected a visual image of the 3-D science fiction film, *Gravity*, for its first page, rather than historical attractions. Beyond the selection of a film, the city connects this notion of technology to a visualisation on the part of design. The visual effects for the film were created by Framestore, a London-based company. After the international success of the film, the achievement and contribution of technology to the film industry has been broadly introduced via UK media (e.g. won Best Visual Effects and other categories in the British Academy of Film and Television Arts Awards 2014 (BAFTA); and a nomination for Academy Awards 2014) (BBC TV news, [www.ndtv.com](http://www.ndtv.com), 2013). Specifically, the promotional texts of "made by a London company" and "made in Britain" emphasise the originality of design production in terms of the city and the nation. In addition, the film's director, a Mexican, stressed the fact, at the British Film Award 2014 that he had lived in London for over 10 years.

The background of the success of London's digital technology for the film is based on the city's involvement in the industry in the past. In fact, before World War II, London developed a number of significant film productions, such as 'Working Title', and special effect studios,

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<sup>60</sup> Klingmann (2007: 265).

and was a world leader in the film industry. This success declined during the war, due to the economic situation, and the film industries were reduced and turned their focus to less expensive documentaries and small-scale films.<sup>61</sup>

#### 5.3.4 Café culture

The role of coffee culture developed as a meeting place, a so-called coffee house (café), in Europe, and, ever since, the café has functioned as an essential venue for major cities. The design for a café, such as signage, furniture, decoration and style of coffee mug, represents product design in cities. As the growth of cafés increased, developing brands for such coffee venues emerged as a phenomenon of urban culture (e.g. Starbucks). Competition between global and local brands also applied to the coffee business, which resembles the dominant aspect of international fashion brands. Understanding a café as a part of official branding elements via the official tourism website of Amsterdam and Sydney is founded on this historical conception.

In fact, a number of recent works on Amsterdam's branding and city marketing have mentioned the coffee shops in the city.<sup>62</sup> Coffee shops are one of the most popular and easily accessed places for tourists when they travel to different cities. Global brands and local coffee shops in cities are afforded the same value by tourists. They are a convenient way to sense and experience the city's culture in design, taste and service without any mediation or guidelines. However, on Amsterdam's websites, the city's coffee shops do not exist as a main category, but this lack of information about the coffee shops in Amsterdam is not closely related to the city branding, which did mention the city's coffee shops. In order to enhance Amsterdam's city branding and its attempted city image, categorising coffee shops can be useful for the city's image. Within urban culture, coffee shops reflect design quality and style of cities, so the coffee shops in Amsterdam can be a tangible part of Dutch Design and contribute to the city's emphasis on design originality.

In comparison, Sydney's official tourism website presents experiencing the cultural heritage of local desserts (chocolate) and coffee as cultural experiences of urban tourism. In terms of coffee and local design, Paris's official tourism website rather surprisingly stresses an imported ice cream brand, under the title of Häagen-Dazs Boutique, rather than local shops and cafés. This example shows two aspects of design in the city. One is the title of 'Boutique',

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<sup>61</sup> Petrie (1991).

<sup>62</sup> Kavaratzis and Ashworth (2007).

implying an upgraded design of the brand's shop, which supports 'design excellency' in the city. The other is a dependency on international brands rather than positioning local venues in the coffee culture. In fact, Paris cafés and their furniture design are one of the important design assets in France and innovative designs in design history (e.g. the style of the Bistro chair).

### 5.3.5 Transportation

Urban culture is being developed through innovation, modernity and cultural movements, including public transportation design. Developing a city's identity through the design factors of official transportation reflects a part of product design history for the city. The visual identity of major metropolitan cities, such as London and New York City, has been recognised through the evolution of transport design.

In London, the progress of the modern environment involves the design of the Underground and bus systems. Historically, the UK was where the Industrial Revolution started, and since London is the capital city of the U.K, innovation in urban transportation design can be seen as emphasising the city's brand identity. The logo, colour and shape of black taxis, the red London Bus and the Underground (subway trains) have all been studied as being vital to London's identity.<sup>63</sup> London's iconic transport system, namely, the Tube (also known as the Underground) was designed in the 1920s, highlighting the advanced modernity of the city's design. In particular, the logo design of the Underground became one of the most iconic design features of London, and it contributed to giving the city an identity. In New York City, the symbolic design of the Yellow Cab has been developed as one of the city's major icons. Within this context, the official tourism websites of the cities do not fully demonstrate the visual role of these symbolic modes of transport.

In Amsterdam's and Paris's official tourism websites, the provision of travel cards was mentioned in the promotions of attractions (e.g. museums): iamsterdam Card and the Paris Pass. The design of travel cards constitutes a part of transportation design in cities. Therefore, the use of their service through viewing the card design can be part of city's identity in terms of design product. On London's website, the availability of the Oyster card is not stressed for tourists as much the iamsterdam Card on Amsterdam's and the Paris Pass on Paris's.

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<sup>63</sup> Watson and Bentley (2007); Forty (1986); Pevsner (1968).

Table 5.1 presents a sample of London’s official tourism website on brand relationship between the promotional text and brand message(s).

Example	Promotional text	Brand message(s)
1	<i>London Icons: from Big Ben to the red telephone box</i>	-State the city as a central venue of design heritage in terms of symbolic design assets. -Link the key design products to the most visible cultural heritage.
2	<i>Find out which London icons real Londoners prefer and why</i>	-Define the city as a communication platform to branding design products. -Restate the importance of design originality. -Imply reputations/values of the design products from the city-based residents.
3	<i>There’s always something new: from a pop-up burger join in East London to a blockbuster exhibition at one of London’s galleries</i>	-Identify the city as a leading brand in terms of museum-initiative place. -Inform the city is compatible to run sufficient infrastructure of creative industry.

**Table 5.1** Brand Relationship between the Promotional Text and Brand Message(s) on London’s Official Tourism Website.

## 5.4 Chapter Findings

From the results of the analysis, a number of key findings were identified as follows:

- Utilising the originality of city-based design products and designers enhances the significance of design capital.
- Prime design features of major cultural attractions define a visual aspect of city identity.
- The fields of architecture and fashion design act as main instruments in constructing the city image.
- Devising local and niche themes of design connects to an increase in the design value as a part of core cultural assets.
- Small-scale design items, such as an official travel card and its use to increase profitability of tourism, function as a branding tool.

- Navigating inner aspect of cities, e.g. viewing houses of residents in a city centre, provides proof that more interesting and authentic designs exist.

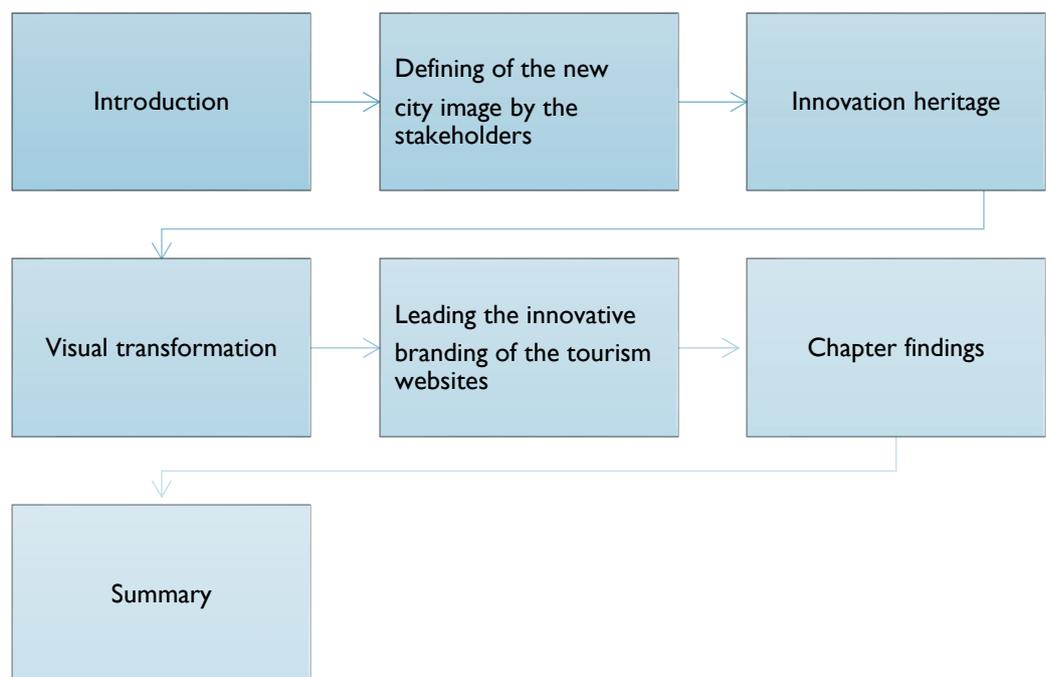
A discussion theme: upgrading design as creative capital

Design features of major cultural attractions represent cities in terms of creative capital. They present external and internal attributes of visual design, which constructs part of the visual content for the cities. The international cities explicitly prove their ability in creativity, technology, investment and management to preserve, display and promote the grand-scale designs via the tourism websites. All the attributes of design development to the cities reflect the value of aesthetics, industrial progress, trends and emotional experience. Relatively, small products of design might not be as clearly recognised as city identity as the lavish architectural museums or fashionable districts. However, the hidden advantage of developing a good design for small and useful every day goods can be described as familiar and tangible design.

## 5.5 Summary

Design plays a crucial role in driving a cultural and entrepreneurial environment and has produced various creative fields and related products in the cities. To sustain their design heritage, the international cities constantly develop and market their products, designers and brands to international business. In branding cities, the online media and their technology for visual advertisements broadly reinforce the core design features. The elements of attractive visuals based on the design fields in the cities ultimately influence a type of second-tier cultural city as industrial-driven cities, such as Manchester. Articulation of city-originated design identified how they connect to further meanings in constructing a design portfolio for the cities' branding. Under the influence of the design phenomenon of the international cities, Manchester's architectural design practice has significantly contributed to the transformation of the city image. The success of designating the new image has been presented in fabricating Manchester's branding towards a cultural, energy-driven city. The distinctive heritage of its football, music and universities actively functions as a key driver for reshaping the city brand. The topic of Manchester branding will be addressed in Chapters 6.0 and 7.0.

## 6.0 VISUAL DESIGN AS THE TRANSFORMATIVE AGENT



**Figure 6.1** Chapter Map.

Original Modern explains the essence of Manchester, two simple words that define what sets Manchester apart from our peers across the globe.

Original Modern is what Manchester gives to the world.

It explains Manchester's spirit, its indefatigable energy for progress and change, that 'do something' attitude, that desire to be different that always has and always will exist within the city.

Original Modern is what runs through Manchester's blood and it's detectable in the best of what we do.

And for Manchester to continue to manifest these values, Original Modern also has to be an aspiration; an aspiration for all individuals, decision makers, groups, communities, organisations and businesses that live, work and engage with Manchester.

Original Modern is a way of valuing what we do in Manchester and is a declaration for Manchester's future. Marketing Manchester strives to be original and modern in all that it does.

It's not just the projects we undertake, but the way in which we go about delivering them.<sup>64</sup>

## 6.1 Introduction

This chapter aims to construct a framework of Manchester's branding towards cultural city. In the previous chapter about the design features of the international cities, a pattern of branding focus with their primary cultural attractions was explicitly identified. The analysis presented how the tourism websites strategically curate and deliver a message to reinforce the major international cities as a leading brand value. On the basis of these findings, navigating the background, current issues and opportunity for reconstructing Manchester as one of the distinctive cultural cities will be addressed. The central topics consist of: i) redefining the city image by the vision of the stakeholders; ii) the historic background of Original Modern as the instrument of innovation; iii) visual design practice in the transformation of the city's visual image; and iv) reshaping the brand image of Manchester with reflections on extended cultural scheme realised on the tourism websites'.

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<sup>64</sup> Source: section of 'Original Modern' on [www.marketingmanchester.com](http://www.marketingmanchester.com).

## 6.2 Defining of the New City Image by the Stakeholders

Branding a city requires a clear concept of image being delivered to the audience. One way of doing this in city branding practice is offering a series of cultural programmes and facilities to the wider audience. The concept of *experience* brand has been broadly applied to product, corporate, and city.<sup>65</sup> In providing the experience, Manchester still needs to advance their brand positioning to compete with other national and international cities. Accordingly, the interviewee from one of the leading branding agencies in Manchester confirms and explains that point:

First you have to understand where you are and you have to understand where you exist [brand positioning]. From Korea, you would have a view about Manchester. I see Seoul as a global city, a little bit the same as Tokyo or London or whatever, buzzing and just dramatic and light and bright and just fabulous. That's what global cities are. But I don't know any other cities in Korea really. The same is true of Manchester. So, positioning Manchester in that framework is very difficult because you think about the hierarchy [IV\_05\_branding agency].

In terms of image development, there is a great deal of evidence that Manchester has been redesigning its old, industrial spaces and facilities to transform the visual image of the city. The business development programme based on industrial innovation has also accelerated the visual transformation of some industrial and residential buildings.

The refurbished districts such as the Northern Quarter have helped create a young and vibrant image for the city. Many of the interviewees involved in the unofficial tourism websites agreed that redesigning the Northern Quarter has contributed to the upgrade of the visual perspective of Manchester, through a series of business expansions (e.g. restaurants and apartments).

For the transformation, reconstruction of the old districts and buildings was carried out and the city's image has been reshaped from one of industrial turbulence to one with 'playful' places to visit (Section 2.6.2, p. 60). A business participant recognised that the convergence process from industrial to modern was a result of the refurbishment developments:

I would like to see itself as a play city and that is being reinforced by lots of these old Victorian buildings being converted into flats by developments such as Northern

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<sup>65</sup> Alvarez (2010: 172).

Quarter with a lot of residential accommodation, by developments such as the Anchor **[IV\_08\_business academia]**.

However, the possibility of Manchester attaining a culturally outstanding image status remains a challenge. From an international perspective, only a few global cities such as London, Paris, Barcelona, Amsterdam and New York City are frequently mentioned as places of cultural vibrancy and visual attractiveness.<sup>66</sup>

In fact, Manchester has astutely observed and interpreted this phenomenon and, by comparing the different cultural atmospheres, they attribute 'stimulating' to Amsterdam, 'romantic' to Paris, and 'dramatic' to Barcelona. This is an insightful argument that states that a semiotic approach is needed in order to reformulate city brand. A branding agency expert reiterated that the essence of city branding, such as brand positioning, and brand architecture should be performed on an international scale:

City brand is an emotional stimulation. Amsterdam is a stimulation, isn't it? Barcelona is a dramatic city with its cathedrals, its night life and all that sort of thing. Paris is about romance and chic, it's visually brilliant. All of that semiotics you use for consumer cities: a city brand<sup>67</sup> **[IV\_05\_branding agency]**.

A general question about Manchester's image was prepared to gain some insight into the city's branding history and how it is currently represented. This was put to the ten interviewees to introduce the discussion (the eleventh interviewee was excluded from this question, because it was a brief interview via email). It is evident that Manchester was battling to create a clear and realisable blueprint for its image regeneration.

The question received some very prompt answers, perhaps because it is almost an obsessive topic for the people of Manchester. Extreme confidence was also noted in the unhesitating responses. A thoughtful attitude also gave the same impression, that Manchester is aspiring to recreate its independence but belongs to a movement of contemporary fashionable image cities. In conclusion, there was total agreement that to recontextualise the city's image and make it explicit inside and outside Manchester, it is necessary to mobilise a thoroughly intellectual effort, such as constant observation, serviceable knowledge and practical understanding.

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<sup>66</sup> Kearns and Philo (1993:10).

<sup>67</sup> Barthes (1967).

The remarks of stakeholders seem particularly useful regarding Manchester's branding. They voiced their impressions, thoughts and visions about current Manchester's image as skilled experts in answering the following interview question: *What are the four key terms of Manchester's image?*

From the result of the interviews, 10 sets of key terms about the city's image were identified. The researcher did not specify and limit the words, e.g. noun, adjective, culture. Therefore, the results of the question elicited a variety of expressions about Manchester. Looking across the key terms, the most frequently used by the interviewees are: cultural (4), history (3), original, modern, science, sport, nightlife, music (all with 2).

The terms imply how the interviewees perceive the image of Manchester. The majority of the terms evaluated Manchester positively as a culturally vibrant city in a cosmopolitan environment, including sport and the arts. Florida states that:

“An attractive place doesn't have to be a big city, but it has to be cosmopolitan” for some reasons: there are stimulating influences between “interplay of cultures and ideas” in diverse groups in cities (2004: 227).

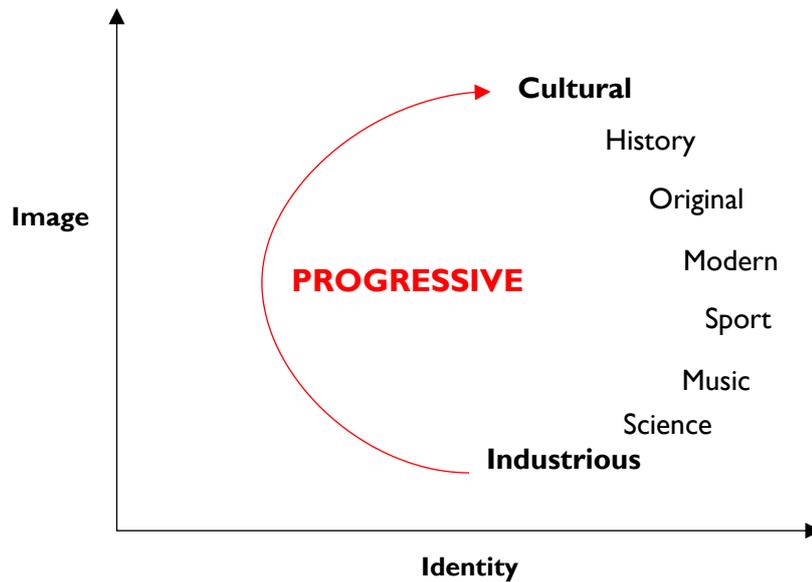
The description and scope of its culture were named as arts, architecture, sport, nightlife, music, and dining. But each attraction is not felt to be of equal value for the city's attractiveness. Forty-four examples were mentioned during the interviews.<sup>68</sup> There is no distinction between the most frequently mentioned, and every aspect of culture, from dining to appreciating artistic work was considered valuable, including art/theatres/art centres/dining/festivals/cultural districts.

- **Keywords: Industrial, Progressive, Cultural**

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<sup>68</sup> The most frequently cited examples are: Manchester Art Gallery, Imperial War Museum North, Whitworth Art Gallery (all with 5), Central Library, The Lowry (all with 4), Manchester United, National Football Museum, Royal Exchange Theatre, Manchester City, HOME (all with 3), French (restaurant), Manchester House, Opera House, Northern Quarter, Museum of Science and Industry, Manchester Museum, John Rylands Library and Manchester International Festival (all with 2).

Figure 6.2 has been developed from the summary of the key terms provided by the interviewees.



**Figure 6.2** Matrix of Manchester’s Image.

### 6.3 Innovation Heritage

Manchester has inherited its innovation-driven leadership in science and city development. During the process, the pride of being the pioneer in industrial progress was connected to the creation of the city’s character. In order to reflect the current status of city image as culturally notable was necessary to regenerate the city via visual transformation. This section, presents an overview of the history of Manchester and how industrial innovation influenced the city and its subsequent image transformation.

#### 6.3.1 Science and creative industry

Manchester has strongly built its strong identity as an industrial pioneer internationally since the 18<sup>th</sup> century. But as the platform of urban economy has been shifted from a manufacturing industry base to a culture base, the city needs to change.

Historically, Manchester has been one of the most widely recognised industrial cities. The term ‘Shock City’ refers to industrial cities’ environmental histories and their past impact on urban circumstances and people, and so it is important to study such issues as the

transformation of the cities' ecologies and living conditions.<sup>69</sup> Having the reputation of being the first industrial city in the world, and being known as the original Shock City, shaped the city's image internationally in both positive and negative ways: i) the city's greater economic development and the predominance of textile industries; and ii) the dark image of industrial environments and living conditions [IV\_08\_business academia]. A participant stated how the industrial phenomenon of Manchester shaped the economic progress in the international image of the city:

[Nationally] its infrastructure, its buildings, its inheritance, it's based on this phenomenal emergence of rapid emergence of textile dominance, engineering dominated the city in the beginning of the Industrial Revolution. In Ancoats, you can still see clearly that early industrial inheritance. [Internationally the historical reputation of being a] Shock City in the Industrial Revolution has shaped everything how we [Manchester] have been seen by the world. In fact, if you visit to New Zealand you can still buy Manchester-manufactured goods such as linens [IV\_08\_business academia].

In terms of significant industrial progress and the city branding, a couple of interviewees from business and urban design [IV\_07\_museology academia; IV\_08\_business academia] offered a powerful explanation: The lesser-known history of Manchester as a Cold War City also influenced the creation of small firms, which shaped a 'science-based city'<sup>70</sup> [IV\_08\_business academia].

All these substantial scientific practices and the development of creative industries and small business firms in high-tech and design have been used to construct Manchester's brand identity. The consequence of the development involves creative industries contributing almost automatically to creating the brand image of Manchester "as a place of innovation and creativity". In particular, Manchester's development in science such as Graphene by the University of Manchester, based on its industrial heritage has impacted significantly on Manchester's image promotion. The impact of innovation heritage on small businesses is also emphasised by a couple of participants from academia:

The notion of science city links Manchester with Graphene so that's clearly part of branding but there are also a number of initiatives led by people like Manchester Chamber of Commerce to promote the image of Manchester as an ideal place to start a firm and small businesses. And they are trying to encourage this image of Manchester as a high-tech centre not just hard high-tech, which they are not very

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<sup>69</sup> Platt (2005).

<sup>70</sup> Science is one of the key strategies of business innovation in Manchester such as "Manchester Science Parks, the UK's fastest growing science park" ('Greater Manchester Growth Plan', 2011: 13).

good at, but also soft high tech, lots of design firms, software and game firms [IV\_08\_business academia].

The 'science-based city' heritage has greatly influenced creative industries such as museums and their exhibitions including event themes. One interviewee identified instances of how the history of science innovation in Manchester can be successfully applied to the thematic content of museum shows: "I am promoting science in culture so what we are trying to do is add science to so much culture in the city" [IV\_03\_museum\_festivals]. Also, the interviewee [IV\_03] explained that the museum had developed an exhibition theme driven by the international recognition of Graphene:

I mean, focusing on Manchester's science and Manchester's elements, a really obvious answer is the Graphene exhibition [at MOSI] [IV\_03\_museum\_festivals].

Manchester's innovative spirit and heritage asset descended from its status as the first industrial city in the world and are essentially important in its branding. This can be counted in four ways: i) the city's pride in scientific development, such as Graphene, has influenced the establishment of small firms and museum exhibitions; ii) the city adopted the innovations as an economic driver in developing small businesses; iii) Manchester has tried to change its negative image of being just an industrial city by redesigning undeveloped areas and buildings; and iv) instead of covering it up, acknowledging its industrial heritage as a valuable background in developing city brand clearly shows how the city has moved on.

### 6.3.2 Original Modern

The innovative inheritance of the city can be seen as the "essence of Manchester" in branding the city together with 'Original Modern'. Acclaiming its reputation as the first pioneer city in the world in the Industrial Revolution is not just the 'same old record' of history. The city has constantly progressed to improve the city image with the stakeholders from communities to city marketing organisations. It is ample proof that the industrial heritage is a great engine on which to build a revitalised infrastructure in the city. 'Original Modern' was selected as the official brand of Manchester, has a great deal of meaning and is rich in concept. It is clear that 'Original Modern' strongly supports the city in constructing its identity as an innovation-driven modern city.

The Original Modern logo was designed by Peter Saville, a very well-known designer of Factory Records in the 1980s. In this sense, the term 'Original Modern' signifies the essence of Manchester in two ways: i) it explains Manchester's spirit, its "indefatigable energy for

progress and change, 'do something' attitude", and its "desire to be different from something that has always been kept and always would exist within the city; and ii) an aspiration for all the individuals, decision makers, groups, communities, organisations and business that live and work in, and engage with, Manchester".

Furthermore, the influence of Original Modern applies directly to the management organisation for the official tourism website in Manchester, Visit Manchester, which officially belongs to Marketing Manchester, a non-profit city marketing organisation. The brand guideline and its context of Original Modern are described in their official website and their whole marketing activity is directly related to the Original Modern branding text. The core meaning and function as the brand guideline from the brand identity have been applied to the creative industry and its content development.<sup>71</sup> A participant from the official tourism website clearly stated the deeper meaning of 'Original Modern' as an on-going activity including an event creation (e.g. Manchester International Festival). Two interviewees from the official tourism website and museology in academia supported the impact of the international festival for the city:

One of the best examples is the Manchester International Festival, which is a biannual festival where we promote new work from artists **[IV\_01\_official tourism website\_marketing]**.

That's a festival that obviously takes place in Manchester's locality is part of the characteristics. But, at the same time, it's an event of the year where we have an opportunity to not just look what Manchester is about but beyond Manchester installation, artistic intervention, artists around the world. That's an example of the cosmopolitan character of Manchester which I agree probably is quite different to you that kind of cosmopolitan character that other larger city cosmopolitan cities might have **[IV\_07\_museology academia]**.

From a brand management perspective, the term 'Original Modern' has influenced the branding of the University of Manchester together with a couple of museums that belong to the university.<sup>72</sup> The brand management of the museums is closely related to their parent brand which is the city brand of Original Modern. The umbrella brand affects possible investment in the museums, which drives the science-led reputation of the city. The brand

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<sup>71</sup> Donald et al. (2009: 63); Hospers (2008).

<sup>72</sup> Rainstro states that strategic brand management for identity-construction enables a legible image to be built (2003: 75).

relationship between the university and the city explains how the invention of Graphene and its success (e.g. the Nobel Prize) actively contributed to the city branding:

It's really important for the university, which is our parent organisation, that we are playing a big role in the city. And that means Original Modern was developed by the city with main partners including the university. So, while we have our own branding it's all influenced by Original Modern [IV\_02\_museum\_marketing].

In essence, the reputation of Manchester as "the first industrial city" does not restrict the meaning to historical activities. Without abandoning the image of former leading industrial city, Manchester has transformed its heritage into an innovative branding practice. The new branding identity pushes the city to be a pioneer for the real, original and creatively minded city.

### 6.3.3 City image-making

The ultimate purpose of image development with the utilisation of culture is to increase the number of tourists. Some cities in Northern areas in the UK, such as Birmingham, Liverpool or Manchester, that led the Industrial Age in the UK, have heavily invested in cultural facilities to achieve that goal. All these industrial-driven heritage cities require a transformation of their old faded image to a new visual image through design practice and its implementation.<sup>73</sup> Spirou states that:

Formerly industrial/manufacturing British towns and cities Belfast, Birmingham, Cardiff, Doncaster, Glasgow, and Manchester which had made a commitment to the promotion of tourism by developing related facilities, reached some interesting conclusions. Specifically, the degree of their previous identity influenced the extent of their newly created external perception (2011: 63).

This is a common phenomenon that is also shared by old industrial cities in North America.<sup>74</sup>

To achieve a change of city image is closely interconnected with designing a platform of a desired brand image: brand identity (e.g. logo), brand vision, strategic positioning and collaboration with stakeholders. These city branding practices help cities to identify the present and future authenticity of their character and personality.

As for the mechanisms involved in city image improvement, several organisations were identified during the interviews. Some leading experts in creative industries acknowledged

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<sup>73</sup> Virgo and de Chernatony (2006: 379-392).

<sup>74</sup> Short et al. (1993: 207-224).

that their involvement in the city brand can be a distinct help in improving Manchester's image. With a clear brand vision coming from the local authorities in Greater Manchester, branding agencies support the local authorities in positioning the city as progressive and culturally exciting.

A number of collaborating stakeholders exist, ranging from the city council to a transport company in the city, as part of the mission of developing the city's image related to the Original Modern brand framework.<sup>75</sup> The interviewee (official tourism website) confirmed this involvement of major stakeholders, such as Manchester City Council, Manchester Airport and transport providers, investment agencies, and private companies collaborating with one another:

City image is not just down to us, we work hard with people across the city, Manchester City Council, investment agencies, and we work with lot of private companies to help develop city image, which could be Manchester Airport trying improve the city image to people who arrive in Manchester. We work with transport providers, rail, bus and trams [IV\_01\_official tourism website\_marketing].

Branding city questions also affect cultural institutions. Marketing and exhibitions in leading museums and theatres in Manchester are planned in consideration of better branding promotion. Good examples of this are the strong statement, "We are part of the Manchester brand", that emerged from the museums side, or the confidence expressed by the film crew who came from outside Manchester. In this sense of brand awareness, it is also evident that museum directors and PR managers in theatres are strongly aware of their roles in the city's branding.

In summary, the stakeholders in marketing and creative industries support and contribute to improving the city's cultural image. And their clear understanding about the relationship between the communities and organisations is a solid foundation for the enhancement and reshaping of the city's image.

## 6.4 Visual Transformation

Using design to make a successful cultural city and to set out a positive image has greatly impacted on Manchester. The city relied on its existing architecture for the reconstruction of some old and industrial places and used design to create major attractions.

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<sup>75</sup> Gelder (2011: 36-37); Houghton and Stevens (2011: 45-53).

#### 6.4.1 Reconstruction

The meaning of innovation dated from the 'Original Modern' city can also be applied in changing Manchester's visual image. Building and presenting symbolic physical design is one of the key tools for branding cities, especially for industrial-driven cities. In order to reflect the demand for superior design for cities, a more refined architectural design sense has been broadly implemented in Manchester.

City brand is not constructed by a single element. The complexity and multi-dimensionality of urban structure, division of urban districts, and mixed style of old and new design in the city's scenery influence all the city's attractions.<sup>76</sup> In all these components that resulted in its visual transformation, Manchester relied primarily on architectural design. Constructing expensive buildings designed by super architects such as the Lowry centre had significant effects on the business infrastructure of the venues surrounding the buildings. Dramatic designs for museums, art centres and media companies in Manchester interconnect with the innovation method for economic profitability, as described by a participant in business academia who has lived in Salford for over 20 years:

Like Salford Quays, they found ready markets in say high-quality design elements. There is hidden economy in other words of design and architecture. So, service innovation [for the meaning of innovation to city branding] is clearly a collective word for it **[IV\_08\_business academia]**.

The idea of redesigning a city also has political and social effect. The recent and major background of redesign in the city is due to the incident of the IRA bombing in the city centre in 1996. From the end of the 1990s to the early 2000s the impetus has in one way or another included the city image. After the IRA incident, the city authorities began a process of reconstruction, as they considered "new facilities would promote Manchester as a world-class international destination" [IV\_09\_urban design academia].

Consequently, a number of old and damaged buildings including residences, were replaced by modern architecture, as in New York. In terms of architectural style, building a contemporary design, for example the Hilton, Beetham Tower added a new iconic edition to the previously low-rise skyline of previously. The ultimate impact of this visual design practice was the change in people's perception of the city. A detailed explanation about that period of reconstructing Manchester is given by an urban design participant is below:

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<sup>76</sup> Anholt (2008: 3); Lynch (1984).

Towards the end of the 1990s, into the early 2000s, you get lots of very significant buildings being built in Manchester but also people regenerating and reusing so you get lots of apartments that you might find in Manhattan [New York]. In 2007, maybe 2006, the Hilton, Beetham Tower added quite an iconic new edition to the skyline whether you see it as positive or negative. Manchester is quite a low-rise city but very striking. And it started to make people see Manchester in a different way [IV\_09\_urban design academia].

Regarding specific design for city branding, the conspicuous designs in Manchester identified three aspects; i) adding an addition to the cityscape in terms of contemporary architecture; ii) balancing with the historic architectural heritage such as the Royal Exchange Theatre recreates the city image; and iii) the use of international reputation of architects as a lever for changing the impression fixed by the former industrial-based city.

#### 6.4.2 Architectural practice

One way of using effective architectural practice to construct or reshape a city's indistinct visuality is to invite star architects in postmodern design. Symbolic museums or art centres, for example Frank Gehry's Bilbao Guggenheim, are recognised as phenomena of that kind of city branding.<sup>77</sup> Greater Manchester is no exception: a few recent buildings (e.g. Imperial War Museum North and the Lowry in Salford Quays) were built by renowned architects.<sup>78</sup> According to the participant in urban design the major list of architects includes: "The City of Manchester Stadium is now known as the Etihad Stadium, where Manchester City plays; you have the Velodrome [National Cycling Centre] designed by Norman Foster; you have the Imperial War Museum North designed by Daniel Libeskind and Ian Simpson designed Urbis".

Nevertheless, the phenomenon of constructing striking architectural design to contemporary eyes produces both positive and negative perspectives, resulting in contradictory opinions: Crillery explains that the objectivity of postmodern architecture provides: "A warm, comfortable and friendly environment—one which manipulates the known design features of popular urban locations" (1985: 12). In contrast, Prince Charles argues that 'postmodern architecture and planning is assaulted for being just as "disrespectful"', such as in London (Ibid.: 23). To avoid negative results from contemporary architecture, it is important to

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<sup>77</sup> Vivant (2011); Evans (2003).

<sup>78</sup> The Lowry promoted the design reputation of Wilford and Partners as one of its major marketing tools via the media: in 2009, the Lowry received a huge amount of funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund for their project, 'Unlocking Salford Quays' as "creative community-based exploration of the history of the important site as heritage" ('The Lowry Info Pack', 2010: 9-12).

consider how to sustain the original beauty and the permanent historical value of places and venues in Manchester in combination with experts in the areas involved.

The design of the reconstruction of Manchester due to the IRA Bombing, also influenced a stage design concept for a historical theatre. The design attempted to build a distinctive interconnection between the stage performers and their audience. In the spirit and concept of architectural innovation, modern design practice is connected to design originality and value. For example, a rebuilt stage of a theatre can be part of the 'innovative' spirit for branding Manchester. Such an important finding that design plays a key role in sustaining a major attraction was obtained from the interview with the staff at the theatre. Details of the design innovation and effect on the performance were affirmed by the participant from the theatre:

This stage was built in 1970s but looks still modern.<sup>79</sup> This theatre was badly damaged by the IRA bomb. We closed for two years to refurbish the theatre. This theatre is now pretty much the same as it was before [the IRA bomb]. [On the stage design] You are so close to the theatre to the actual action. And what happens is when a show is on there this area becomes the backstage: this is where actors walk in and to the stage from each of these doors as well [IV\_06\_theatre\_PR & communications].

The newly constructed architecture in Manchester helped the city to compete with other major tourism cities in the UK in increasing the number of tourists. Those historic cities, the so-called former 'industrial engines' of Northern England, have noticeably invested in architecture: Glasgow (e.g. Riverside Museum) and Liverpool (e.g. Tate Modern Liverpool). Since the late 1990s when reconstructing visual attractiveness for the cities gained support and anticipation, Manchester has realised many ideas and impressive designs for museums, art centres, business centres and public facilities have revitalised the old industrial feeling of the city. The introduction of the modern architectural style into the city helped Manchester's promotion policy radiate a youthful mood in terms of the city's visual character. In fact, the visible outcomes of fashionable designs have been used for repositioning some cities in terms of design reputation and economic perspective.

Nevertheless, a few iconic designs in a city are not likely to result in a globally popular destination in tourism or city brand. Developing and promoting interesting facilities and

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<sup>79</sup> The interviewee explained the history of the theatre during the Second World War. "In the War, very heavy bombing damaged the theatre. They closed off that side, and it became offices and so on but they kept this side, which between the First World War and the Second World War was twice as big. It was the biggest single space used for commercial trading, basically the biggest stock exchange in the world. An incredible amount of history."

themes for events, exhibitions, festivals and conventions will be necessary to support the visuality of the designs for branding the city. Using the themes of industrial heritage and how it is still a key tool for the city can be considerable in framing the contemporary design assets in Manchester.

In essence, from the majority of the interviews, the meanings and subsequent issues about the visible change to Manchester by design emerged as follows: i) adding a modern version to the visual side of the city to compete with other successfully transformed industrial cities in the UK; ii) using new architecture for primary attractions to regenerate the economy by increasing tourism; and iii) dealing with the confusion of the city brand and ownership of the design attractions.

#### 6.4.3 Iconic design: sufficiency and ‘geographic ambiguity’

The emergence of the latest design (e.g. the Lowry, BBC) by star architects in Manchester has expanded a list of major attractions.<sup>80</sup> During interviews about ‘primary attractions’ in Manchester, two specific findings emerged: i) the majority of the primary attractions are new landmarks in Salford and the Quays; and ii) the recently constructed facilities represent a category of the arts (e.g. museums, art centre, TV media). In particular, the BBC in Salford emerged as an enviable icon in representing Manchester both in architectural style and as a national media brand of the UK. However, there are two contradictory opinions about the BBC: i) geographic confusion as to the actual location occurred but it has grown as a key tourism destination; and ii) clarity of the character of the BBC, a world-wide media company to be a primary attraction. The interviewees from two museums expressed their perceptions on the latest popular primary attractions in the Quays:

Another thing that people go to is the Quays, Salford Quays. The War Museum [Imperial War Museum North] and the Lowry [Lowry Centre] are also there, so they may go and see the BBC now as destination as well, rather than specifically look at one venue so they could all be a [single] tourist attraction [IV\_02\_museum\_marketing].

On the contrary,

I’m not sure how that’s [BBC] the primary cultural attraction but something [visually attractive and interesting content] is there [IV\_03\_museum\_festivals].

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<sup>80</sup> Donald et al. (2009: 63); Leadbeater (2009); Kennedy (2009); Hospers (2008).

Geopolitically, Greater Manchester comprises ten boroughs: Bolton, Bury, Oldham, Rochdale, Stockport, Tameside, Trafford, Wigan, and the cities of Manchester and Salford. A number of popular attractions are concentrated in the city centres in Manchester and Salford.

Throughout the interviews, there was a united voice about a 'geographic ambiguity' occurring between Manchester and Salford: most interviewees understood the city as incorporating Greater Manchester, with some mentions of Salford as well, whereas I was referring to Central Manchester exclusively, instead of the whole of Greater Manchester. However, a couple of participants mentioned distinctiveness and the confusion that had arisen from the recently established and emerging iconic venues across Central Manchester, Salford and the Quays. Almost exceptionally the interviewee from the museum stated the correct name of the location for their museum as follows: "Imperial War Museum North is in the Quays, not in Salford. Politically, we have to say the Quays" [IV\_10\_museum\_marketing]. The explanation from business academia about the designs and their confusion of geographic state on the two regions, Manchester and Salford is below:

Manchester is two cities [Manchester and Salford]. There is tremendous ambiguity about what is Manchester, whether it is Manchester or Greater Manchester. This ambiguity over whether it is Manchester or Manchester and Salford. BBC is in Salford and the Lowry Centre is very much in Salford. And ITV is technically in Manchester but they are only separated by 10 metres [IV\_08\_business\_academia].

Concerning architectural design and practice for visual reconstruction of Manchester, three points are presented: First, the principle and necessity of shifting the visual perception from the industrial-driven to a brighter complexion is almost unanimously agreed. Second, there was almost no resistance to the application of brand reputation of designers in architecture to construct more cultural figurations, such as museums. Lastly, subsequent problems in city branding seem to be caused by the spatial ambiguity of ownership and by the specific location of physical key attractions.

## 6.5 Leading the Innovative Branding of the Tourism Websites

Marketing strategies of tourism websites are seen as an effective way of attempting to redesign Manchester as culturally recognisable. The story of branding Manchester shown through the websites' philosophy, vision and sense about the culturally driven energy identified specific activities in progressive design.

In this section, the aim of the research is to identify the content on the websites, from the perspective of cultural themes, and how they contribute to branding Manchester as a cultural city. To establish the connected context between the websites and the interviews, the main topics from this section will be viewed as supporting the findings from the interviews. The key topics are as follows: i) reading messages resulting in the creation of brand image in view of the aspects of visual design; ii) identifying the key cultural driver in constructing authenticity in Manchester; and iii) exploring the design system of the tourism website in practice.

### 6.5.1 Content

Overall, the visual creation redefining the cultural characteristics of Manchester mobilising the revived progressive energy and the hidden richness of heritage is broadly being reflected through their major tourism websites. Visit Manchester, Time Out Manchester and Creative Tourist are some of the prominent websites in tourism promotion for Manchester.<sup>81</sup> Both the official and unofficial tourism websites promote a broad range of attractions located in central Manchester (e.g. the Manchester Museum) and the Salford Quays (e.g. the Lowry). The key context of the promotional examples on the websites were identified in arts, shopping, sport and dining, with some variation of content from exhibitions to gay culture being explored. The elements valued for progress and vision of city branding, can thus be generally named as 'cultural'.

### 6.5.2 Cultural scheme

The visitManchester.com website represents Manchester officially and is part of Visit Britain, the official tourism website network for the UK.<sup>82</sup> Due to the management system being under the control of the national tourism website, the design features between the cities are similar to those of the national website. The prominent contents on Visit Manchester are focused on the most popular attractions and local events that connect immediately with wider audiences. The main categories are: What's On, Shopping, Best of MCR, Family, Locals Like, Walks/Tours, Offers, Groups, Attractions, Nightlife, Eating Out, Sport, Countryside, Maps and LGBT, Christmas. In the Attractions category, sub-categories are: Family Events, Arts & Exhibitions, Entertainment, Festivals, Music, Sport and Theatre. Thus, it can be

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<sup>81</sup> Waitt and Mcguirk (1996: 11-12); Kirshenblatt-Gimblett (1998).

<sup>82</sup> The national official tourism website in the UK, [www.visitbritain.com](http://www.visitbritain.com) consists of four regions and their major cities; England, Wales, Scotland and Ireland.

identified from the composition of the categories for attractions, that the focus is on branding the city for tourism consumption.

The major attractions were identified as follows: museums, events, shopping, dining and clubs. The core visual images on the website mainly represent permanent exhibitions or symbolic attractions, such as Mummy at the Manchester Museum and shopping at Trafford Centre. Also, the section on Afternoon Tea at the historic and lavish French restaurant at the Midland Hotel in Dining adds a classical aspect to the city in cultural heritage. Positioning the tradition of *Afternoon Tea* as an identity of Englishness in Manchester (the same title can be seen from the visitLondon.com) matches the brand identity theory between a city and a nation. Therefore, various attempts by official marketing encompass the breadth of cultural features and related consumer opportunities in Manchester; not just those that are newly developed, but also those with a traditionally strong place in the urban culture.

The unofficial perspective on culture in Manchester sees opportunities in developing the city towards a locally-based event bank. On Time Out Manchester, the main images were shown with rhetorical titles introducing the city from the different angle: the drawing of the Lowry Shopping Mall and the symbolic photo of the gay community. On Creative Tourist, each category was presented with the five most essential events, from the cartoon scene of Manchester Animation Festival 2016 to the literature event by Manchester-based actress Maxine Peake, visually erasing the old perception of the city as industrial and reframing the city's image as culturally impressive.<sup>83</sup> Instead of using and repeating previously familiar images (e.g. the Mummy exhibition at Manchester Museum), selecting a different angle to introduce the museum (e.g. the image of a bird) helps people to learn about the current cultural events in the city.

In terms of attractions, the Creative Tourist curates all the major venues to promote Manchester, from a theatre play at the Home, a newly renovated and expanded cultural venue, to a classical music performance from the BBC Philharmonic. Time Out Manchester and the Creative Tourist introduce a broad range of the cultural scheme in Manchester, from exhibitions to theatres. A couple of interviewees share their expectations and pride about the newest cultural products:

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<sup>83</sup> Landry (2000: 153-154); Herrero (2006) et al. state that mega-events regenerate a city with creative instruments.

There is huge amount is going in terms of the new art centre. HOME is opening up the next year, that's gonna be huge. That's gonna be taking over the Corner House [IV\_04\_unofficial tourism website\_editorial].

My daughter is coming to Manchester on this Saturday to perform, which involves some of the theatre company. Why? Because its connected with the BBC Philharmonic. That wouldn't be happening if BBC hadn't moved here [Salford] [IV\_08\_business academia].

In summary, Manchester presents the inevitable influence of the international, and, at the same time, signifies the opportunity to reconstruct a strong cultural identity for itself. As the city has built its international position with the acclaimed football brands attracting general audiences, designing a new scope of cultural contents can be a guideline for further branding. Officially, the visual focus of museums indicates that the city has a wide-ranging and long-term concern about the impact of the most valuable visual design to upgrade their cultural image. Unofficially, articulation of various forms of authenticity, and curating through each cultural genre and area of creativity will support the city's potentiality as a new, robust brand.

Figures 6.3 presents a matrix of Manchester branding based on the key findings:

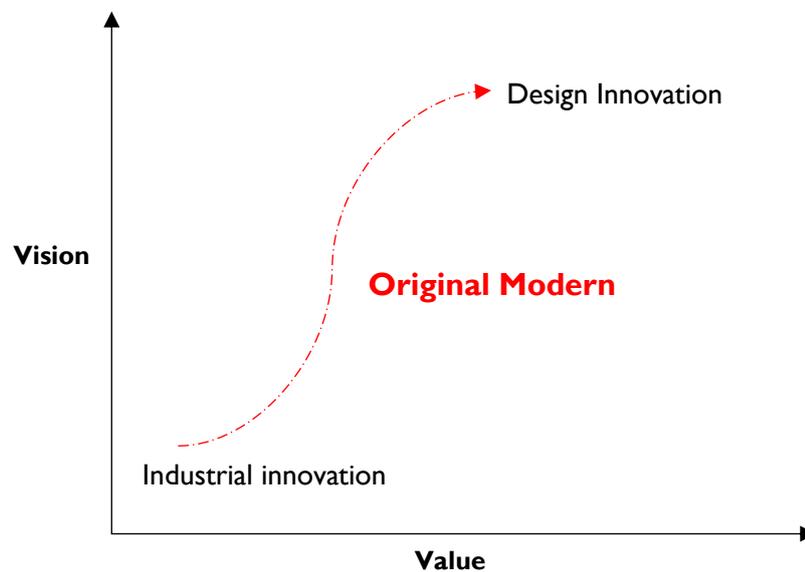


Figure 6.3 Brand Platform based on Design Innovation.

## 6.6 Chapter Findings

Overall, the findings suggest a thematic brand story of Manchester in reshaping the city's historic and conceptual image through the visual transformation from industrial to cultural.

The key topics of the findings are as follows:

- Awareness and vision of the stakeholders in reconceptualising Manchester's image in a scope of reflection of innovative and cultural heritage.
- Historic inheritance of the industrial innovation and its connection with developing a core identity of the city, such as international science acclaim (e.g. Graphene).
- Applicability of the innovative practice to develop a conceptualisation of the city brand by the stakeholders, with the philosophy of 'Original Modern' as universal innovation.
- The indispensable necessity of transmission of the city image through collaboration with the creative industries and their central attractions.
- The function of architectural design in reframing the visual aspect of Manchester, from industrial-driven to culturally vibrant.
- Repositioning of the city brand image through the newly fabricated portfolio of the city-originated cultural products via the tourism websites.

From the key findings, a main theme for discussion was developed:

### A discussion theme: brand positioning as a cultural city

A question from the findings opens a discussion as to whether Manchester is yet in a strong position to compete with other international cities, such as London or Amsterdam. In terms of brand positioning, Manchester is still faced with the challenge of building and maintaining its reputation as a cultural city while competitors in other national or international cities have already built their reputations. London was mentioned as the most influential city in two ways: i) role model for creative content (e.g. museum exhibitions, theatre performances), facilities and a strong reputation as a cultural city; and ii) due to the economic situation, some creative professionals are tending to move to Manchester, which in turn is creating new regions, infrastructures and genres of creative arts. As for cities that are influential for Manchester, Paris, Barcelona and New York were the most frequently mentioned at the international level for being culturally exciting and having dynamism in cultural energy. Nationally, Glasgow and Liverpool were discussed as successfully developed

cities with their use of cultural attractions and reputations (e.g. museums). Nevertheless, the strong awareness of city image improvement by the stakeholders armed with understanding, knowledge and vision about the city contributed to the opening of a new chapter in Manchester's branding.

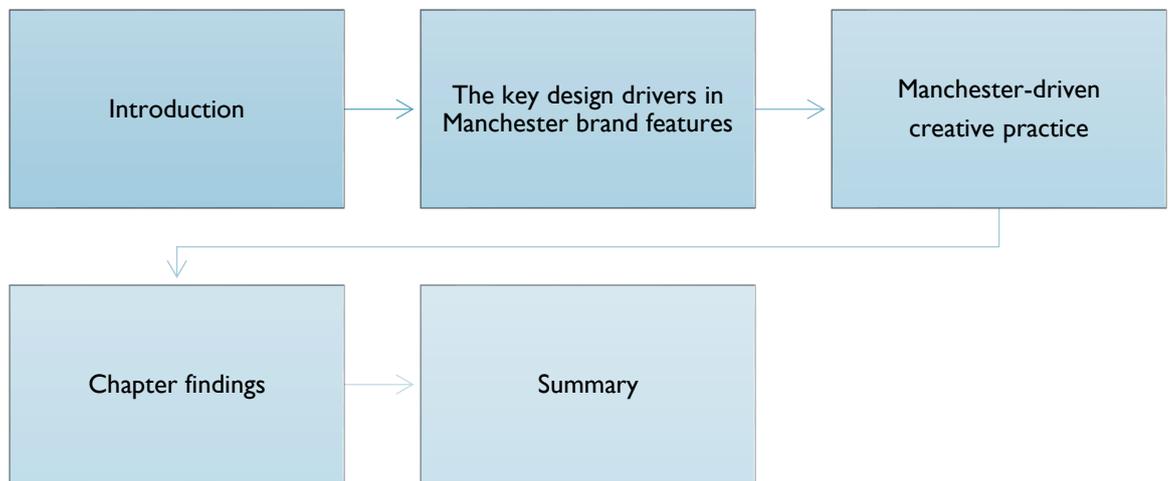
## 6.7 Summary

For Manchester, 'cultural city' is a key phrase in the reinvention of its brand. The city of Manchester wants to be liberated from its reputation as the first industrial city. The city developed a very significant engineering and textile infrastructure and became one of the leading cities in the world in canal construction and cotton production. Consequently, the problems of being a major industrial city, poor living and working conditions, impacted on city image-making and presented Manchester as a place lacking in culture.

Despite this negative side, the city has made major improvements in its image-making to be regarded as highly cultural. One of the reasons lies in its tradition of supporting the sciences. Its heritage as an industrial city meant an inclination towards science and that environment successfully influenced inventions in science, e.g. the first computer and Graphene. These innovative aspects of science have thus developed unique and creative themes in museums, events, exhibitions and university research.

The strategy of applying 'innovation' heritage to the city of science and the creative industries was adopted and, in fact, produced uniqueness to the city image. In terms of brand stakeholders, there are leading actors in city image production and promotion of the city as a cultural city; for example, the official tourism website collaborates with various organisations in the municipal sector (e.g. City Council, Manchester Airport). In reflecting the branding essence for image transformation, the tourism websites extend and amplify the core cultural products with their own curating strategies.

## 7.0 VISUAL DESIGN FEATURES IN CITY BRANDING PART 02



**Figure 7.1** Chapter Map.

At the core of these manifold endeavours is a concern with making and propagating place images that are sufficiently attractive to persuade place users, principally understood as visitors and investors, to part with their money. The place is packaged and sold as a commodity. Its multiple social and cultural meanings are selectively appropriated and repackaged to create a more attractive place image in which any problems are played down.<sup>84</sup>

## 7.1 Introduction

Following on from the previous chapter, the second stage of analysis in Manchester's branding was conducted as a research on the impacts of visual design features in reshaping the city's image. The results of interview data from multiple perspectives of selected key stakeholders on this topic will provide a solid conceptual framework for the subject. The main topics consist of: i) the central drivers of design in Manchester's brand features; and ii) city-based creative practices and their visions of culture-based branding.

## 7.2 The Key Design Drivers in Manchester's Brand Features

This section, takes an in-depth approach to identifying core attributes as the cultural heritage of the city. The central reputation of football in sport and culture, the authentic music culture and the universities' impact on Manchester branding will also be discussed.

### 7.2.1 Football: the brand ambassador

Sport tourism in the UK has been one of the major drivers in attracting international tourists to Manchester as well as regenerating urban economics, and the municipal government has significantly invested in programmes and events associated with sport tourism.<sup>85</sup> Manchester is not exceptional in this. Historically, the city's enthusiasm for the game and the popularity of their football teams made it the most popular form of tourism for the city. The focus on football brought development in relating businesses, e.g. football teams, which support branding Manchester as a football venue. Strong interest in the football industry has played a vital role in creating such a prominent position for Manchester. This is evident when compared to the images of Glasgow, Bristol or York, and

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<sup>84</sup> Ward (1998: 1).

<sup>85</sup> Ritchie and Adair (2004: 206-207).

other major tourism cities in the northern part of the UK, who do not have major football teams.

The two iconic teams—Manchester United and Manchester City—have become lead tourism products for Manchester, nationally and internationally. In particular, Manchester United has played a role in the “instant brand recognition” for Manchester [IV\_08\_business academia]. Manchester United Football Club was founded in 1878 and became one of the most internationally well-known football brands. The brand value of the team was estimated at £ 1.2 billion in 2015 (Forbes Magazine, 18 April 2012).

The interviewee (number 8) reiterated the power of the brand reputation of the football team: his PhD student had had difficulty conducting a survey for his thesis, but when the student offered Manchester United T-shirts to the survey participants, everyone eagerly agreed to take part. The participant from the official tourism website explains that “sport (football and rugby)” is equally important as the categories of shopping and dining for Manchester tourism.<sup>86</sup> To support the claim, another participant from museums stressed that Visit Manchester focused on football, followed by shopping and nightlife. In terms of the football teams’ contribution to Manchester branding in an international sense, the participant from business academia stated that the football team brand functions as a vital feature of imaging the city:

Undeniably football. City and United. Football is clearly a key feature of the city as its global projection of the image of the city, South Korea, northern China, Lulea in Sweden. It has a gravitational pull right across Europe. Football overwhelmingly has a resonance worldwide [IV\_08\_museology academia].

In comparison to the confidence placed in football as a prime attraction for Manchester, a contrasting response to the interview question emerged. The question of ‘whose perspective?’ implies there is a different perspective between visitors and residents on primary attractions in the city. Manchester has developed football as a key driver as part of a significant city brand. However, one response from a branding agency questioned the status of football as the best attraction, and the implication of the question can be seen as important for constructing the city as a cultural city:

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<sup>86</sup> Porter (2012) ‘Cultures of resistance and compliance: football fandom and political engagement in Manchester’.

From whose perspective? Visitors' perspective [which is different from residents]? Obviously, there is sport, isn't there? [In general, people state] Football stuff is the primary attraction for Manchester, but that's very narrow. That's not a primary thing **[IV\_05\_branding agency]**.

The reputation of the two teams has been further expanded by the relocation of the National Football Museum to the city. The success of this museum has positioned football across both sport and culture to attract a broader range of tourists.<sup>87</sup> Manchester was unique in expanding the category of football across sport and into culture. The position of football in the city has been strategically enhanced, with the use of a range of associated tourism and cultural products.

As museums are part of the key features in driving tourism and promoting a city, establishing a museum related to Manchester meant that football as heritage emerged.<sup>88</sup> The National Football Museum in the Greater Manchester area has contributed to expanding the notion of sports teams to cultural products. In that museum, the history and indispensable value of the Manchester football teams are the main themes of the exhibitions. Through these exhibitions, the city has visually expressed its international football reputation with their pride, passion and sustainability to increasingly broad audiences.

The museum is situated in the city's central area among an assortment of shopping centres, museums, cafés, and restaurants, and other historic buildings such as cathedrals. From the aspect, the football museum is not just a supportive part of sport events. The function of the football museum implies the role of museums is very necessary in extending the football brand in branding Manchester. The interviewees from Urban Design and the official tourism website mentioned how Manchester's football has been situated between sports and culture:

Some people see sport as culture, so I think Manchester United is probably the biggest export. I guess now, with Manchester City. It's very close to being almost the same **[IV\_09\_urban design academia]**.

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<sup>87</sup> "Manchester United has a spectator capacity of 86,000, and every other week people travel in huge numbers from Scandinavia, Ireland, and as far as Thailand. Manchester City is starting to develop in a similar way" **[IV\_02\_museum\_marketing]**.

<sup>88</sup> Kotler et al. (2008: 31-32) and Wallace (2006) stated that museum marketing incorporates with diversified elements and helps to build a museum's identity.

Actually, there is the National Football Museum which is situated between sport and culture. And that's really popular at the moment [IV\_01\_official tourism website\_marketing].

This topic asks whether the essence of Manchester's brand identity is culture or something else. As the interviewee discussed, the football team brands have played a role in positioning Manchester as a football venue. The football brand has propelled the city to gain global recognition and have an impact on sport tourism. Nevertheless, a couple of unexpected comments on 'whose perspective?' and 'that's not a primary (for Manchester attractions)' from the interviewees cannot be ignored. Their questions mean there are other interesting and vibrant features of cultural heritage, and that physical facilities or intangible content (e.g. events) exist and should be promoted as part of the primary attractions for Manchester.

### 7.2.2 Music brand capital

The football heritage and its popular culture appeared as the best speculated brand asset for Manchester during the interviews. Unexpectedly, however, the field of music was also mentioned as the authentic cultural heritage for Manchester. The interviewees from the museum, the unofficial tourism website, business and urban design academia strongly stated the importance of the music industry in branding Manchester.<sup>89</sup> Understanding about music and its associated values (e.g. the club, bands or districts) helped me to gain a broader knowledge about cultural products in Manchester. Specifically, the Hacienda club, the successful band, Happy Mondays, and Factory Records have been a major part of Greater Manchester's culture over the past decades [IV\_08 in business and IV\_09\_urban design; both in academia].<sup>90</sup>

A strong tradition and there are lots of things that are part of the past like the music scene stuff. We are interested in how it is moving forward [IV\_04\_unofficial tourism website\_editorial].

Following the significant formation of great bands over previous decades, the current status of the pop music industry and its reputation have fallen slightly in comparison with those glory days of the past. The background of this situation is explained as follows: i) shifting the

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<sup>89</sup> Middles (2009).

<sup>90</sup> The Hacienda was an iconic music venue and a night club in Manchester; it opened in 1982 and closed in 1997. Happy Mondays are Salford-based alternative rock band (1980s-present); Factory Records was a Manchester-based independent record label, founded by Tony Wilson. The record company started in 1978 and closed in 1992 (additional information from IV\_08; IV\_09).

geographic hub of music and entertainment from Greater Manchester to Salford; and ii) closure of major music clubs and decline of related events. Interviewees from the unofficial tourism website, urban design and business academia all commented on Manchester's current music scene. The following interview quote is from business academia:

The music scene is quite weak at the moment but had been strong in the past, Tony Wilson, Factory Records, Happy Mondays and Hacienda in Manchester have always been an underground creative pool. So, Manchester has always had this creative edge being 'of the moment'. [Currently] the creative industry is shifting to Salford Quays [such as the Pie Factory] [IV\_08\_business academia].

Acknowledging the music heritage as a primary traditional culture in Manchester opens a discussion about what is a really sustainable and authentic culture for branding the city. Understanding the 'glory days' and the current decline in the music industry business can be useful to have a better understanding of strategies for Manchester's promotion. In terms of design, mention of a historical music club like the Hacienda throughout the interviews can be interpreted that the music business and associated products should be a legible cultural heritage in driving city branding: i) the architectural design with classic style as a visual icon of the city; ii) reflecting the popularity of the club delivers a message about the vibrancy of music communities and events; and iii) the city could consider an idea of constructing music attractions in combination with the football brand in enhancing the city brand.

### 7.2.3 University brand impact

The role and influence of the universities and significant academics in science have been an invisible part of the city brand in Manchester.<sup>91</sup> In this section, the official relationship between the city brand and the universities and primary cultural attractions appeared at the beginning of introducing Manchester branding (Section 7.2, p. 167). From that stance, discussion about the universities as a key engine to identify the Manchester brand is necessary. In fact, universities in Manchester are one of the "important factors contributing to Manchester's economic potential".<sup>92</sup> Three findings on the topic were identified: i) research outcomes to increase funding from the city and collaborative research between universities; ii) reputation of academics and the contribution to Manchester promotion; and

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<sup>91</sup> Florida's 3 T's theory, technology/ talent/ tolerance + diversity, argues that universities transform city image to a creative place, e.g. the growth of technical institutes, such as Stanford and Silicon Valley and MIT (2003: 63, 133).

<sup>92</sup> 'Greater Manchester Growth Plan' (2011: 9).

iii) interconnection between the universities and their associated institutions under the city brand of 'Original Modern'.

Research outcome is one of the barometers to measure the value of the universities, such as academics at the University of Manchester producing the notable: Discovery of Graphene and the 'Oxford Road Corridor'. Such projects have contributed in transforming "the way cities imagine themselves" in terms of Manchester as an intellectually led city (IV\_09\_urban design academia; Greater Manchester Growth Plan, 2011: 9). Those achievements within the universities have impacted on the city's consideration as to further funding of the universities: The 'Foresight Review of Manchester' by Manchester School of Architecture.

Furthermore, the research has helped to project the city's level of innovation in terms of digital innovation: 'Corridor Project' by a collaboration between Manchester Metropolitan University and University of Manchester: Research on digital economics will transform the way cities are imagined. [IV\_09\_urban design academia]. From the results of the research projects, university research and practice collaboration with industries in design, media, medicine and digital technology has also contributed to the establishment of small firms.<sup>93</sup> For instance, the emergence of new firms in creative industries and IT businesses has changed Manchester into a science-based, creative city. The urban design academic comments about the Corridor Project:

Manchester recently got a very significant funding for the Corridor Project and that's to connect the two main universities Manchester Metropolitan University and University of Manchester all the way along the Oxford Road to make it an important and digital public space for innovation and creative digital economics and academia will be completely involved with that, which will transform the way cities imagine themselves [IV\_09\_urban design academia].

The interview question about how academics contribute to branding a city provided practical answers about the importance of academics' activities in constructing brand characteristics of innovation for Manchester: Lectures and presentations to the public outside Manchester, research, business creation, presentations and personal branding in Manchester. In the realm of science, a few iconic academics and scientists have been acknowledged by the media and have become a part of the city's symbolic brand.

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<sup>93</sup> Florida (2004); Landry and Bianchini (1995) state that using creativity by city planners and policy makers has become an essential and popular discussion.

Historically, Manchester has produced a number of significant scientists like John Dalton and Alan Turing. The contribution of their scientific achievements has added to the already high status of science. The heritage of science and innovation can still be seen in the reputation of Professor Brian Cox at Manchester University. His frequent public appearances in the media have significantly contributed to the positioning of Manchester's strength in science. In fact, his documentaries on the BBC have been sold internationally:

More recently if you turn on TV you probably see the gentleman called Professor Brian Cox and, obviously, he is making a very strong contribution to the Manchester image [of science]. Not [at all] a professor we think of with a bald head, or very sparse white hair. Not at all. [He takes] very interesting ideas and, actually, makes science ideas very connected and it's always very clear that it's happening in Manchester **[IV\_09\_urban design academia]**.

From a city brand management perspective, the university brand (Manchester University) connects the city brand to subsequent cultural institutions.<sup>94</sup> In other words, the university owns and manages some major cultural organisations such as the Manchester Museum, which aligns with the John Rylands Library in a brand scope. The interviewee from the library states that the connectivity between the brand identity of the library and the university is closely interrelated, and the library is seeking to develop its own strategy in the city branding:

[John] Rylands is part of The University of Manchester which has a very strong brand identity and it is aligned with the University brand and strategy primarily. But, of course, we retain our commitment to the people of Manchester and have recently completed a large piece of research on visitor perceptions of Rylands to inform our future planning **[IV\_11\_library\_marketing & communications]**.

In summary, the role and influence of the university and significant scientific institutions have constituted an unseen but indispensable part of the city brand in Manchester. The academic philosophy and research practices in science can be tracked from the industrial revolution in terms of innovation. Major scientists from the universities have also contributed to a science-driven Manchester brand. This visible and invisible university capital, along with university museums and the library, are part of branding as primary attractions of Manchester. For that reason, the university is interconnected with the city brand as a distinctive branding entity, and the intellectual assets have essential value for the city branding innovation concept.

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<sup>94</sup> Museums represent one of key cultural institutions for cities with a diversity of components in constructing brand identity and brand image, Kotler et al. (2008: 31-32); Wallace (2006: 1).

## 7.3 Manchester-Driven Creative Practice

Reframing the city as a culturally strong identity was discussed, looking at opportunities and limitations in Manchester. Major topics included external influences, such as London, and internal ones, such as Manchester's creative power and expansion in the creative industries were major topics.

### 7.3.1 Views on creative Manchester

The majority of interviewees identified Manchester as a cultural field due to confidence in the key tourism products like the newest museums and redesigned trendy districts.<sup>95</sup> The design activities to reframing the Northern Quarter or the Imperial War Museum North were mentioned as examples of proclaiming Manchester as a cultural venue. Nevertheless, repackaging the external aspects of Manchester does not seem sufficient to sustain the city as culturally visible.

The two contradictory views on the issue were an interesting finding for me. One is that Manchester is definitely a cultural place. The other sees Manchester as still struggling with its development of the city as a major cultural venue to compete with other cities such as London. The messages conveyed by the two interviewees from the official tourism website and the museum bring out some contradictory ideas related to opportunities and limitations for creative Manchester:

Manchester is a cultural field.<sup>96</sup> Culture is the missing track in Manchester.<sup>97</sup>

The latter opens a couple of sub-topics about the issue: i) building a single and authoritative tourist venue such as Buckingham Palace in London; and ii) solving the lack of infrastructure creatively to manage the major attractions, including museums and theatres, to support the new and historic cultural amenities. Thus, the following discussion about issues from various perspectives will be useful in understanding how Manchester would consider further development in their creative originality and practice:

I don't think there's anything like London which may have tourist sites [virtual tourism] like Buckingham Palace, where you may go and look at but not go in. I don't think there is much in Manchester that we consider to be an attraction  
**[IV\_02\_museum\_marketing].**

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<sup>95</sup> Florek and Conejo (2007); Smart (1993).

<sup>96</sup> IV\_01\_official tourism website\_marketing.

<sup>97</sup> IV\_02\_museum\_marketing.

Branding Manchester in terms of creative infrastructure demands diverse and sufficient professionals trained in creative communities, such as the arts. As shown from this research, Manchester still requires prolific capital input yielding creative experts who will robustly realise the city's aim, i.e. branding Manchester as culturally distinctive.<sup>98</sup>

### 7.3.2 London: the role model as a creative nexus

In the interviews, London has been frequently identified as a most desirable role model of cultural energy city within the national scheme. The city provides sufficient diversity in business, abundant facilities and communities, with its age-old and colourful personality to present itself as a cultural city. That characteristic of London has immeasurably supported and shaped the essence of branding the city. A participant from a branding company stated the core elements that represent London from Manchester's viewpoint:

If I can't drive or can't get a train to the office, well that's bad. And that's a bad experience [of city brand]. In London, the train is terrible, but when you get to London, you've got restaurants, offices, energy and buzz. That's what Manchester has to have in the future **[IV\_05\_branding agency]**.

From a visual design perspective, one example of London modelling its influential creativeness as an iconic design to Manchester is the London Eye. A participant from the academic field of urban design explains how it visually works for the existing cityscape in Manchester as follows:

We've got the Manchester Eye, a little version of the wheel that is in London, which is sometime there and sometimes not **[IV\_09\_urban design academia]**.

However, there could be an opportunity for Manchester to build their own Manchester-based creative communities to overcome the problem of a lack of design stimulation. The interviewee from the unofficial tourism website identified the relocation of creative people (e.g. artists) from London to Manchester, due to the expensive high cost of living. This migration can probably help Manchester gain more attention, from business and arts communities filled with a variety of professionals. Furthermore, the shift of this creative pool can help the city to become visibly a more cultural venue to compete with London.

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<sup>98</sup> Vanolo (2008: 370) argues that creating a city's brand image connects with developing strategies with creativity and culture. But there has been an issue of stereotypes of creativity and culture in promoting cities.

Supporting this notion of the creative pool, some recent political changes in Manchester have offered a progressive vision to the city. Manchester has been chosen as the first city in northern England to elect a mayor from 2017.<sup>99</sup> For a long time, Greater Manchester was part of Lancashire and did not have an elected mayor. Moreover, this change in governance for Manchester is expected to resolve the geographic confusion concerning the primary attractions in Greater Manchester and Salford. It may also affect the city's leadership in branding. A participant from urban design mentioned that empowering Manchester through political change is connected to the heritage of industrial progress:

Manchester would have the very first elected Mayor. So, it would be like London and Paris and New York and that will be a devolved power to Greater Manchester which will mean for the first time and after a very long time the north of England will have a power base outside London. I think that perhaps represents some of the qualities of these terms Manchester has. It wasn't given to any another city. It wasn't given to Leeds or Newcastle or Liverpool. It was given to Manchester. I think that's because of industrious progress [IV\_09\_urban design academia].

These rapid changes in politics and population could help the city to be independent, and out of the shadow of London. In that case, a lack of creative pool in identifying the Manchester city brand could be resolved. The shift of creative professionals as *human capital*, in particular in the arts sector, can influence Manchester's progress in brand identity as well as in its economic development.<sup>100</sup>

The next topic explains how London impacts on the core primary attractions in Manchester in terms of creativeness.

### 7.3.3 Localisation of creativeness from London to Manchester

The project of redesigning a city, bearing in mind that achieving high quality applies to both tangible and intangible design elements, ranges from the design industry to exhibitions and plays.<sup>101</sup> As the example of the London Eye stands for tangible design, creative themes for exhibitions and events can be explained as intangible design instruments in branding the

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<sup>99</sup> Source: [www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2014/nov/03](http://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2014/nov/03), The Guardian, 'Manchester to get elected mayor' 3 November 2014.

<sup>100</sup> Jane Jacobs argues that the human capital theory of cities and urban areas can be explained as follows; "ability of cities to attract creative people and thus spur economic growth" (2003: 221). Florida advocates her theory as follows: relocation of creative people creates specific cultural districts, such as the Left Bank in Paris or New York's Greenwich Village (2004).

<sup>101</sup> Macdonald (2007: 73) stated the importance of in-depth comprehension of art history and meaning in creative practice.

city. Current programmes in major museums and theatres support this claim, e.g. ‘Museums after Hours’ and ‘Hamlet’.

### 7.3.3.1 Museum events

In the creation of museum exhibitions, two ideas were adapted from London. One is the collaborative event, under the title ‘Museum after Hours’ launched by the Creative Tourist, a leading unofficial tourism website in Manchester. It was adopted from the London trend of clustering museums for events at night. Originally, the event, called ‘Museum at Night’, was established by a London-based organisation.<sup>102</sup> The event has since grown as a regularly promoted event with various programmes at the national level, e.g. films and talks in Manchester and Birmingham. It is publicly funded by Arts Council England and supported and sponsored by cultural organisations nationally, including: the Manchester After Hours, Light Night Liverpool, North Norfolk Stories Festivals etc. Also, it has been frequently featured on TV, radio, and in print: the BBC, The Times, Time Out London, The Guardian, The Huffington Post etc.

A recent article from the Guardian indicates that Manchester After Hours plays a major role in creative Manchester:

#### ‘Manchester After Hours, Various Venues’

An unlikely collision between live arts and art, a musical tour of the world’s oldest surviving passenger railway and a record label giving away their pressing secrets [ . . . ]. These are just a few of the delights in Manchester’s citywide evening of ‘cultural mixology’, including bizarre TV clips at the Central Library and another potentially peculiar pairing—between poet Andrew McMillan, winner of the Guardian First Book Award, and dancer and choreographer Joshua Hubbard. An exclusive preview of Manchester Art Gallery’s Fashion and Freedom exhibition, which features First World War-inspired pieces by the likes of Vivienne Westwood.<sup>103</sup>

### 7.3.3.2 Museum exhibition themes

Another example is sharing an exhibition theme with the Wellcome Trust, a specialised gallery institute in medical science in London. The exhibition is called ‘Sexology Season’, and

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<sup>102</sup> Museums Association in London confirmed that over 300 museums exist in London involving associated organisations (e.g. the Art Fund) according to data from 2015.

<sup>103</sup> ‘Museums at night 2016: the highlights’, [www.theguardian.com](http://www.theguardian.com), 12 May 2016.

it has been promoted in major destinations, such as Manchester, Brighton and Glasgow.<sup>104</sup> The exhibition theme is about gender and relating socio-cultural issues, and the Creative Tourist launched the programme for Manchester. The title for the exhibition was revised, to 'Manchester Sexology Season' but the collection was borrowed from the London exhibition.<sup>105</sup> For the grand promotion, various representative organisations in Manchester collaborated; among them, Creative Tourist.com, the Royal Exchange Theatre, Manchester Art Gallery, Museum of Science and Industry, and Manchester University.

### 7.3.3.3 Theatre performance

Similarly, theatres are equally authentic attractions for Manchester as museums. From a theatre business perspective, Manchester houses a couple of significant theatres, the Royal Exchange and the Piccadilly. An interviewee from theatre marketing [IV\_06] mentioned one method for supporting the brand reputation for major theatres is to build a profile through participation in a national writing competition (e.g. the Bruntwood Prize for Playwriting). Also, the participant observed that some theatre performances can change the general perception of audiences that the city is culturally weak:

A theatre plays a huge role in making Manchester a cultural centre. People think that [high- quality] theatres only exist in London and think of the North is somewhere like a cultural desert this is kind of putting things right-saying we are as good as anywhere else [IV\_06\_theatre\_marketing].

In content development, some of Manchester's historic theatres have aimed at presenting their own distinctive themes for their plays rather than replicating internationally-successful commercial shows such as 'Cats' or 'The Lion King' from the West End in London.<sup>106</sup> Some of the major theatres in Manchester are willing to tour in London with their own programmes. 'Hamlet' was a successful theatre production because the play was performed by the famous, Manchester-based actress, Maxine Peake and directed by Sarah Francom of the Manchester International Festival (interviews from the theatre and the unofficial tourism website). The participant [IV\_06] elaborates on that topic:

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<sup>104</sup> The exhibition programmes "incorporating live performances, films, salons, archive, talks and literature events" (<https://wellcomecollection.org/sexologyseason>).

<sup>105</sup> The exhibition of 'Sexology Season' by the Wellcome Trust in London has toured the exhibition and its related active events nationally ('Manchester Sexology Season Event Programme 2015').

<sup>106</sup> Kaika (2010) and Sales et al. (2009) state that theatres in London play a major role in the city's heritage.

The [vast] majority of the shows [open and close] just here [in Manchester]. With the slight exception, we sometimes do co-productions with other producing theatres. For instance, recently we've done one with West Yorkshire Playhouse in Leeds. We share the cost of making the theatre play. It played in Leeds and it came to play here, they didn't tour in a sense of the big tour, it's not like the Lion King. Big commercial producing companies would put money together to make the pieces of theatre, starting in the West End [in London] and then going off. We don't do that kind of commercial shows [such as The Cats], we make our own shows. Having said that sometimes when our own shows are so successful which is very occasionally, it is an opportunity to take that show to London and put it in the theatres in London [IV\_06\_theatre\_Press & communications].

These creativities in composing the city's symbolic venues play a role in transforming the Manchester brand as a cultural destination. Nevertheless, in comparison to London, Manchester still needs to improve its creative leadership and rich creative pool in driving the attractions.

## 7.4 Chapter Findings

Based on the analysis, the key findings are as follows:

- The primary attractions and their design value for Manchester implies that a framework is indispensable of core design scheme in branding, e.g. modern architectural style.
- The active use of internationally renowned architects for Manchester connects to structuring a competitive strategy as design reputation in the authentic and creative infrastructure.
- Creating the specialised visual designs and their sustainability requires brand personality for the design originality, especially symbolic and contemporary museums.
- Manchester can position its cultural personality by following up the trends and common instruments used in branding international cities (e.g. London) and developing a distinctive platform of creative and local contents.

A discussion theme: localisation of design creativity

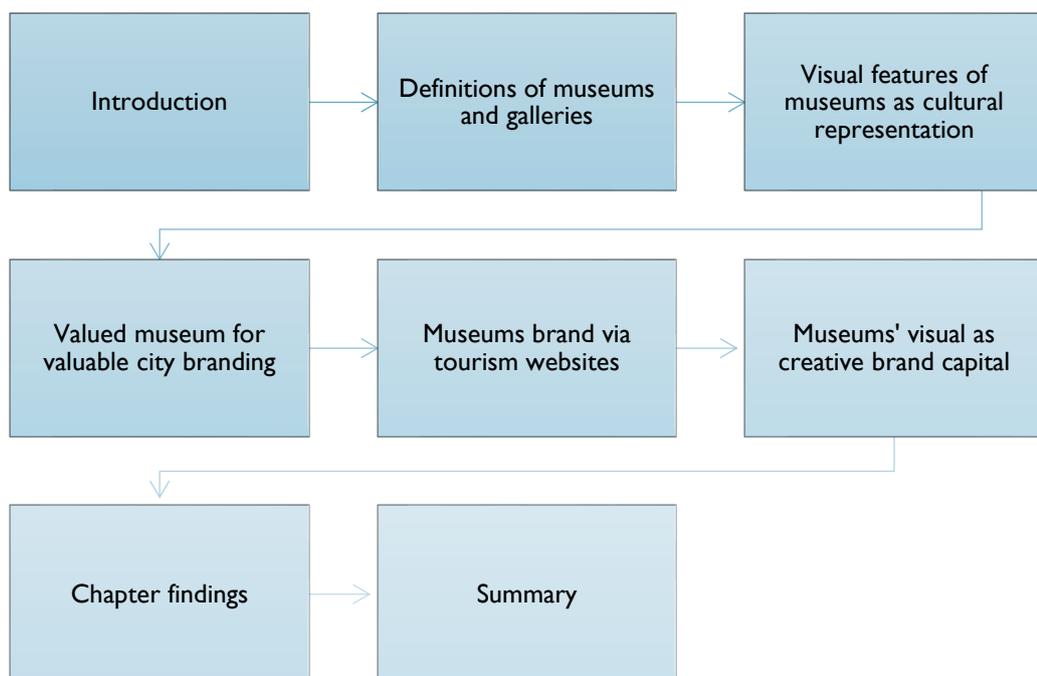
In developing a visual theme to design a culturally energetic and creatively authentic city, two types of strategy can be discussed. One is the constant improvement of the quality of attractions via creative themes and physical design; for example, recent contemporary

design of large international museums supports the creation of a new city landscape. The other is promoting organisations as desirable destinations through various marketing tactics. The cases of the international cities strongly demonstrated that the representation of selected visual images directly and indirectly implies a part of the design scope for the creative originality of the cities. In this sense, the topic of London's influences on Manchester's creativity can offer an insight into the potential vision of a creatively cultural city : i) based on its industrial heritage, Manchester has constantly processed its own creative assets and infrastructure in sustaining iconic attractions, such as museums and theatres; ii) the scientific achievements, a major outcome of the industrial leadership, has grown to be a unique academic achievement; iii) the international reputation and the history of science in the city have also been adopted as thematic creativity for museum exhibitions; and iv) besides the shining examples of football and science, there are other genres displaying the city's creativity, such as music performances and theatre productions.

## 7.5 Summary

With its robust and innovative heritage from the Industrial Age, the city has notably accumulated its own cultural and intellectual scheme from football to universities. The realistic contribution of the key components in composing a characteristic of Manchester's brand include its visual design attributes, intensive industry, and academics and their innovative research. This iterated the role of design and its implementation in city branding development, as identified in Chapter 2.0 (Sections 2.5.1, p. 55; 2.6.1, p. 59). In comparison to the international cities in the previous Chapters 4.0 and 5.0, Manchester has specific niche themes that clearly identify its future brand personality in terms of cultural identity. The development of traditional and expensive design-based core attractions, such as the National Football Museum and Imperial War Museum North, inevitably influenced Manchester to pursue this route. Nevertheless, its history of valuing and celebrating science can be more actively applied as a primary driver of attractions in terms of differentiation strategy. From a new vision for the city branding, their historic and innovative prime culture from a new vision for city branding, Manchester's historic and innovative culture, from international football brands to ground-breaking academics, can build a far more substantial profile of its visual culture at the international level.

## 8.0 THE VISUAL ROLE OF MUSEUMS IN LEADING CITY BRAND



**Figure 8.1** Chapter Map.

MUSEUMS, in the broadest sense, are institutions which hold their possessions in trust for mankind and for the future welfare of the race. Their value is in direct proportion to the service they render the emotional and intellectual life of the people. The life of the museum worker, whether he be a humble laborer or a responsible trustee, is essentially one of service. His conduct rests on a threefold ethical basis.

- 'Code of Ethics for Museum Workers', The American Association Museums (1925)

Like the city which is its home, our Museum of Modern Art is constantly on the alert for the new challenge, the new idea, the new concept that may improve on the old. It is busy, it is frequently crowded—as a favourite visiting place for New Yorker and out-of-towners—but above all, it is always true to its own standards of quality, not afraid of controversy, not afraid of growing

- The City Mayor of New York, Wagner (1954)

Museums need a strong brand image because competition is tougher than ever.

- Wallace (2006)

## 8.1 Introduction

This chapter challenges two subjects concerning museums. One reflects Research Question 03; how do the design features of museum act as a vehicle for city branding? The other considers Research Proposition 04; museums function as the key design feature of city branding. Because these two themes cannot be viewed independently, the main presentation of this chapter is composed of three interrelated parts; i) visual features of museums as cultural representation; ii) museums' visual qualities as creative brand capital; and iii) value of museums for valuable city branding. But before approaching the meaning and function of museums in city branding, the definitions and conceptions of 'museum' and 'gallery' will be discussed.

The background of museum-driven city branding is in debt to the history of metropolitan European cities that consolidated the cultural importance of museums. For example, the UK has recently been keen to invest in their major museums, and over £22.6 million per year in

2015-16.<sup>107</sup> In particular, the presence of iconic, historic and large-scale museums in London and Paris has been the most representative visual culture for the cities.<sup>108</sup> The analysis of the five cities clearly identified that museums are the main cultural feature and a primary cultural sector on official tourism websites.

## 8.2 Definitions of Museums and Galleries

Camarero et al. (2010: 495) acknowledged the importance of the application of brand theory to arts and cultural organisations:

Image, brand and brand equity are becoming increasingly important concepts for arts and cultural organisations such as the Tate Gallery, Guggenheim or MOMA.

This suggests strongly that without museums, image and brand in the cultural field could not be invented or appreciated or the appropriate perspective placed on city image and city brand. Reputation of the distinguished architectural style of iconic museums supports that assessment. The Guggenheim is a good example of how much museum design amplifies the city branding market. Frank Lloyd Wright's humane and environmental design philosophy raised design features of museum to the realm of aesthetic city image.

However, what is needed first of all is a new interpretation and definition of a museum and a gallery. Contemporary museum practices and theories make museums much more popular and approachable to all audiences. According to Witcomb (2003), the museum is reimagined by media, government policy and museum practitioners themselves.<sup>109</sup> The renewed definitions of a museum raised a new proposition as to how museums can represent a city driven by arts and culture in a new way.

This new perspective of museum and gallery is, however, not so simple. What constitutes a museum conflicts somewhat with what constitutes a gallery conflict somewhat. The official tourism websites suggest there was a textual confusion in the categorisation of the menus. Each city in the web study uses a different classification on their websites in the way they present museums and galleries: i) London and New York City divided the categorisations into 'Museums' and 'Galleries'; ii) Paris had only 'Museums' as a category, with galleries in it; iii) Amsterdam used one unified category of 'Museums and Galleries'; and iv) Sydney separated them into 'Museums' and 'Art Galleries' (Appendices C, p. 276).

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<sup>107</sup> 'Investment in Museums 2015-18' of Arts Council England.

<sup>108</sup> Museums are one of the key influences for tourists to visit London, London Visitor Survey (2008).

<sup>109</sup> Witcomb (2003).

Regarding the use of the terms museum and gallery, the findings show that the websites are very carefully contextualised, because of their aim for more effective city promotion. Each different aspect of the content development was also identified by the specific categorisations of museums and galleries.

Although the reason why the websites do or do not separate museums from galleries was not exactly identified, some potential reasons are assumed. From the beginning, the definition of museums, galleries and art galleries have been historically entangled.<sup>110</sup> Due to modernisation projects by both public and private initiatives, the art field became dispersed and no longer uniform.

Moreover, it progressively attracted audiences of differing backgrounds and social strata. Artistic and technological activity can be further extended through the establishment of museums and art galleries as separate and unified concepts. All the more important will be to broaden and enhance the definition of museums and galleries rather than to put limits on them. To this end, Tate Modern was located in both 'Museums' and 'Galleries' on London's official website.

### 8.3 Visual Features of Museums as Cultural Representation

One of the functions of museums in enforcing the aim of city branding, is to make a more culturally outstanding city. In this section, the main aspects of museums as an agent of visual representation for the cities will be addressed.

#### 8.3.1 Destination for the visual city

Given that design or designed style is also a memorable aspect of local heritage like a visible industrial or technical culture, it is museums that assume the role of its transmitter. In that sense, every primary interesting thing of interest has the right to be conserved and displayed by the museum. Interestingly enough, a participant in urban design in Manchester explained that the National Football Museum was originated by the Museum of the City of Manchester. Manchester's lack of museums and what this tells about the city's history is described as follows:

[What they are saying isn't] In Manchester, we don't have a Museum of Manchester like a City Museum, a museum that talks about the history of the culture of Manchester. The People's History Museum probably is closest to a Manchester City

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<sup>110</sup> Siegal (2008).

museum. Obviously, the way also temporary exhibitions could contribute to how we think of Manchester through objects use temporary exhibitions that obviously, objects that are collected by individuals in Manchester or donated by them. So, looking at the biography of collectors in those kinds of temporary exhibitions that is also kind of link indirectly to the city and the city's history and kind of culture **[IV\_07\_museology academia]**.

Moreover, what and for whom to collect is an obsession not just for museums, but also for libraries. According to the participant from a historic library in Manchester, the Library was built as a prominent facility to offer the city's residents broad and deep knowledge as a "gift". Consequently, the purpose of the library's innovation to expand their collections is clearly linked to enhancing the value of city and brand of city:

When the John Rylands Library was built, it was as a gift to the people of Manchester. Over the years, the purpose of the Library has changed as the collections have expanded, and the introduction of a full public programme in 2007 meant the Library had an additional focus. Rylands is part of The University of Manchester which has a very strong brand identity and it is aligned with the University brand and strategy primarily. But, of course, we retain our commitment to the people of Manchester and have recently completed a large piece of research on visitor perceptions of Rylands to inform our future planning **[IV\_11\_library\_marketing & communications]**.

Throughout the interviews, it is almost unanimously agreed that the improvement of the museums in Manchester contributes to the representation of the city as a cultural place. Three interviewees stated that museums "help the city brand" by producing and offering well-made exhibitions. Considering their exhibitions as a primary agenda was discussed from a branding perspective. From the findings, a couple of key agendas for the improvement of the museums were identified: i) reflecting tourists' demand for high-quality exhibitions and their indication of a lack of creative ideas; ii) applying science to art to identify the innovation heritage in Manchester; and iii) investing in museum collections to display impressive and sumptuous contents.<sup>111</sup>

In terms of the cultural offering from cities, tourists demand not just brand reputation of museums, but also "high-quality museums and successful exhibitions". Major museums in Manchester focused on improving their exhibitions via enhanced themes, curation and venues in order to meet the criteria of "high-quality". Nevertheless, the major museums in Manchester feel they need to improve to meet the demands of tourists, in particular

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<sup>111</sup> Guttridge (2008) 'Culture and interpretation: An investigation into Manchester Museums interpretation of its ethnographical collections in multicultural Manchester'.

regarding the attributes of creative exhibitions. This topic of exhibitions is related to Manchester's weakness in areas of cultural visibility. The explanation from the field of museum marketing supports the claim:

Culture is the missing track [in Manchester] because we know that it is a big driver. But it has not been in the past historically a big driver for visiting Manchester. We [practitioners in museums] work really hard to make sure we are developing exhibitions and levels of service [architecture and interior or museums] that are good enough to satisfy the demands of tourists as well [IV\_02\_museum\_marketing].

### 8.3.2 Beyond the city representation

One of the research findings in museum studies is that museums are the strongest valuable brands for cities. Global major museum collections appear in foreign countries and cities to attract and maintain foreign attendance. This kind of visual transmission is sought by the museum institutions and by the popular audiences. In fact, contemporary museums are often associated with the economic rationale and tourism's demand for potential visitors.

The tendency can be read at first as the realisation of the museum's enterprising spirit to extend its brand value to the maximum. But it can be interpreted more broadly. Because the museum building is located in a specific city, like London, Manchester, New York and Bilbao, its exhibitions held in other cities probably have a greater visual effect more than initially expected. Therefore, one of the result findings of such long-range exhibitions can be related to the implementation of city branding.

## 8.4 Valued Museums for Valuable City Branding

In applying attributes of museums to enhance their position as a primary cultural access to the city, one way of achieving it is to maximise the use of museums. In this section, various real issues, from the strategic categorisation of tourism websites to an awareness of the needs of sufficiently advanced museums in Manchester, will be addressed.

### 8.4.1 From arts to shopping

Popular tourism destinations such as London and Paris have developed their museums in relation to economic activity and business. The historic meanings, values and popularity of the international museums in the cities are explained on their official tourism websites. The five cities' websites articulate museums as a part of the Products category to attract tourism, and all are enumerated in the main categories, from Attractions to Dining all are enumerated in the main categories. Applicability of museums in the main and sub-categories on the

official tourism websites implies three points: i) meanings, offerings and functions of museums cover a wide scope from art exhibitions to travel cards; ii) suggestions from the cities' practitioners (e.g. tourism board, marketing team of the websites and regional stakeholders) are multiple; and iii) the wishes and needs of tourists increase in relation to the tourism product development.

This reflects how the expansion of the primary function of museums is realised for the urban civic culture, from educational purpose to an entertainment facility. For example, some museums prefer to be called a 'heritage centre', as they own and present substantial heritage treasures in their exhibition, while larger museums offer service facilities such as cafés and restaurants. In particular, positioning museums as examples of attractions in the categories of Shopping and Dining supports the notion that museums are a key tourism product (e.g. the title of sub-category, 'Amsterdam's Fashionable Museum' under the title of shopping and Sydney's emphasis on Sydney Opera House for the category of 'Shopping and Dining').

From the case study of Manchester, it is noted that shopping, sport, dining and museums were introduced on the official tourism website but were mentioned exclusively on the unofficial tourism website's Arts section. Although the interview data is from one city, answers from the official and unofficial websites simultaneously support that museums and arts are one of the most influential urban tourism products. The majority of the websites position museums in the main categories of Arts and Culture (e.g. London, New York, Paris, Sydney); for example, Amsterdam's use of *Museums after Midnight* for the main title on the cover page with the visual image. This phenomenon certainly means that arts and other forms of consumer culture, e.g. economic and cultural rationales, are working in parallel. In a way, the balanced, formed, coloured visual can distribute arts and goods alike, depending on museum policy.

New York City has also produced several major museums to compete with the European museums in branding the city.<sup>112</sup> The historic Metropolitan Museum of Art and the design value of the Guggenheim by Frank Lloyd Wright have become symbolic cultural/tourist attractions in representing the city. Besides the reputation of the museums, the city has also developed popular events in art performance and sports: "Inside Lincoln Center introduces specific event programmes (e.g. opera, jazz, ballet); "Super Bowl XLVIII indicates a ticket

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<sup>112</sup> Duncan (1995) stated that modern art movements in New York City from the 1860s to the 1920s influenced the design and construction of phenomenal art museums, such as the Guggenheim.

offering for the sport event”; Time Out New York’s “Best Things to Do this Week: Celebrates nine years of Wasabasso” announcing the club event.

In comparison with museums as a year-round offering, tourism products driven by events highlight seasonal performance programmes. In this sense, an example of museum-driven branding enables New York City’s museums to play a key role in branding. In a promotional text, “Hello”, a specified tourist target for UK visitors mentioned tourism offering museums and galleries (e.g. “travel deals, itineraries, shopping, nightlife, museums, galleries”).

According to descriptions of the texts, the solid infrastructure of museums and galleries is to attract UK audiences, who are accustomed to the museum-driven cultural environment in London. The museum brand is offered to tourists and accepted by a wide range of consumers.

#### 8.4.2 Primary cultural access

Manchester’s brand creation and development have been largely related to museums in a culturally driven regeneration. This has worked in the same way that major cities in Europe and the US have applied themselves to developing city brand.<sup>113</sup> Historically, international cities such as London, Paris and New York City have developed their major museums to make their capital cities prosperous. Among the corroborating findings in the literature, some evidence from Chapter 2.0 (Section 2.6, p. 58) provides examples of symbolic museums being a key driver in tourism. Museums in Manchester constitute part of the vital factors that attract a wider diversity of tourists and museums and consequently their creative exhibitions can strengthen the city’s brand as a cultural city.

To approach the topic of why museums are undoubtedly important for Manchester’s branding, the first step is to understanding the meaning of museums within the scope of cultural urban tourism is the first step. In this sense, a couple of essential topics for Manchester were identified: i) culture is the most important reason to attract tourists, and museums represent a key concept of ‘culture’ or “the more cultural side” (official tourism website, museum); ii) museums’ function is to increase tourism as shown in the popularity of destinations in the UK, such as Edinburgh, York or Birmingham (all with major museums); and iii) recent growth of museums in Manchester supports the city in being recognised as a cultural city by a general audience. This is stated in feedback to the museum:

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<sup>113</sup> Pallud and Straub (2014: 359).

People say, 'Why are you going to York or Edinburgh for the weekend?' Culture is very high on that list, and museums are really high on the list of reasons why they [tourists] are visiting those cities [IV\_02\_museum\_marketing].

Since the term museum represents 'culture' for Manchester to the various stakeholders in city branding, understanding the background of the museum field in the city will be useful in identifying the issues and visions of the museums. Interviews with practitioners in leading museums and business academics helped to explain types of museums and museum ownership, marketing collaboration with tourism websites and exhibition development.

## 8.5 Museum Brand via Tourism Websites

Before implementing a particular brand articulation of museums into city branding, it is necessary to know the background, current problems and vision relating to that point. This section addresses: Manchester and its understanding of the local cultural scheme; the relationship between stakeholders and museum ownership; and marketing with major tourism websites.

### 8.5.1 Relationship between the ownership and museums

To begin to explore the relationship in promotion between museums and tourism websites, gaining knowledge of major museums and the stakeholders in their ownership helped to answer the topic. The literature confirmed the importance of marketing museums as a key city branding tool.<sup>114</sup> From the findings, real issues in museum promotion via the official and unofficial tourism websites in Manchester were identified. Tracking the history of museums and the official organisations that own the museums revealed the difference between Manchester and the other tourism cities in the UK on similar cultural level: Birmingham, Bristol, Glasgow, Liverpool, Leeds and Sheffield. The primary museums in those cities belong officially to the City Council. Due to this integrated system of ownership, the museums in the cities can market themselves more easily and intensively through marketing channels. In contrast, Manchester has developed a varied management structure for its key museums:

Manchester Art Gallery is a part of the city; Manchester Museum and Whitworth Art Gallery ended up being a part of the university, a branch of the Imperial War Museum, the Museum of Science and Industry which was independent but it is now a part of the Science Museum Group [IV\_02\_museum\_marketing].

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<sup>114</sup> Elderkin (2011); Altınbaşak and Yalçın (2010); Desgrippes and Gobe (2007); Plaza (2006); Côté et al. (2006); Smith (2005).

One of the reasons why Manchester is relatively weak in promotion was explained by an interviewee connected with the museum. Although the interviewee did not mention how variation of the management structure of museums in Manchester affects the city image or tourism, the data imply a simple management system has greater impact on collaborative marketing between the museums. For instance:

We have to work really hard to work together because we all are part of [different organisations]. If we all are part of the City Council [we all will do better] In Newcastle, all the museums are part of Tyne & Wear Museums, all centrally managed which makes collaboration between museums very easy [IV\_02\_museum\_marketing].

Regarding management for museum promotion, the need for more effective promotion for the museums via influential tourism websites became apparent. The official and unofficial tourism websites and some popular museums collaborate in promotion via different channels of marketing communication.<sup>115</sup> During the interviews with marketers in three leading museums, a number of main findings appeared that reflect the contribution of museums to a sustainable economic profit for Manchester: i) major museums in Manchester need all year-round promotion so that tourists are able to visit them at any time; and ii) differences in collaboration of museum marketing between the official and unofficial tourism websites:

Manchester is open year-round. So, that's our aim now, to market us as a permanent cultural offer [IV\_02\_museum\_marketing].

#### 8.5.2 Collaborative marketing with the official and unofficial channels

To construct a framework in the marketing relationship between museums and primary tourism websites in Manchester, a separate content helps to identify the context. First, on the official tourism website, two interviewees in the museums provided contrasting perspectives on collaboration. One interviewee stated that the museum and the Visit Manchester as well as Visit England sites collaborate closely over marketing: for instance, Visit Manchester supports the museum's promotion by sending journalists to the museum [IV\_10\_museum\_Press & PR].

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<sup>115</sup> Some of the stakeholders of the Manchester Museum are the City Council, funders such as Manchester University and marketing collaborations with the Creative Tourist, the unofficial tourism website ('The Manchester Museum Strategic Plan 2012-2015', p. 8).

In contrast, another responded that there was an issue of 'raising a profile' in promoting the museums/galleries on the official tourism website, and came up with the idea of establishing a company jointly with an unofficial tourism website:

There's definitely still more work to do to make sure that culture and museums get a right amount of profile within the official tourism website [IV\_02\_museum\_marketing].

The specific reason why there has been insufficient support in promoting some primary museums from the official tourism website was explained as follows. In a business scope, the official tourism website is in close collaboration with Manchester City Council as the status of the website is an official marketing route for Manchester. Furthermore, the participant added a more realistic answer as to why the majority of museums in the city try to attempt to raise their profiles: the official marketing organisations focus more intensively on a cultural event, such as the Manchester International Festival rather than on the major museums.

Although less specific answers echoed this focus on the festival, it is possible to assume that the event is regarded as a more significant attraction for the city. The other critical background to the marketing problem relates to finance for promotion. The lack of financial support to promote the major museums in Manchester is connected with the quantity of iconic venues that compete with other tourism cities in the UK and Europe.

From the discussion of the lack of a symbolic venue representing Manchester as a culturally strong city, the issue connects to sufficient financial investment in marketing for the existing leading attractions. One participant from museum marketing stated that insufficient investment for museum promotion encourages collaborative marketing in the museum field in Manchester:

We haven't got one single venue, like Barcelona, Paris or London that can carry a city, carry a campaign. But together [will be good to carry a campaign], because none of us [museums] will be good [on our own]. Somebody will give me a lot of money to run an international tourist campaign for Manchester Museum, but the offer on its own is not good enough [IV\_02\_museum\_marketing].

Due to the promotion agenda of most museums in Manchester, developing a new partnership for marketing museums with an unofficial tourism website emerged.<sup>116</sup> As the

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<sup>116</sup> Rentschler and Hede recommend developing variables of museums with marketing strategies (2007).

role of museums so evidently influences branding Manchester as a cultural city, introducing unique events and exhibitions through an unofficial tourism website opens another promotion route for the museums. From the perspective of the unofficial tourism website, their major interest and support of the arts to represent Manchester as a cultural venue connects with their business partnerships with the City Council and art organisations: Manchester Consortium Group of Arts Organisations, Manchester Art Gallery, Whitworth Gallery, and Central Library [IV\_04\_unofficial tourism website\_editorial].

From the museums' point of view, their business collaboration with the unofficial tourism website company, Creative Tourist, can expand their profile in media promotion:

Over the past 10 years, but more in a conservative way over the past 5 years all the museums and galleries in Manchester have come together to try to raise a profile of culture as a tourism message. And what we have to do is go out and raise our own money to do that in order in a way to buy a seat for the table to buy an influence within Visit Manchester to create four strands in their marketing messages that's about culture. And one of the ways we have done that is by setting up our own tourism company we should call it Creative Tourist. All the museums and galleries came together to set up a website, set up a company to market us collaboratively [IV\_02\_museum\_marketing].

The new marketing with Creative Tourist also introduced a collaboration with museums for an event promotion. Museum at Night was identified as a good example for Manchester to replicate the trend in London and aimed to increase the number of visitors who find it difficult to attend events in the daytime. As an introduction, the event was held in different venues in Greater Manchester under the title of 'Museums at Night'.<sup>117</sup> Staging one event in various exhibition places in the city denotes branding collaboration among the museums and, between museums and the website:

'Museums at Night' is a national initiative to get museums open after hours and then Manchester did 'Museums at Night'. I don't think it was from Visit Manchester, I think it was from Creative Tourist [IV\_03\_museum\_festivals].

The interviews raised two points about the relationship between Manchester's opportunities and limitation for the branding of museums and tourism. One is about raising a profile in marketing. The other is developing a unique programme for exhibitions and related events. From the findings, it seems as though the need to create and promote a strong identity for

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<sup>117</sup> Manchester has attempted an innovative event with the concept of art form by citizens' participation (Olsen, 2012; Hemment et al., 2011).

Manchester as a museum-driven cultural city is a considerable task for Manchester's tourism stakeholders and decision-makers. Therefore, museums are essential for the city's promotional tools in producing and branding a cultural image.

## 8.6 Museums' Visual as Creative Brand Capital

To upgrade a museum's infrastructure to improve the value of city brands, it is useful to navigate wider and more in-depth aspects of the museum system. This section will address the roles of museums and their creative ability to have exhibitions as a supporting brand agent.

### 8.6.1 Iconic museums' solid brand validity

Most iconic museums were built between the 18<sup>th</sup> and the 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, amongst which, the British Museum in London, the Louvre in Paris, the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam and the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York are the best known. They have functioned as key cultural facilities for the cities. The museums above are similar in scale, reputation and popularity, architectural value, and the attribute of branding museums was established over the two centuries.<sup>118</sup>

These popular museums have been branded as a form of franchised brands, such as Tate Modern in London and Tate Liverpool. The museum brands represent their cities as modern cultural art hubs with strong branding strategies and franchise businesses.<sup>119</sup> The visual aspect of their architectural design, collections, exhibitions and associated service facilities (e.g. shops) have all become crucial elements in sustaining the museums' reputations. Implications of the emphasis on museums for city branding illustrate that the global cities have utilised their international reputations, authority in the arts, and popularity of their museums as visible key drivers. The following examples explicitly identified the phenomenon of museums in branding cities:

In London's official tourism website, the category of Museums and Galleries acknowledged that the city has produced a variety of museums as familiar landmarks.<sup>120</sup> Four out of the five most promoted attractions are large and historic museums on Visit London: The Victoria & Albert Museum, the British Museum, the Natural History Museum, and the Science Museum. The confidence and international influence of museums for city promotion is

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<sup>118</sup> Henning (2006: 110).

<sup>119</sup> Stylianou-Lambert (2011); Vivant (2011).

<sup>120</sup> Pallud and Straub (2014: 359).

visualised on the website. The historic popularity of the British Museum and Madame Tussauds is presented thus: i) the contemporary interior design of the ceiling in the British Museum; and ii) image of the make-up for the mannequin of the Queen at Madame Tussauds. The visual theme for Madame Tussauds integrates dual functions for the museum brand: The unique identity of exhibitions of celebrities and historic figures in the form of realistically designed mannequins; and showing the Queen rather than entertainment celebrities reflects the global popularity of the Royal Family.

In comparison, Amsterdam's official tourism website emphasises the Rijksmuseum and the Anne Frank Museum as the most promoted attractions. In this sense, Amsterdam promotes historically famous people for their museum attractions. For example, the Anne Frank Museum and the Van Gogh Museum are iconic museums and main drivers in branding the city. The visual representation of night tourism at museums demonstrates a readable storyline by positioning the city's symbolic museums as a key branding factor. The well-narrated promotional text supporting the visual image clearly delivers a brand message from the city: "Museums after Midnight—Discover Amsterdam's museums in a contemporary new light—after dark!".

This design direction of museum-focused branding also identifies the use of museums in art-driven city marketing on the unofficial tourism website, Time Out Amsterdam: "20 great things to do in Amsterdam—discover world-class art, fabulous flea markets—and how to eat herring". The term 'world-class art' shows that Amsterdam is aiming to identify the city as having art museums with excellent facilities and contents to attract an international audience.

However, this limited spectrum of the museums of Amsterdam can be expanded to educate about other important artists throughout their history, who actively developed their professional careers in art, design and philosophy in Amsterdam. For example, Rembrandt from the Renaissance and Piet Mondrian, who was a pioneer of the De Stijl movement are both representative of the city's background of visual design: The Rembrandt House Museum exists in Amsterdam but neither official nor unofficial tourism website promote the museum as a major attraction. Exhibitions of Mondrian's work are often held in the Amsterdam Museum and other museums, but there are no links to them on Amsterdam's websites.

### 8.6.2 Branding small museums

Museum leadership via the tourism websites implies global brands of museums in major international cities supports the cities' refined and globally renowned cultural reputation. The primary function of the iconic museums has grown in attracting wider global audiences. To attract an increasingly diverse range of tourists, conspicuous external (e.g. architectural style) and internal attributes (e.g. exhibitions, service facilities) have been part of the visible identification for the iconic museum brands. In contrast, the cities allocate their large range of small museums in only a small section of sub-categories:

London's Time Out introduced the new popular museums of London (e.g. Design Museum) and the Wellcome Collection through evening events at the museums. London Town reintroduced small museums with varied themes as an individual category, from the photography exhibition at the Victoria and Albert Museum to the history of package design at the Brand Museum. Utilising various aspects of world-class and small museums via the websites' marketing, from visual design to exhibition themes, impacts on city branding. Incorporating Visit London's focus on museums, a couple of unofficial tourism websites promoted the value of small museums in London. The specific thematic exhibitions of the small museums represent the characteristics of the small-scaled museums, from photography to package design. Studies of small museums identified that exhibition themes for the museums are part of a useful promotional tool for cities and reflect cities' 'cultural value'; the smaller economic profit from small museums has been discussed.<sup>121</sup>

Museums are very vibrant tourism attractions and the vast number of museums on the official tourism website identifies London as being a city full of museums, including small ones. The city has produced a great number of diverse museums that have become a major cultural heritage and the key driver for tourism.<sup>122</sup> The majority of museums in the city relate to London's heritage, including small museums in the houses of historic figures and with specialised exhibitions. As London's official tourism website actively uses the global reputation and popularity of museums in the city to promote London, discovering and promoting more small museums can strengthen both the museums and the city image. However, in London, there are a number of historic and interesting small-scale museums and

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<sup>121</sup> Xie (2006: 1232); Tohmo (2004); Geismar and Tilley (2003).

<sup>122</sup> The email conversation with a member of staff at the Museums Association in 2015 confirmed that, according to the data of 2015, there are over 300 museums in London including associated organisations such as the Art Fund.

residences, which imply the city's meaning, social change, value and style in the context of urban heritage.

In Paris's website, two attributes consist of museum-based branding that support the city's reputation in the arts and museums. The international fame of the Louvre is naturally used as a key attraction via the official tourism website; supporting the Louvre as a visual icon of Paris, the substantial list of museums and galleries under 'Museums and Galleries' on the website indicates the abundance of museum products. Also, the supporting promotion of exhibitions from the unofficial tourism websites: i) Frida Kahlo and fashion in Hot List via Time Out Paris; and ii) 'Paris Fashion' on Paris Digests, an introduction of fashion museums and exhibitions alongside fashion events (e.g. 'the Arts Decoratifs Museum near the Louvre Museum' and the Galliera Fashion Museum).

In terms of exhibitions, the small museums have contributed to develop types and exhibition themes of the museum industry of the city. From a city branding perspective, these museums have built their brand reputation and values through architectural style, exhibitions and associated events and service facilities via the media. The official tourism websites of the majority of the five cities do not convey elements of exhibitions.

Consequently, a few visual images and the introductory texts from Visit London support museum-driven city branding: The image of the Queen in the image of Madame Tussauds; "There's Always Something New: From a pop-up burger joint in East London to a blockbuster exhibition at one of London's galleries". The text indicates that the city considers offering significant exhibitions of the museums and galleries as important in framing part of city branding.

Looking at the background of modern art history in the city can be useful in developing a category of small museums for New York City. New York became one of the leading cities in modern art history alongside Paris and London in the 1940s with Abstract Expressionism, which impacted on the city's investment in art museums, galleries, and artists.<sup>123</sup> This phenomenon influenced the hierarchy in art between Europe and the US, and raised New York City to be the world's leading cultural city. Since that time, the city has been a centre for art movements, e.g. Abstract Expressionism, and this continued with Pop Art in the 1960s, Minimalism and Contemporary Art in the 21st century. The impact of New York's reputation and its cultural influence on modern art have been reflected in new museums and

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<sup>123</sup> Walter Benjamin saw New York City in the 1960s as a consumer-led modern city, "dynamic interplay between visual phenomena of culture and material forces", *The Arcade Project* (1999: 392).

exhibitions. Also, a number of the artists in New York have become widely popular, from Abstract Expressionism to Street Art, representing the city and its lifestyle.

Thus, content relating to modern art and artists, including the artists' meeting places such as cafés, and storytelling about relationships with the museums/galleries can be beneficial. The new content would explain the city's value and its role in modern art as the city's branding strategies to appeal to tourists.

### 8.6.3 Creative exhibitions for visual city

From a creative perspective, a couple of interviewees (museology and business in academia, museum events) stated that creative exhibitions with a variety of ideas in the arts are required for some of the major museums. The discussion about museum exhibition quality in terms of themes and collections emerged as a point of concern.<sup>124</sup> For example, unique exhibition themes (e.g. Sexology from the Wellcome Trust) that are supported by London's galleries imply a shortage of creativity on the part of the museums in Manchester (Section 7.3.3.1, p. 177).

To understand the reason for the lack of creative themes at Manchester's museums, a comparison with other cities can be helpful: nationally, by reinventing Glasgow with museums (e.g. The Mackintosh, The Burrell Collection) and Liverpool (e.g. Tate Liverpool).<sup>125</sup> And from an international perspective, the abundance of art museums and galleries in Paris (e.g. Centre Georges Pompidou), Florence or Barcelona identifies the cities as culturally rich. Relatively, the museums in Manchester do not sufficiently demonstrate an art-driven culture or the city's originality in science. The lack of an existing world-class museum in Manchester can be linked with possible issues of imagination, funding and management [IV\_08\_business academia]:

The Museum of Science and Industry should be the greatest in the world given Manchester is a Shock City [IV\_08\_business academia].

A large number of teams and practitioners are involved in the design process for exhibitions, at a museum: the exhibition team, the education team, and the director of events.

[IV\_10\_museum\_Press & PR]. Since having a variety of exhibitions and events is a strong

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<sup>124</sup> Significant quality of collection is one of the most important concerns in improving museums ('Manchester Museum Strategic Plan, 2012-2015', The Manchester Museum, pp. 6-7).

<sup>125</sup> Major cities in the UK develop cultural infrastructure to reconstruct their identities (e.g. industrial). Manchester (Leadbeater, 2009; Kennedy, 2009) and Liverpool (Daramola-Martyn, 2009) being two of the cases.

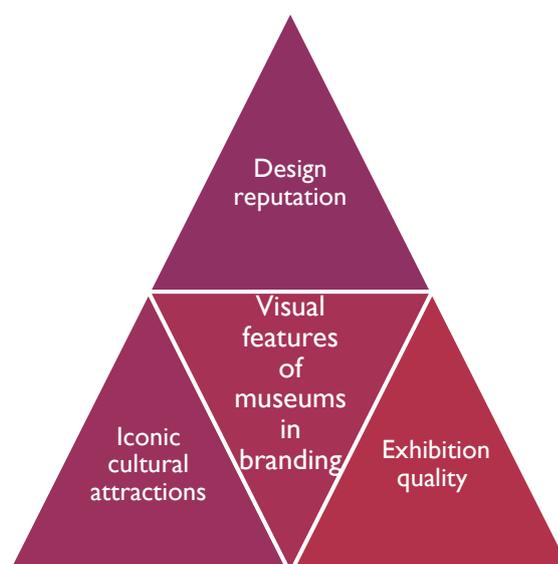
point in the tourism and creative industry of Manchester, the expansion of art exhibitions to include events and festivals has become more prevalent.

One practical method was identified as utilising the innovation heritage of the city, such as creative exploration of science in museum exhibitions. In other words, breaking up traditional art exhibitions with non-art sector themes in various venues outside museums and galleries is an aspect of innovation for the city's branding. The Graphene exhibition at Manchester Museum of Science and Industry was mentioned as one of the successful examples: engagement with audiences through presenting easily accessible science in various art forms; collaboration with outstanding scientists at Manchester University; programming live events [IV\_03\_museum\_festivals].

Furthermore, one of the most important elements of museum exhibitions is the collection itself. Different types and varieties of collections differentiate museums, from contemporary art to a city's historic photos. Also, abundant collections are indispensable in creating an image of a museum (Section 2.6.1, p. 59). Most responses from museums stated that they invest in both old and new collections to produce innovative visual curation (e.g. photos and paintings at the Lowry). In particular, commission and collection of modern art is considered as a valuable asset in branding a museum with its exhibition themes:

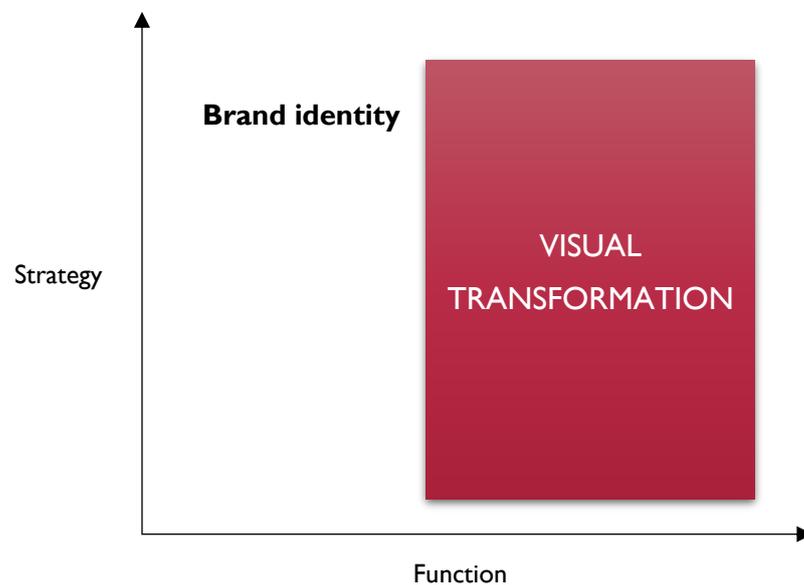
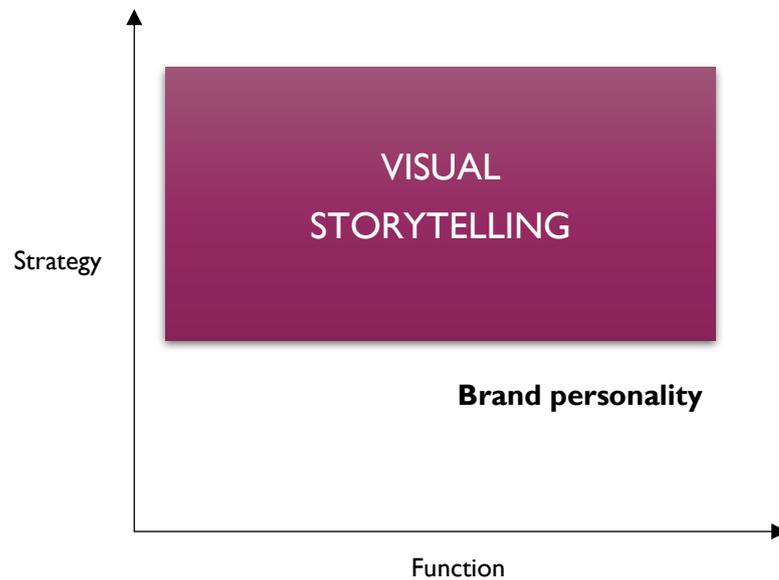
We have the second largest collection of British modern art. We have been collecting and commissioning art for years [IV\_10\_museum\_Press & PR].

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**Figure 8.2** Key Brand Features of Museums for City Branding.

Figures 8.3 and 8.4 show a scheme of museum's visibility in enhancing city branding, comparing the international cities and Manchester.



(top to bottom) **Figure 8.3** Design Function of Museums for Branding International Cities: Amsterdam, London, New York City, Paris and Sydney; **Figure 8.4** Design Function of Museums for Branding Manchester.

## 8.7 Chapter Findings

From the results of the analysis, a couple of key findings were identified:

- Possessing acclaimed and iconic museums is indispensably beneficial for international cities in promoting themselves as cultural leaders in the international market.
- The reputation of large museums and their visual features, from brand logo to an exhibition theme, function as a key branding instrument for the cities.
- Iconic museums enhance their own branding strategy themselves, and this is extensively connected to a major part of cultural city branding.
- Conversely, attention to small but distinct museums and specialised exhibition themes also enhances the cities as a solid foundation for museum culture.
- The use of various aspects of museums expands the roles and functions of the museums through the promotion of technology.
- The impact of museums influences Manchester in developing its cultural features with visual design with the various stakeholders.
- Awareness of the stakeholders in strengthening a museum scheme in Manchester, accelerates improvement of collections, exhibition curation and collaborative marketing with tourism websites.

A discussion theme: dependency on global museums

Museums are obviously one of the most common types of attractions in major cities. As history and popularity of museums has positioned their status at the top of branding vehicles, the need to possess remarkable museums and their brand management is interdependent with that of the cities. This phenomenon and the growing number of tourists and their expectations of the museums, influence stakeholders in the field of city marketing. The internationally-successful museums in London, New York City and Paris have been constantly renovated to sustain their reputation and value. The core meaning of museum culture in branding cities connects to arts-driven image making for the cities. However, it is not always appropriate for every city, in particular a post-industrial city.

For Manchester, the investment and improvement planning for museums opens a further agenda about depending on museums for the best branding. As some interviewees suggested, developing more small, historic museums with their city-based collections (e.g. science heritage) could be one approach.

## 8.8 Summary

Utilising museums to be more visible and profitable is a successful way of revitalising city branding at the international level. This trend, or urban cultural phenomenon of positioning museums as a main concern impacted on the redesigning of the city image of post-industrial cities, such as Manchester. To follow the success story of museum branding for city branding, the stakeholders in Manchester have invested significantly in a couple of new museum attractions. In achieving success, practitioners from city marketing and museum marketing adopted the core strategy of inviting internationally-acclaimed architects for high-cost museum design. In this sense, the presence of museums for cities is no longer simply providing a space for displaying objects to the public, it also constructs their sustainable value through lavish architectural features, authentic and creative exhibitions and extensive branding strategies. From the comparison of the international cities and Manchester, a number of programmes, dilemmas and opportunities of museums for city branding have emerged. One potential solution, from the analysis of the field research data, is to develop an additional and substantial platform of museums for Manchester branding, such as investing in exhibitions that trace the city's unique cultural sources from the Industrial Age and its many other forms of creative resources.

## 9.0 AN INSIDE LOOK AT THE VISUAL DESIGN OF CITY BRANDING

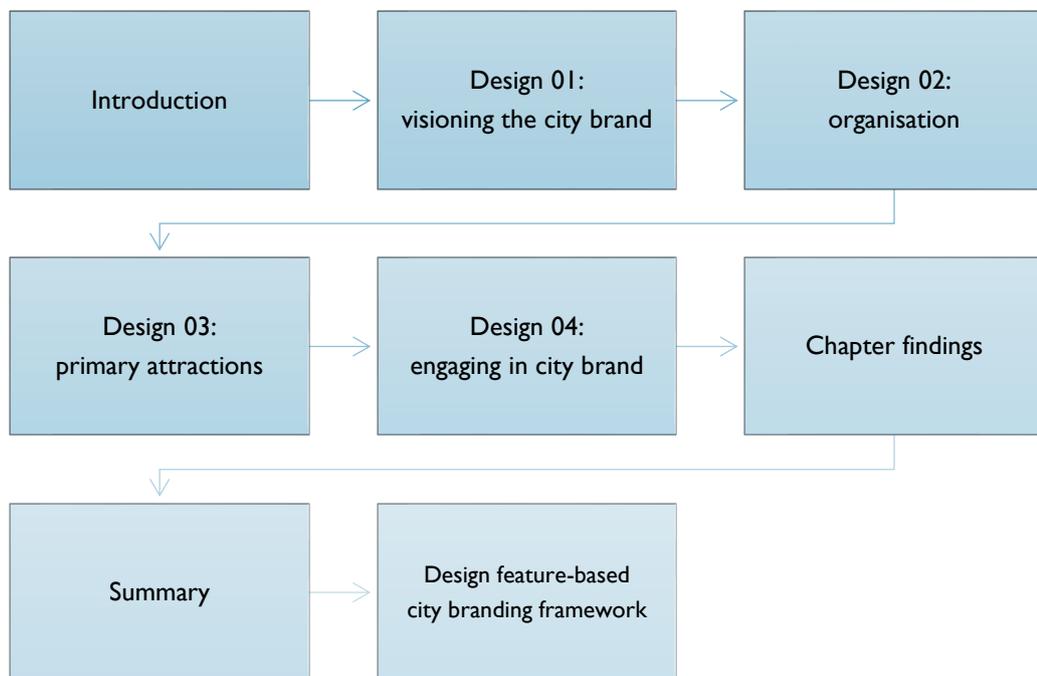


Figure 9.1 Chapter Map.

The meaning of a message is the change which it produces in the image.<sup>126</sup>

## 9.1 Introduction

This chapter aims to present how tourism websites work in practice, responding to Research Question 01: How does the design context of the tourism websites enhance a city's branding? At the same time, it aims to help solve Research Proposition 01 and 02: The strategic design of the tourism websites contributes to city branding; Visuality of cultural attractions has been essential for city branding. The three subjects of design management, design framework and engaging for city branding were selected to examine the websites' working function. The principal method was to 'divide and compare' the official and unofficial websites. The source and data for the presentation of this chapter are the interviews conducted in Manchester. Overall, this chapter's questions and examinations addressed the city of Manchester.

## 9.2 Design 01: Visioning the City Image

What image of Manchester do the people there want to present? This is explained by the main key terms discovered through the interviews: '**Original**', '**Modern**' and '**Historical**' and '**Cultural**' are the main key terms, followed by others including 'arts', 'expanding', and 'dynamic'. In this section, the transcription of questions and answers is almost verbatim, so as not to alter the exact expressions and their implications.

## 9.3 Design 02: Organisation

Tourism websites are a vital publicising instrument and have their own structure, decision-making process and unique aspect of connectivity between people and culture. The situation is analysed by stressing the functions of three elements: ownership, planning and decision-making.

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<sup>126</sup> Boulding (1956: 7).

### 9.3.1 Ownership and design flexibility

In terms of selecting content and visual images, practitioners of the official and unofficial tourism websites show different approaches in creating the processes for branding Manchester.

On the official sites, images and texts are changed on a daily basis. They do not change the actual content, but on the Home Page, they change the main heading images. Global change occurs when it is absolutely needed, e.g. seasonal events. In terms of design of the website, it probably will not change for a long time because, first of all, they are a not-for-profit organisation and cost is important, and because the design element is done by an external agency they have to pay. The actual design can't be decided until they can find the money to do it [IV\_01\_official tourism website], which is clearly related to ownership limitations.

Unofficial interviews are composed of major museums and the website founder who co-invests in the website. One of the problems derived from the ownership of the unofficial website is rather technical, a sort of limitation or indirect censorship. They have to choose from the images that the events or the institutions possess; they can't use images that are copyrighted to someone else. However, something colourful is diligently sought for a more attractive presentation. According to an interviewee on the unofficial site:

We do black and white but we do colour on the homepage, which is intriguing and gives an idea of the events that are happening. And we believe that works well for the site, we don't use any cartoons, we do illustrations [IV\_04\_unofficial tourism website\_editorial].

Using good images means people will be interested in the events, restaurants or any topic [IV\_04]. Preference of photographic image and informative graphics, rather than abstract, stylised illustrations or cartoons is impressive. It can be a proof of the website's concern that people should find things easily and have a real appreciation of the cultural area.

### 9.3.2 Planning a cultural calendar

Both the official and unofficial tourism websites regularly plan to promote different types of attractions to match seasonal events or event launches. The official site works with its own style guidelines. The role of planning is to create an identity in the tone and voice of the content:

It could be how you should write an article, why this information, basically it should have images. It should have details of times, it should have contact details, it should

have website link too. But it is not 100% prescriptive, not you must say this word, must be specific, should be from a third person, things like that. The reason why guidelines function is to keep information and style [IV\_01\_official tourism website\_marketing].

For the unofficial website team, the regular editorial schedule is made six months in advance and the planning is initiated by the Head Editor. They try to spread the colourful cultural ambiance across each subject:

We are trying to spread contents, so we have one piece on art exhibitions, one piece on theatre plays, a couple on bars and music [IV\_04\_unofficial tourism website\_editorial].

What they care about most is the question of balance. It's not their sole approach towards cultural Manchester but the balance is achieved in two ways. One is geographic adjustment, the other is balance between the various types of cultural events. The website allocated 50-60% to Manchester, giving the rest to other central destinations in Northern England. In fact, this website is shared with other Northern cities including Liverpool, therefore, a huge event like Hamlet at the Royal Exchange or a number of them can spread beyond Manchester and obtain more cultural appreciation or critique. The principle is that every form of culture merit being presented to and commented on by the public.

### 9.3.3 Decision-making

There is a difference between the team size and team structure of the official and unofficial websites. The official site is made up of four members, while two members manage the unofficial site. Because of the restricted number of agents, the work of both teams is fully integrated. But the official site also has a Digital Content Manager who oversees and has total control of visual image selection.

The small work force on the unofficial site makes them eager to gather information and exterior sources scattered around Greater Manchester. They have a hand in producing and selecting content for the website. To produce more serious cultural contents, they listen to political talk around Greater Manchester [IV\_01\_official tourism website\_marketing].

Both website teams can cover local events and local listings from reliable sources, which is very positive in building local importance in the cultural field. This kind of system is due to the simple but open, smooth style of the editor of the unofficial tourism website. The system is run by the Head Editor who has control over the website, editorial planning and articles.

Such direction also forms part of the development of the website as a whole. The small team consults about the topics for pieces, and what to set aside, how to publicise, and what is the idea the piece is trying to show. Overall, article selection is controlled by the Head Editor but article sourcing and writing is respected, 95% of all articles go on the website [IV\_04\_unofficial tourism website\_editorial].

The check system is the same decision-making agenda for the official tourism website too. They have confidence in the participating people, perhaps because of an accumulation of experience, and trust has a positive function in the critique of every domain of culture:

We have lots of events on a daily basis. People in our team already are trained and we're really good. I don't have to proof the content, because they know what they are doing, they have guidelines. Sections of the website are down to me to be proofed and get developed [IV\_01\_official tourism website\_marketing].

If the content is supplied by, for example, the National Football Museum, they would attempt to supply the best and most suitable images along with their event information. However, the Digital Content Manager would select the correct image for that content in their online image bank where all the images and photos are stored. Despite this effective internal system, decision-making about any design change does not depend on them. The design element is handled by an external agency that they have to pay [01\_official tourism website\_marketing].

#### 9.4 Design 03: Primary Attractions

Selecting and realising the primary attraction for an enhanced city image and for an increase in tourism results primarily from the implementation of that image. But what is required at the beginning is the proper definition of the term 'primary'. Popular attractions can be called primary attractions even if this designation is in question. A specialist in Manchester in the field of tourism website marketing explained that all are definitely primary attractions, since 'popular' means 'primary' on their website:

Anything that is currently being looked at by a lot of people and talked about by a lot of people [IV\_01\_official tourism website\_marketing].

However, the sort of attraction most people go to is not necessarily primary. What people are talking about and looking at online also has a great value. By definition, the term primary gains more dynamics when it shifts from the actual buildings or places to the websites:

It's not just the National Football Museum and Manchester Arndale. Its broadly more people looking at the website **[IV\_01\_official tourism website\_marketing]**.

#### 9.4.1 Data sources for a specialised view

To identify current issues potential visitors are searching for the official tourism website uses an analytical, technical method of internet research. In comparison, the unofficial tourism website communicates directly with several leading arts organisations to find out about their new events and exhibitions. The practitioners of the websites act as producers who are confident of developing attractions. For instance:

We developed them ourselves, because we have some analytical background about what people [family or a couple] look at and what people stay on for a long time. We also research the best practice for other people [singles] as well. We obviously monitor Google a lot. Any technical changes in prioritising of the searches depend on how we create content and how we develop our site **[IV\_01\_official tourism website\_marketing]**.

You get to know people in the key roles through events. Through talking about what's happening you meet them in that way **[IV\_04\_unofficial tourism website\_editorial]**.

Indeed, they have more meetings on the consultancy side. A new project called Cultural Concierge was born out of the idea connecting people with other art venues, and providing them with similar contents.

#### 9.4.2 Trends

Primary attraction strategy looks for current trends which are then selectively reflected in making primary attractions. More importantly for an intermediate city like Manchester is to not simply model external trends. For a more creative tourism, three aspects of current trends at the international level are adopted and modified.

Trend reflection is necessary because many tourists come to Manchester from the US, Canada, Australia and New Zealand, where there are large numbers of loyal fans of Coronation Street. A creative way of interpreting this is to offer both old and new perspectives of the TV show. Therefore, they've got two versions of the Coronation Street set: i) the old one involves walking down the streets and seeing the old houses and shops as they were filmed; and ii) in the new one is that they visit the actual place they now film the show in Media City in Salford Quays. Moving from one to another for a while but confronting two different places, people can taste how tourism takes them to another time

and space. It also helps to explain why Coronation Street is so popular across the UK and around the world.

Another trend is to condense a tour of several events into a limited time: exhibitions, museums at night, other events and dining, all happening in the course of a weekend. Creative Tourist Research Manchester Museum at Night.com noticeably adopted that approach encompassing the Northern Quarter, Central Library, and the Manchester Art Gallery. Finally, trends are important for Manchester too, but even more important is how to mould typical trends for Manchester, and not to focus on those of London [IV\_04\_unofficial tourism website\_editorial].

### 9.4.3 Core product's meaning

Given that the core product is made with the specialised view and trend reflections, what is the characteristic aspect of all the core products? It is this question that is to be addressed in this sub-divided chapter. Regarding the use, benefit and service proposed by visual design of city tourism, two points can be considered positively, together with one questionable point.

First, Manchester's core product that enjoys an international reputation is its sport attractions. The role of Manchester United and City Football Clubs has a significant value for the city image through their own museums and the Manchester Art Gallery and the National Football Museum [IV\_01\_official tourism website\_marketing]. This type of tour can be helpful in making the core product of Football into an augmented product.

Second, the tourist element of art galleries can utilise the integration of many valuable but lesser known arts institutions. If the Northern Quarter, Whitworth Art Gallery, Castlefield Gallery, the Royal Exchange Theatre, Contact Theatre, and the National Football Museum were included in an itinerary, the circulation of core products would be enlarged.

Furthermore, the Central and John Ryland's libraries, and the historic Chetham's Library, which is one of the oldest and most magnificent libraries in Europe, can be integrated as cultural assets linked with the Cathedral.

Third, to realise that kind of core product idea, it will be necessary to have a clear visual figure of Manchester. But how to associate industrial Manchester with cultural Manchester is challenging. In spite of the difficulties, creating a robust visual, which is productive, and not simply linked to consumer culture will be a major task.

## 9.5 Design 04: Engaging in City Branding

The thinking and policy behind Manchester city branding goes under the name of The Creative Tourist. In this chapter, what it means to engage in city branding will be considered in three stages. Starting with stakeholders, the section will then examine marketing strategy for better branding, and finally how much Manchester aspires to be a creative image and what is the foundation for the brand image.

### 9.5.1 Stakeholders

Manchester City Council, investment agencies, private companies helping to develop city image, and transport providers (rail, bus and tram) are all stakeholders in Manchester city branding. This includes those involved both online and offline. Stakeholders who can affect city branding express their concerns to Creative Tourism. The term Creative Tourism means exploring the city and looking for unusual venues, but not those that are hidden. The positive expectation from the stakeholder is based on their feeling that something great is going on, that there is collaboration between organisations and that the City Council also functions in this way. The former is the content that is most appropriate to Creative Tourist. There is also quite a lot of collaboration with arts organisations in the city:

We support the Manchester Consortium Group of Arts Organisations and try to work together with them to promote things that are happening. We also campaign both parts of the Creative Tourist Consults which is the other part, [CEO] ones **[IV\_04\_unofficial tourism website\_editorial]**.

### 9.5.2 Marketing strategy

Designing tourism websites is based on content selection and aims to promote cities' major attractions.<sup>127</sup> Official marketing strategy is viewed in two ways of making promotion and the primary concern of informing and advertising the latest popular thing in any cultural field. Marketing understands popularity well; either you are popular because lots of people look for you, or you pay to be promoted more than other people. Marketing is also extended toward related organisations. Membership organisations: hotels, attractions, events and restaurants pay the website as part of their extra marketing activity. This is illustrated here:

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<sup>127</sup> Nekic (2014).

We offer an opportunity to get further promotion. Dedicated emails to our database. And if a member can pay to be featured on those promotions they will get promoted a bit more **[IV\_01\_official tourism website\_marketing]**.

Like planning, marketing is also concerned with why Manchester is great now and how it is moving forward. Marketing strategy is really focused on why and what people do and why when they visit Manchester. Consequently, people who live here but also those who travel to Manchester are targeted. Marketing would ensure they make contact with those people **[IV\_04\_unofficial tourism website\_editorial]**.

### 9.5.3 Visual network in city branding

Creative city branding can be realised by combined or conflicting aims and plans but networking is absolutely necessary, and Manchester needs it as much as other cities, and probably more than many.

The reason is that Manchester defines its brand role and expects it at the level of representation of Northern UK. This does not necessarily mean its place should be a centre or summit but a nexus of those interconnections. Those who engage in creative city branding for Manchester understand that a well-established network means interconnections between people, organisations and city councils. However, a network is not a static conception, but rather an interconnected and changeable entity. In this sense, major hotels and ticket agencies in Manchester belong to an inner network of business partners.

The broader network for Manchester represents a number of cities around the North-West covering Liverpool, Sheffield, Bolton, and some towns in Cumbria and elsewhere **[IV\_04\_unofficial tourism website\_editorial]**. However, networks function not only by being immersed in them but also by standing independently:

How we present Manchester nationally, internationally, and to lots of people to make sure we all have the same messages in promoting city image in a uniformed approach **[IV\_01\_official tourism website\_marketing]**.

In formulating and in processing the creative city branding, visual arts work as a cultural artery:

If somebody whose interest in the arts is travelling, exploring and in digging on the surface about cities will not necessary be going to the most obvious places **[IV\_04\_unofficial tourism website\_editorial]**.

## 9.6 Chapter Findings

Overall findings indicate that Manchester's websites' designing and branding strategies are actively ongoing under the key terms for a creative image. The key topics of the findings are as follows:

- Framing of the Manchester image by the key terms: 'Original', 'Modern', 'Historical', 'Arts' and 'Expanding'.
- Knowledge in official and unofficial tourism websites' mechanisms on design and branding, such as ownership, planning and decision-making.
- Existence of material restrictions to change the design of websites.
- Primary attractions' developmental potentiality from core product to augmented product.
- Necessary aim and strategy developed for more interconnected Greater Manchester image.
- Concerned and careful attention to Manchester brand in order to reach an increased and more dispersed engagement of people through its artistic culture.
- Considering the overall findings, expectations for a more creative city branding of Manchester are bright and constructive, despite certain restricted circumstances for flexible design.

## 9.7 Summary

Through the interview research method, the image of Manchester that people want to present is framed by the key terms: 'Original', 'Modern', 'Historical', 'Cultural', 'Arts' and 'Expanding'. For that image promotion, official and unofficial tourism websites have their own planning, operation methods and decision-making procedures. The issue of budget limits requests to the agency for any change to the overall design framework of the website. However, the designers and manager in the related website team can constantly change visual images and text. Searching for the best visual images provided either by cultural institutions or from an internal data bank of the digital marketing team shows their wish to transmit strong visual images to their site's viewers. The unofficial tourism website's focus on visual clarity of the images also intended to inform the audience's visual understanding of promoted attractions. The official and unofficial tourism websites both play a very positive role in their approaches towards people. There are formal and informal collaborations between Manchester City Council, Bolton City Council and private

organisations, and also with museums as co-stakeholders in managing, marketing and developing content.

## 9.8 Design Feature-Based City Branding Framework

### 9.8.1 The aim of the framework

The main objective of the conceptual framework is to explain how the particular phenomenon of culture-initiative city branding is structured via tourism websites. Using significant findings from the literature, it is intended to map out potential relationships between the web-based study and the field research, with the aim of explaining how the central topics from the results are connected to each other in terms of the core context of primary design features that enhance city branding. Furthermore, the content of the framework represents the author's attempt to synthesise systematic research. Specifically, the framework suggests how to address the knowledge gap that has not yet been explicitly explained in the literature (Section 2.9.1, p. 68).

- How can intermediate cities such as Manchester distinguish themselves from global cities (e.g. London or Paris) in order to be recognised as culturally strong cities?
- What are the meanings of the visual presentational design of a cultural city's image, through branding via major tourism websites?
- How do specific types of cultural attractions and their design features function to drive the brand of culturally vital city?
- How do museums and their characteristic design elements play a role in terms of impacting on visual city branding?

### 9.8.2 Application of the framework

#### A guideline to a visual design strategy in city branding

The framework can be used by practitioners in design and in city branding as an applicable guideline in developing a visual design strategy for tourism websites. In particular, the framework can help in understanding the legibility and functions of visual design features of particular attractions, which are instrumental in structuring a unique visual story for their cities.

From the research, findings prior to section 4.5 (p. 128) and section 5.4 (p. 141) indicated that the major international cities clearly emphasised the design of their primary attractions and related design assets, exploiting design originality of these venues by structuring a visual theme for the branding. For example, London's confidence in its museum-driven visual identity and Paris's leadership in style-initiative both contributed to an expression of each city's 'persona', from products to the overall cityscape (4.3.1, p. 121).

For Manchester, the reflection of its industrial heritage has been seen in new and striking architectural designs, including branded museums such as the Imperial War Museum North designed by Daniel Libeskind. Although the city has not produced significant landmarks on scale comparable with the examples found in international cities the outcomes of redesigning places and constructing its own thematic identity, through creativity and marketing technology for museums or theatres, support Manchester's transformative visuals (Section 6.4.2, p. 157).

#### A flexible design tool in a theory and in practice - visual design and city brand

First, application of the framework can add expanded nuances to existing theories about visual analysis in design by synthesising potential brand messages in the cultural content. The majority of the existing theories in visual analysis are oriented from the field of cultural study, in which most of the analytical approaches converge, on some level, to delve into topics of ethnographic and social issues, and advertisement design.

The use of the framework can be discussed as a design tool for city branding: the extension of study topics and methods from the viewpoint of cultural study to that of visual design study for city branding. In fact, extracting a city brand message from visual context, and transforming the conceptualised message from a brand communication perspective can be helpful developing a more design-initiative-oriented method in visual analysis.

Next, for visual designers and commissioners of design, the framework helps to better articulate specific and culturally appealing content by curated themes. Instead of giving the task of promoting a city exclusively to a marketing team in the governance staff, or to a brand agency which commissions a design by outsourcing the job to design agencies, our option involves collaborating with visual designers and commissioners of design to improve a brand theme via the online media, which helps ascertain a competitive brand communication design. Specifically, visual designers' participation in brand practice can refine a city's brand position to give it greater clarity and international legibility.

Finally, within branding practice, the framework presents the key factors for composing a brand identity through elaborately curated visual content and the meanings beyond this content in urban culture. This can help brand strategists, whether based in an agency or in the city's governance, in two ways: i) structuring their aim and target market at international level; and ii) indicating what sorts of storytelling they should be presenting for their potential and diverse audiences.

In essence, the aim and use of the framework—in theory and in practice across visual design and brand—address this issue of how to approach the development of city branding via the design feature-based framework.

Based on the key and contextual findings from the research on the function and contribution of design features for city branding, a framework was developed, which is explained in the next section.

### 9.8.3 Key text of constructing the framework

Three main features are systematically presented to articulate the primary content of the framework: key topics, brand functions and design contexts.

First, **Key Topic** presents the elements involved in (re)constructing city branding via the design features. Second, a section in **Brand Function** articulates how the key topics of design features from the first section relate to the focus on strengthening city brands. Lastly, **Design Context** structures the scope of the key findings from the micro perspective. The content for each of the three features consists of keywords and concepts from the examination of tourism websites and interviews and is related back to the literature on visual city brand identity, brand messages, thematic culture-based branding and design features.

The three features making up the framework can be explored at different scales. For the purpose of this thesis, I have chosen to look at the international city scale (e.g. London) and the second-tier city scale (e.g. Manchester). The same structure may be used for both scales of city to provide coherent ideas for the text and visual composition of tourism websites.

The key topics of the framework are as follows:

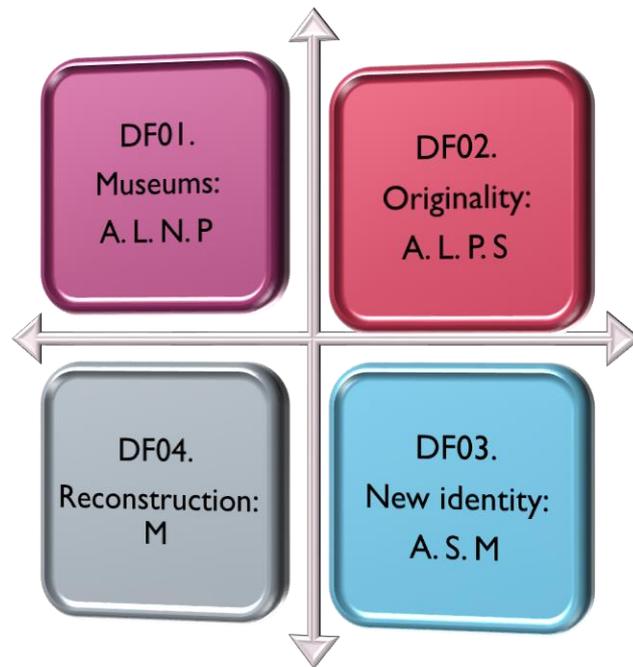
- **Key design features in constructing the visuality of the city brand.**
- **Core concept of the design features in enhancing city branding.**
- **Summarised context of the design feature-based city branding framework.**

To demonstrate the development of the framework content, Table 9.1 illustrates the three main features mentioned above alongside Key Topic, Brand Function and Design Context.

	Key Topic	Brand Function	Design Context
Stage 01. International city	<p><b>Thematic branding:</b> Strategic concepts and promotional technologies through the construction of various and culturally reflective themes for city <u>brand image.</u></p> <p><b>Design-based cultural heritage:</b> Presenting the design of primary attractions as a core design feature in accelerating branding of <u>cities.</u></p> <p><b>Valued museums:</b> Emphasis on world-class museums to expand audiences and (re)position the city as an arts-driven creative venue.</p>	<p><b>Visual story:</b> Creating a visual scenario of attractions through visually strong representation. Making a visual brand story that includes design heritage and sustainable value of the <u>design products of cities.</u></p> <p><b>Sustainable value:</b> Building a visual story supports cities' brand communication with international audiences. It consequently assists sustainability of cities' brand identity in terms of design <u>capital.</u></p> <p><b>Iconic reputation:</b> Use of a brand portfolio of iconic design from the venues that attract broader audiences.</p>	<p><b>Strategic categorisation:</b> Segmentation of thematic branding in framing the design assets of cities, from global brands to local design infrastructure and <u>businesses.</u></p> <p><b>Design originality:</b> Presenting the value of design-based cities through representative visual images of core attractions and highlighting the design via well-written promotional <u>texts.</u></p> <p><b>Museum brand:</b> Developing museum brands and the use of visual features of the museums in order to expand international reputation.</p>
Stage 02. Manchester	<p><b>Cultural image:</b> Refining the visual definition of the city in terms of cultural <u>attractiveness.</u></p> <p><b>Visual features:</b> Reconstructing the visual identity of the city through architectural design <u>practice.</u></p> <p><b>Innovation heritage:</b> Reconceptualising innovative ideas to develop creativity in structuring the <u>city's brand identity.</u></p> <p><b>Museum's vision:</b> Finding an alternative solution for the dilemma of a shortage of content in second-tier cities.</p>	<p><b>Niche themes:</b> Delving into more local and historical incidents to improve the scope of design <u>themes for city branding.</u></p> <p><b>New visual identity:</b> The use of redesigned contemporary or existing historic architectural design to add a visual layer to a city's <u>brand.</u></p> <p><b>Innovative persona:</b> Strengthening the characteristics of the city brand with a more systematically planned and targeted brand vision that supports regenerating the brand personality to attract broader international audiences.</p>	<p><b>Stakeholders:</b> Producing visual transformation through their vision, plan and performance. Collaborative marketing with the creative industries identifies the role of stakeholders in city brand <u>enhancement.</u></p> <p><b>Manchester-driven creativity:</b> Manchester-driven creative practice derived from the industrial and innovation <u>heritage.</u></p> <p><b>Distinctive museums:</b> Developing distinctive exhibition themes through the history of its innovation heritage.</p>

**Table 9.1** Description of the Context of the Framework.

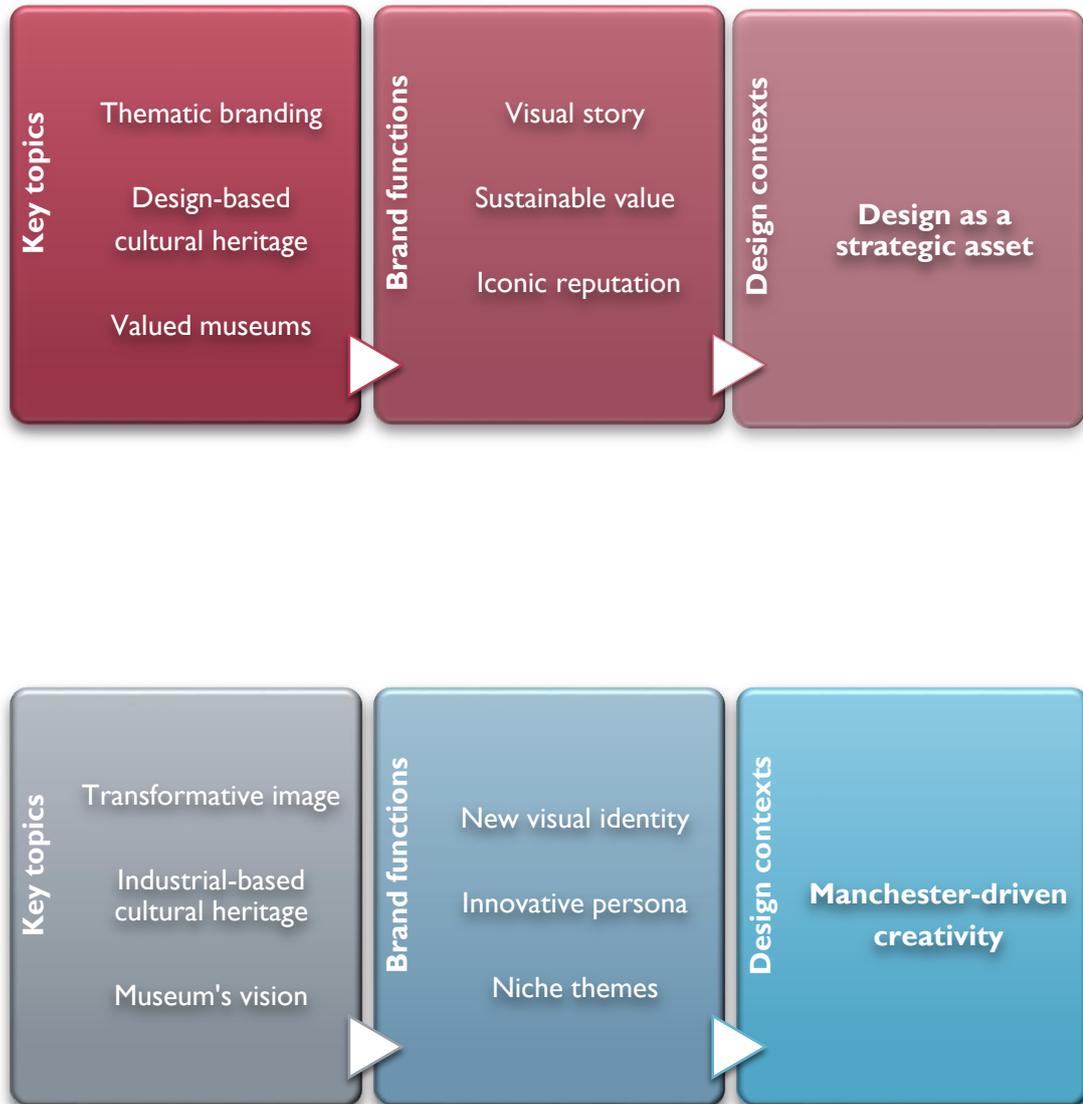
Figure 9.2 presents the summaries of the main vehicles in utilising the core design features in the cities' branding: Amsterdam, London, New York City, Paris, Sydney and Manchester. The results of the matrix on the subject functions as a contextual basis of structuring the conclusive concept of the design feature-based city branding framework, figure 9.3.



**Figure 9.2** Matrix of the Core Design Features in City Branding.

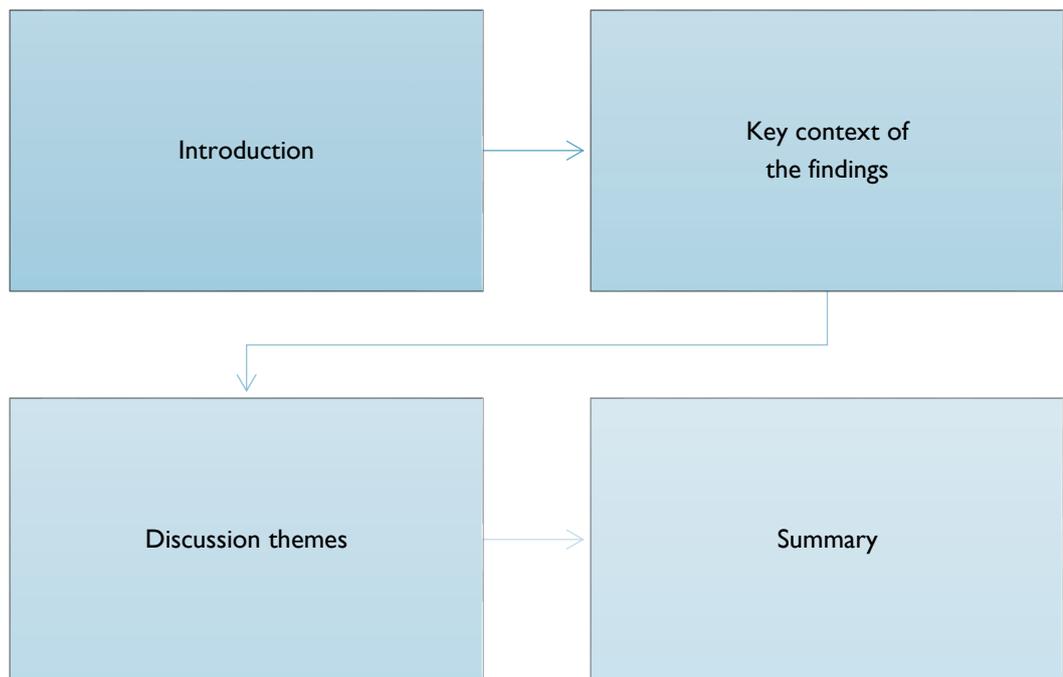
NB: DF (design feature); A (Amsterdam); L (London); M (Manchester); N (New York City); P (Paris); S (Sydney).

Figure 9.3 presents the modified core context and its implications for city branding.



**Figure 9.3** Design Feature-Based City Branding Framework (top: International cities, bottom: Manchester).

## 10 DISCUSSIONS



**Figure 10.1** Chapter Map.

Design is approached as an ongoing process of reflection-in-action, involving intervention by heterogeneous stakeholders, who do not need to consider themselves as being 'designers'.<sup>128</sup>

## 10.1 Introduction

The processes undertaken to arrive at the main objective of this study were critically executed in the previous chapters. The results from Chapter 4.0 to 8.0 respond quite positively to the initial research questions formulated and interrelated. **RQ01:** How does the design context of the tourism websites enhance branding of cities? **RQ02:** How do the visual designs help to construct a city's brand personality? **The third research question,** "How do the design features of museums act as a vehicle for city branding?" was approached using direct observation and participation.

This chapter proposes extensive discussion of how to rethink the problems stimulated by the research questions and to set them in a synthetic pattern. After an overview of the research findings in three necessary groups, this chapter examines the connections between and implications of the findings as follows: i) a literature review as an interdisciplinary approach; ii) contextual research in navigating web-based study of international cities; and iii) a primary research solution in the form of interviews conducted in Manchester.

Before moving on to transit to the sections about the discussed themes, a recap of the key findings of the research in a macro sense will help construct a basis for understanding the theoretical knowledge and related case studies.

## 10.2 Key Context of the Findings

### 10.2.1 Context mapping 01: the literature review

Having reviewed the literature, the author refined a detailed theoretical basis in order to draft a number of fundamental issues linked to branding cities that have cultural attractions. A framework of interconnected cross-disciplinary literature was identified from the process of compiling the essential findings:

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<sup>128</sup> Haldrup and Bærenholdt (2010: 187).

Mainly, the city branding phenomenon boosted the creation of a “legibility” aspect in a cultural city’s image via official tourism websites, and this legibility closely intertwined with branding strategies, cultural attractions and visual design elements. The majority of internationally-acclaimed cities, such as London or Paris, utilise their major cultural heritage for city branding purposes in order to build clustering attractions. For instance, look at the indispensability—in terms of impact on city branding—of using cultural assets in cities that are industrially innovated on an intermediate scale, such as Manchester. This type of city renovates and transforms its inert visuals through design-initiative vitalisation.

In terms of design in city branding, the process of engineering a storyboard with conceptualisation and visualisation of visual contexts and words in design produces intentional messages conveyed from creators to audiences; this, can be identified in the design interface of tourism websites. The actively-used design features of acclaimed cultural attractions, such as museums, to provide essential and feasible leverage, have influenced the development of visual attractiveness in city branding. Furthermore, the long-term reputation of museums’ design values, in terms of their support of city branding and impact on pushing it forward at international level has been examined using case studies, such as the Bilbao Guggenheim.

Thus, to create a visual city brand through design, stakeholders’ engagement to devise, process and sustain the characteristics of city brands applies the theoretical basis of conceptualising an identity and creating an image to represent the activity of product brands for cities.

### 10.2.2 Context mapping 02: the pilot study

Navigating i) visual contexts and ii) the implications of the official and unofficial tourism websites of selected international city brands structured the scope of the key findings (Sections 4.5, p. 129; 5.4, p. 143):

Overall, the process of curating the design representation through the visual communication of tourism websites is instrumental to highlighting the personality conveyed in the city brand. The representation of the visual images draws on major attractions, via the websites, and captures the core design features and their associated products and brands in the cities. In terms of themes, the visual context of the official and unofficial tourism websites delivers a message in which aspects of cultural attractions and their design content can be the main drivers in characterising the city brands.

From a brand perspective, the brand function of the official tourism websites visually reinforces the identity of the cities in terms of cultural heritage, creative industries, design capability and brand production. In contrast, insight into the visual themes used in unofficial tourism websites, such as the internationally-distributed Time Out ([www.timeout.com](http://www.timeout.com)), specifically confirmed their own perspectives in defining niche cultural schemes of the cities. For example, the act of (re)positioning iconic museums (via the official tourism websites) as the strongest design features for branding the cities is connected to the necessity, opportunities and problems faced by the cities which have designed and constructed their museums as a key branding tool and are in the process of managing them.

Therefore, visualising, contextualising and clustering the design features of the primary attractions, by curating the visual context on the websites, is linked to the city's brand personality in a visual sense.

### 10.2.3 Context mapping 03: the primary research

The key findings from the interviews specifically identified a series of topics concerned with creating and strengthening the city brand as a culture-initiative image (Sections, 6.6, p. 164; 7.4, p. 179; 8.7, p. 199; 9.6, p. 211). The interviews confirmed how and why Manchester's brand representatives understand how to apply the pivotal contexts from the literature and the web-based study (including city image, branding, and producing cultural attractions), and they explained the reasons behind Manchester's aspiration to raise its profile as an internationally-recognised fashionable and cultural city.

The most critically examined topics within the findings are as follows:

The most-considered agenda presents how to transform people's visual impression of the city from industrial to cultural, via continuing action in visual design. One way of doing this is to apply the city's prominent heritage in science as an innovative factor linked to creative products, such as exhibition themes. Specifically, in-depth understanding of the ramifications of visual sensations, such as phenomenal architectural design, influences engineering and adds vitality to the city's cultural and creative appeal. In spite of Manchester's being a second-tier city, the fact that its home-grown brand values are being elevated on the basis of collaboration with stakeholders is largely connected to city marketing, tourism websites and the creative industries.

In terms of visual design practice, recapturing potential design assets serves to categorically personalise Manchester's brand identity and enable it to compete at national and international level. One example would be refining the existing infrastructure of the city's museums, using design as a leading visual feature for upgrading their status until it matches the city's brand value. The benefit from the realistic design outcome, for the stakeholders, was that it impacted on the design content—via the brand communications on the representative tourism websites—and vitalised the city's visual image.

In summary, the primary research provided connectivity, issues and visions in branding for Manchester, which reflected a couple of main contexts in design issues in the web-based pilot study. Thus, clustering the findings from the two studies helped to structure discussion themes in a broader and global sense.

Depending on the conceptualisation of the primary contexts for the discussion, the following sections will discuss mapping the macro and micro issues and agendas in the research objective.

### 10.3 The Unenviable Task of Making a Culturally Attractive Image

In the literature, the study of the visual aspects of a city's brand as culturally vivid elements is considered an indispensable factor in city branding. A couple of key issues for this theme were discussed: i) city branding is closely intertwined with utilising cultural strategy; ii) both tangible (e.g. brand logo) and intangible associated elements (e.g. events, exhibitions) of cultural schemes and technical tactics have been broadly used for branding cities; and iii) these associated elements have influenced the definition of the cultural characteristics of cities (Section 2.4.3, p. 48).

In terms of (re)designing, a city brand as a collection of cultural landmarks has its foundation as a global phenomenon. The fundamental theme is focused on the iconic cultural attractions illustrated in the literature. The indicated cultural attractions constitute the main instrument for creating the city's image and branding strategies for tourism. At the same time, three subsequent themes were identified from the web-study of international cities as well as from the field research focusing on Manchester. First, the possibilities and problems of a post-industrial city whose image is deliberate transition. Second, the role of the creative industry in i) driving cities' cultural infrastructure and ii) supporting initiatives to improve the cities' image.

Lastly, the engagement and supportiveness of practitioners in the creative industry with regard to city branding.

However, a different perspective on the international issue of competition in city branding can also be discussed. A fundamental question was seriously formulated while analysing the main content of the websites and the interviews. What constitutes a precise barometer to evaluate a city as a culturally successful or a popular destination, apart from its ranking based on numbers of tourists? What would be an exact or a quantitative strategy for lesser-known cities in terms of presenting them to broad audiences as a favourite destination for people wishing to experience particular cultural amenities or programmes.

Although the literature clearly demonstrated the universal issue of creating a cultural destination for the majority of global cities, it implies that there are obstacles in selecting one particular city as a brand preferred over other cities. Nevertheless, the topics discussed in the research throughout Chapters 4.0 to 9.0 clearly articulated that both internationally-acclaimed city brands and up-and-coming city brands alike attempt to deliver a strong potential brand message of *we are definitely culturally attractive* in a modern sense. A further issue in creating a visual image of a cultural city is closely intertwined with the design task in terms of quality, quantity, capability and marketing.

In short, replicating a city's visual image through utilising the design became a common and useful tool for city branding. However, tracing what gives a city its originality, in order to present its culture in a visual sense, can be discussed with a variety of design themes.

From the key findings in Chapters 4.0 to 9.0, five main themes emerged in the context of design features-based city branding: i) a visual assemblage of primary attractions; ii) museums as a visual brand icon: mission and dilemma, iii) value up local design/designers in fashion; iv) curating design features into a city branding framework; and v) reflection on experiencing city brands via the design.

## 10.4 Discussion Themes

### 10.4.1 A visual assemblage of primary attractions

Understanding the meanings of the primary attractions from the visual design perspective, paying particular attention to their constructive design, is key to appreciating a city's visual cultural attractiveness (Sections 2.5.1, p. 55; 5.3, p. 134; 6.4.3, p. 159). In this regard, the

official and unofficial tourism websites assume complementary functions. Visual and textual analysis of the tourism websites' design produced a number of subsequent themes.

First, the design of iconic buildings and monuments as transformative agents for the city's image. Second, presenting museums as a key engine to drive city branding, and how the websites understand museums as a key product. Third, the undeniable effectiveness of global brand reputation involves cultural heritage and its broad consumption, in order to construct a strong city brand. Fourth, discovering and promoting local design hubs and designers, a particularly fashionable new option for city branding strategies. Lastly, the different perspectives of unofficial tourism websites seeking to project a city's distinctive cultural scene through their assorted examples of compatible attractions.

When the key findings of the web-based study were considered again to the observations about Manchester's branding, the fact of knowing the visions and existing limitations of presenting visually striking primary attractions helped me to understand what the city actually has been struggling with in terms of culture-based city branding. The most interesting finding from the interviews was that the majority of the interviewees claimed that Manchester was a culturally exciting venue. In fact, the city has ambitiously invested in expensive designs such as the Imperial War Museum North, the work of a so-called "super architect". This clearly shows that design is used as one way of resolving the problem of lack of landmarks, to make Manchester comparable to other world-class cities. For example, (re)shaping the cultural content on the websites in Manchester, from literature events at the redesigned Library to collaborative marketing of museums through the unofficial tourism websites, reflected this point.

In this sense, an investment in planning projects on (re)discovering undervalued designs and presenting them, via a channel of tourism websites, as one of the city's distinctive, attractive venues can be discussed between stakeholders. It could be a branding issue at the next level rather than imitating larger and/or international cities in terms of design performance and its implementation in practice.

#### 10.4.2 Museums as a city's brand icon: mission and dilemma

Having reviewed the literature, it can be confirmed that museums are one of the major drivers for city branding. In fact, some major tourism cities in Europe have greatly invested in museums as part of enhancing their city brands (Sections 7.3.3.2, p. 177; 8.1, p. 182). Related to impeccable city branding, it was essential to recognise the cognitive reception of

museums in global cities to reflect how they use museums as a key driver based on that recognition. The basis of this theme is that museums have been accepted and identified as a representative tool for city branding. Because this has been confirmed by contextual examining the tourism websites, it is now up to the stakeholders involved in branding Manchester to spot the operation problems.

The sub-themes gained by the procedure are: first, the relationship between museums and city branding, working together to raise their status to that of an internationally-distinguished city. Second, iconic larger museums as a symbolic cultural instrument for brand positioning in the city's cultural character. Third, the value of small museums in reflecting cities' hidden heritage and culture. Lastly, subject to the interviews, tourists' interest in the specialist subjects of exhibitions, and an understanding about the issues from professionals in the field of museums.

With regard to Manchester, the data taught me that the majority of cities do not have a rich portfolio of excellent museums in terms of architectural design, collections, and exhibition distinctiveness of the same standard as the British Museum or the Guggenheim. It can reflect rather ironically on museums if they are located in a supposed "cultural city", because the phenomenon of city branding tends to largely depend on popular museum brands. Although the city has constructed a couple of significant museums and uses the design of these museums as a branding tool in order to craft a recognisable city brand, the issues of 'high-profile' museums in multiple perspectives suggests that design practice may not be a one-stop solution for improving a city's image.

In short, placing the emphasis on museums as a leading design vehicle in accelerating city branding implies that the museums convey a message that the cities are home to arts-initiatives, and therefore cultural places. The use of museums and their design features as a main instrument involves a variety of related themes, from small and thematic museums positioning museums such that they fulfil multiple purposes for consumption by visitors.

From the analytical observation on the topic, a further discussion about how to utilise unknown and qualified small museums in clustering a more solid infrastructure in museums for cities could help to elaborate the design context of city branding.

### 10.4.3 Value up local design/designers in fashion

Overall, as design is a key issue and a (re)branding tool for some international cities, considering the cities' creative assets can expand the scope of the city branding strategy (Section 5.2, p. 132). Moreover, design acts at multi-dimensional levels, from architectural design to brand design in the construction of brand personality. Furthermore, from the author's perspective, the balance of assembling local and imported brands and designs can highlight cities' portfolios for sustainable brand management.

From a visual design perspective, introducing local fashion designers as mainstream conveys some ideas about the city's regard for creative industries and design infrastructure. For instance, stressing the originality of fashion design in the cities, such as the title 'Sydney's Designer' on Sydney's official tourism website presents a case in point. Although the official channels cannot address all aspects of cities' less well-known and niche design groups, this attempt via the media will help to strengthen the creative communities of cities.

On the other hand, a critical aspect of shaping a city's brand personality with the use of fashion design based on either city-production or global brands is likely to create a stereo type of city branding. For example, presenting a "fashion Mecca" of streets containing familiar, often similar, internationally-popular brands and very few distinctive and local designs may not give an impression of originality to some audiences.

In order to resolve similarities in the field of fashion in city branding, further content development and its presentation via the strategic design of tourism websites can be explored by visual designers. For example, the discovery of young, independent and lesser-known fashion designers and geographically clustering their work with regard to uniqueness in style and target market can be utilised in part of the strategy for city planning and consequently represented on tourism websites. From the distinctive refinement of the structure of fashion districts in a city, visual designers can recreate the most attractive side in representing the city via media promotion. Moreover, reconsidering local fashion design and designers as a major vehicle in highlighting comparable design value for a city can be a useful branding.

Therefore, the potential growth in the profile of diverse local design on the websites makes it possible to open a new genre for branding cities at the next stage. As a discussion, developing more creative and authentic ideas in composing a fashion design infrastructure for cities can be one of the branding topics.

#### 10.4.4 Curating design features into a city branding framework

From Chapters 4.0 to 9.0, I discovered that the role and impact of design for city brands is indispensable, whether the city is internationally-successful or considered a second-tier city. The well-designed and carefully curated visual images and textual content succinctly imply how visual designers and marketers in the field of tourism websites consider the importance of the design features in accelerating the cities' branding in a visual sense. Having a design feature-based city branding framework can help them, and other key stakeholders in city branding, clarify brand communication such as a segmented positioning (Section, 9.8, pp. 212-217).

Furthermore, the meaningfulness and the value of design in the cities were developed and constructed, based on the accumulated creative industries and business infrastructures, founded over the centuries or decades. For that reason, the framework opens up a further discussion in the context of city branding, relating strategic design to the design capability of visual and commercial designers. Furthermore, the use of the framework for analytical comparison between the selected international cities and Manchester, in terms of the design leadership for creating a visual city brand suggests a new approach that can be used in the field of design management.

Also, for second-tier cities, in particular, industrial-driven places, the governance, communities and related professionals in city branding can focus more attention and in-depth consideration towards the aesthetic and historical value, and the originality, of visual design as part of the cultural heritage. This focus on the knowledge and philosophy of design as an invaluable component of the visual heritage of cities can be a strong weapon enabling these "ambassadors" to make their city stand out from other places. The framework can be considered as a practical and useful design tool to assist some cities that are trying to set a vision for a readable and creative image to present to wider audiences who have not visited those places.

Nevertheless, it might be a challenge and an interesting subject to discuss how to use and develop the concept of the framework in order to assist specific brand strategies for multiple cities. Developing the study of the framework in the field of city branding from the collaborative perspective in visual design and in brand communication, can suggest a more efficient design tool to help cities with their (re)branding issues. Moreover, a new method of collaboration between designers and brand strategists could be discussed to address a

further and in-depth topic in city branding from design management perspective: developing the key topics or understanding the brand function.

In this working process between practitioners and academics in design and branding national or international cities could develop their own and applicable design concepts for visioning their cities in the context of visual personality using the framework.

#### 10.4.5 Application of design to city branding by stakeholders

The analysis of the web-based study and the case study articulated a main concept of city branding by utilising design factors from various perspectives (Sections 4.5, p. 129; 5.4; p. 143; 6.6, p. 164; 7.4, p. 179; 8.7, p. 199; 9.6, p. 211). The implications of the key findings in each topic in Sections 10.4.1 - 10.4.5 construct a conceptual platform of cities and their visual presentations. In other words, the representation of the cities via the design factors supports the creation of a coherent brand story in terms of highlighting the design factors of their selected primary cultural attractions. The results of the analysis offer further nuance on the application of design to city branding at the international scale: the connectivity between the design features via the brand communication of tourism websites and defining the cultural personality of a city.

Furthermore, the research from the major official and unofficial tourism websites of the selected international cities identified that brand is closely connected with a city's urban culture. It also reflects a city's facilities and contents for entertainment and consumption, such as museums; theatres; departments, shops and shopping malls; and theme parks.

In terms of using prominent design features of the central attractions as a communicative branding instrument, there is the possibility of including many different stakeholder groups in the discussion of visual representation, including designers, architects, and brand strategists who are commissioned from the city's local authority (Section 10.4.4, p. 226). For example, launching and promoting luxury architectural designs from internationally-leading brands, such as the franchised Tate Modern or Guggenheim, with a multiple of professionals in international cities can produce values and agendas from various perspectives for a city: the investment in art, the economic profitability, enhanced brand reputations and coherency with the city's vision and commitment to the cultural and historic environment.

Knowing this has applications for second-tier cities, as the creators of tourism websites can bring together different stakeholders to consider the content, design, and visual language used to convey a city's brand identity.

## 10.5 Summary

This chapter presented the core themes that emerged from the results of the key findings across this research. The key findings primarily identified the close relationships between city branding, cultural attractions and visual design in the case of internationally-acclaimed cities and Manchester. In order to know how to move and transmit these issues of city branding to a post-industrial city like Manchester, a number of main themes were proposed. These themes help to suggest how to measure out the design value impacts and their visual contribution in positioning the city brand in the sense of creating a visual image of a cultural city.

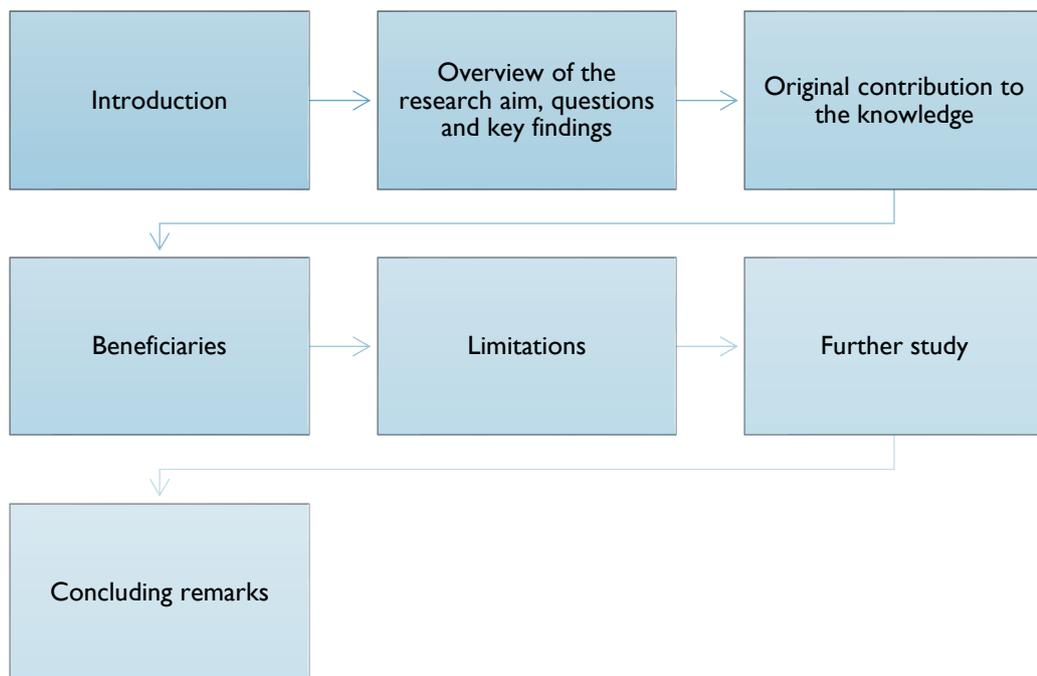
As the examples of the official and unofficial tourism websites clearly demonstrate: i) the global cities constantly reinvented and reshaped their design products when they rediscovered the cities' cultural heritage, with new businesses and interesting stories emerging and resulting in an increase in the numbers of tourists; ii) the creative process of fabricating a culturally sustainable city via the websites' design enhances and reinforces the cities' legibility in the tourism market; and iii) explicit city branding (city brand logo) and product branding (museums and fashion brands) management leads to a proactive city branding synergy.

The major themes with their conceptual points were discussed as follows: i) input of the design of the tourism websites and how the websites strategically curate the cities' primary cultural attractions as design features, such as fashionable museums being converted to a main driver in brand communication; ii) in-depth discussion of museums as a leading driver in city branding on global cities, and how lesser-known cities such as Manchester utilise their museums with the city's innovation heritage in renovating the brand characteristic; iii) rediscovery of local design and designers in reconstructing a visual personality of a city, and how local design can contribute to enhancing city branding from a distinctive perspective; iv) implications and application of the design features-based city branding framework in developing a further value and presentational uniqueness in positioning cities at the international scale; and v) reflection on how city brands are sensed and communicated

through their visual representation in the media and a suggestion of a further discussion theme on design features in city branding.

Lastly, from these findings, a realistic question for post-industrial cities emerges: How can previously less-established cultural cities, such as Manchester compete with the internationally-preferred destinations in the sense of design attractiveness (e.g. London and New York City)? For cities that have not built a strong foundation in (re)generating a substantial and creative magnetism, the need to make a readable visual identity by operating the city's design assets to compete with the globally fashionable cities in the web-based study is unquestionable.

## II CONCLUSIONS



**Figure 11.1** Chapter Map.

## 11.1 Introduction

This chapter aims to frame the conclusions to the body of the research contained within this thesis. Based upon the systematic evaluation of the results, the chapter consists of: i) an overview of the research aim , questions and key findings (Section 11.2); ii) a statement and justification of the original contribution to knowledge (Section 11.3); iii) applicable beneficiaries in academia and in practice (Section 11.4); iv) potential limitations resulting from the adapted research (Section 11.5); v) expandable topics for further research (Section 11.6); vi) generalisability of the result's topics within this research subject; and vii) concluding remarks regarding the outlines of this research (Section 11.7).

## 11.2 Overview of the Research Aim, Questions and Key Findings

The central purpose of this research is to investigate city branding via the design of tourism websites. The reason the design of tourism websites is used for the observation base is due to their technological and cultural attributes. Websites function as a mirror to the visual presentation of cultural attractions in a city. The research drew insight and knowledge from findings throughout the process of the developing contexts in answer to the three research questions:

**RQ01:** How does the design context of the tourism websites enhance city branding?

**RQ02:** How do the visual designs help to construct a city's brand personality?

**RQ03:** How do the design features of museums act as a vehicle for city branding?

To examine a fundamental topic of the research questions, five research propositions were formulated:

**RP01:** The strategic design of the tourism websites contributes to city branding.

**RP02:** Visuality of cultural attractions has been essential for city branding.

**RP03:** Use of cultural attractions for branding relates to producing the designs.

**RP04:** Museums function as the key design feature of city branding.

**RP05:** The visual context on the tourism websites enhances cultural brand personality.

### 11.2.1 Research conjunction between the pilot study and the primary research

To give an overview of the proposed research aim, questions and key findings, an evaluation of the contextual connections was summarised as follows:

First, a web-based study of major tourism websites of selected international cities was carried out to construct a solid contextual basis on which to establish the main case study. Amsterdam, London, New York City, Paris and Sydney were selected according to the rationale derived from the existing literature, the international city brand index, and project experience of the author. The results of the cross-analysis of the cities identified substantial answers to Research Questions 01, 02 and 03:

**RQ01:** The international cities produce their own brand messages with the use of design features of primary cultural attractions via the thematic visual text of tourism websites (Section 4.4, p. 127).

**RQ02:** The design features of selected primary attractions on the tourism websites represent the cities: a range of accumulated cultural heritage, creative ability and design infrastructure (Section 5.3, p. 134).

**RQ03:** i) iconic museums are the strongest branding tool for the majority of the cities; and ii) the visual features of international museums are strategically repackaged through the official tourism websites (Section 8.3, p. 184).

Manchester was chosen as a case study for its particular historical background as well as its representative role in the creation of new city image, and a series of qualitative interviews were conducted with leading experts in practice and academia for that reason. In Chapters 6.0 to 9.0, substantial answers to RQs 01, 02 and 03, were identified regarding detailed current topics in Manchester. This strengthened the contextual findings and helped fill the gaps of the web-based study. The key findings of the interviews were:

**RQ01:** i) Evolution in transforming city image from 'industrial-based' to 'culturally attractive' via visual design practice; and ii) a vision for Manchester as a cultural example through the visual design of the city's official and unofficial tourism websites (Sections 6.2, p. 147; 6.4, p. 155).

**RQ02:** Visual design transforms the city's brand image and cultural characteristics by enhancing Manchester's active branding (Section 6.4.2, p. 157).

**RQ03:** Museum production is effective in city branding and useful in competing with other major city brands. This presents both opportunities and dilemmas for stakeholders, infrastructure, marketing and exhibition content (Section 8.5.2, p. 190).

In essence, the key findings of the analysis obtained from the two forms of research provided substantial answers to the questions both explicitly and broadly. Consequently, the research helped to support the propositions.

### 11.2.2 Summary

The main contents of the key findings are as follows:

First, creating distinctive and authentic visual themes with the use of cultural attractions and transmitting them to the representation of tourism websites supports city branding. Second, design practice and its visual outcomes in the representation of cities enhance the formation of a personality for city branding. Third, using museums as a central cultural strategy for city branding is key for city brands in internationally-acclaimed cities. Reflecting such phenomena, museums can influence emerging new city brands owing to their particular industrial heritage.

### 11.3 Original Contribution to the Knowledge

The richness of the data-taken partly from the web-based study of international city brands via their representative tourism websites and partly from interviews conducted with highly experienced professionals who are active in Manchester's city branding, represent an original contribution to knowledge. The main focal topic is the design feature-based city branding framework in Chapter 9.0 (Section 9.8, p. 210) in terms of its potential contributions in applying the context of the framework to related theories and practices in design and in brand.

The primary aim and application of the framework is to present a visual summary of the context of the design features in city brand enhancement through clustering the comparative analysis between the international cities and Manchester. The two key points of the contribution to knowledge within the context of the framework are: i) the conceptual originality as a design-driven branding framework; and ii) the value represented by different areas in both theory and practice. In this sense, specifically, that the contextualised outcome of the content in the framework can contribute: i) in theory, to the field of study in visual design and in city branding; ii) in design practice, to visual and

commissioning designers for the design of tourism websites; and iii) in brand practice, to brand strategists and marketers working to promote cities.

Details of the main points within the original contribution to knowledge are as follows:

#### Reconceptualisation of the design's contribution to city branding

The main content of the framework presented a novel approach, from a design perspective: to construct the original concept of the author through systematically evaluating the research outcomes. In the review of the existing literature related to the design topics of tourism websites in city branding, a couple of knowledge gaps in the literature were identified (Section 9.8.3, p. 212). To provide substantial and reliable data to fill these gaps, the key topics of the framework in terms of clustering the main design features, and their connectivity to brand functions in visual city branding were identified. In this sense, the context of the framework can contribute to expanding the understanding and scope of the design issues in the abstract subject of *design*, from a cultural study and a tourism management perspective.

In particular, the existing literature used visual analysis as an analytical tool for investigating socio-cultural or political issues, or tourism trends. The framework illustrated the topics of design for city branding from a different perspective to that in the literature. Firstly, the visual analysis for the framework throughout Chapters 4.0 and 5.0 articulated that, and explained how, the leading international city brands extensively utilised a spectrum of design in order to create a specific visual theme with supporting textual materials. For example, a visual image of the vivid interior design in the British Museum and a textual emphasis on the reputation of the city's "home-grown" design and pride in "French designers".

Therefore, the development of the framework in the research can be considered an aspect of the original contribution to knowledge in city branding, specifically from a visual design perspective.

#### Framing visual design-initiative study into city branding practice

The other side of the framework in the original contribution to knowledge involves the potential for applying it to expand an existing theory and to vitalise related practices in city branding.

In theory, my idea of developing the framework attempted to suggest a design tool based on the methodological approaches of visual analysis (Barthes; Bateman, Figures 2.4, p. 48; 2.5, p. 53), and extend the framework into the area of strategic branding for cities. Specifically, in the web-based study, the methodological approaches of visual analysis can be utilised as a design tool in developing brand strategies aimed at positioning cities so that they have a clear action plan for competing with other cities at international level.

In practice, the aim of the framework was to add a value in the form of design attributes, from the macro and micro angles, into the fields of visual design and in city branding. For visual and commissioning designers and for branding strategists, the framework can be used as a methodological tool to reach a deeper understanding of how other international cities tend to deliver a brand message through representing strategically designed visual themes. In particular, cities founded on their industrial heritage can consider how to apply the framework to a restructuring of their original design heritage and its vision, in a bid to attract multiple audiences.

In essence, recapturing the framework in the context of the original contribution to knowledge suggested that it was not only possible, but also valuable, to use this key concept in the framework. Furthermore, it is hoped that consideration of the framework as part of the new perspective on design features will bring an independent and focused element into city branding, rather than a visual component in structuring a massive idea focusing on the presence of cultural heritage.

## 11.4 Beneficiaries

The four potential beneficiaries of the research are: i) culture/marketing team in the city governance, ii) practitioners of tourism websites, iii) marketing directors in museums, and iv) design researchers/design educators:

### Culture/marketing team in the city governance

The anticipated outcome of this research is to offer applicable and practical data that can generate guidelines for developing a city's brand persona. The key findings and their implications in terms of branding strategies for the international cities, e.g. thematic branding concepts using design features of cultural icons, can suggest how to develop visual representation of primary attractions via the online media. As this research identified in specific differentiations and commonalities of the international city brands,

recapturing a core essence of the primary visual culture of a city can be developed by creative and well-coordinated design. Primarily, professionals from related teams in a city's official marketing and communications bodies can adapt the findings of this research to understand how other cities are viewed on their official tourism websites and how it leads to positioning their city's image.

By using the findings of this research, policy makers in a culture/marketing department in a city can increase their investment in official tourism websites to develop strategic designs for city branding. Collaboration with outsourcing design agencies or the city's designers are two possible sides of a design system for city branding. One is an efficient and cost-effective way of improving the design of official websites in supporting city image, which would allow practitioners, e.g. marketers and editors, to be more focused on content development. In contrast, there are limitations to enhancing design factors, such as using more creatively expressed visual images without restricting the frequency of changing the design. If marketers or editors can more actively participate in the design process of tourism websites, they can reflect more state-of-the-art and uniquely designed content for local or international audiences.

Practitioners in agencies involved in city branding will be able to utilise the components of the research and adapt them to the design of tourism websites. For example, analysing commonalities and differences between cities in Northern England in terms of post-industrial cities, can modify some of the successful elements of visual design and text in creating more appealing promotional images or text via the media. Through understanding and analysing different cities' strategic designs of their official tourism websites, branding strategists can rethink their collaboration with designers and marketers of official tourism websites.

#### Practitioners of tourism websites

Website designers and marketers can utilise the promotional strategies of the cities studied in terms of visual and textual content [design] on tourism websites. In particular, practitioners of official tourism websites can develop a unique and attractive city image production through visual design quality. For example, the key findings of this research showed various interwoven topics of city image on the official and unofficial tourism websites. Understanding how competitors among similar cities design their official tourism websites in terms of scale, geographic location, reputation and popularity can provide an in-

depth appreciation of successful cities. Based on this knowledge, website designers and marketers can then develop unique content design for the cities' official tourism websites. The distinctiveness of website design in tourism can strengthen cities' visual identities, and deliver a clear message to tourists in general as well as those interested in the visual arts. One way of doing this can be seen as improving content from various sources (e.g. social media), thus reflecting current cultural themes and issues in cities.

#### Marketing directors in museums

Museum professionals, most specifically directors, are in a position to realise the potential validity of museums from the physical design to intangible services and creative exhibitions. This research showed the value and importance of museums in presenting the cultural side of cities and how it affects tourism in both international examples and in Manchester. The findings of this research also showed museum practitioners to be fully aware of the importance of good quality in the themes of their exhibitions, collections and curation, café facilities and other associated designs and services. Understanding and improving these essential factors in audience identification of high-quality museums can increase profits for the museums and for the cities' tourism in general. Also, this research could motivate directors to renovate communication systems and decision-making processes to change and improve their museum's exhibitions.

#### Design researchers/design educators

Design and branding engage with various disciplines to achieve better outcomes and to find out why certain strategies and factors influence successful or failed city branding. To reflect the phenomenon in research fields on city branding, academics involved in design teaching will be able to utilise this research to design curricula based on cross-disciplinary research. It can help academics in design support students' learning, design thinking and creativity in a variety of design contexts (e.g. co-developing a methodology or a visual presentation for a research on city branding). Furthermore, academics in design can influence how design researchers collaborate with researchers and practitioners in other disciplines in relation to city branding. Since this study on city branding broadly links design and management through culture and tourism websites, both design students and management students will be able to benefit from the research: students in both disciplines will be able to utilise the multi-disciplinary literature reviews and methods; for example, understanding the broader context and connections in creating city image via tourism websites opens the way for

further potential discoveries in the research. In design, expanding the concept of design from city image to websites can help students in comprehending the importance of design. In management, understanding how the content design of tourism websites can function in developing branding strategies will be useful.

## 11.5 Limitations

There are two main limitations of this research to be considered: i) theoretical framework; and ii) research methodology. It intends to consider further development from the results of this research in two ways: (a) to give further attention to crucial factors that potentially affect the certainty of the research findings; and (b) to extend the generalisation of the research results to similar subjects.

### Philosophical approach of the theoretical framework

The main limitation of the literature review is the collection of data from case studies of cultural urban planning and its impact on a city's image. Although a number of literature reviews on city image, city branding and museums and exhibitions do exist, specific cultural branding methodologies need to be researched. In particular, curation literature is very limited in its articulation of its theoretical basis. However, the use of a range of journal articles from various fields confirms the recent paradigm shift in the use of creative art curation of the museum in a city image context, though the lack of in-depth theory restricts the ability to provide accurate evidence on the topic. For further research, the theoretical influence of urban theorists and cultural production to explain the impact of curation on city image will be studied: i) Barthes' *Mythologies* (1957) in the context of city image and cultural production; ii) Lefebvre's *The Production of Space* (1991), which is one of the most influential theories for urban theorists, and iii) the theory of 'concept' to support creative curation for city image. This literature will give a solid theoretical foundation to show how interrelations between city image and new forms of curatorial methodology work.

### Applicability of the research scheme

If time had allowed, it would have been desirable to conduct additional surveys with practitioners in tourism websites of the five cities (London, New York City, Paris, Amsterdam and Sydney) to provide additional data; e.g. process of selecting, presenting and promoting main examples of attractions. Initially, the author intended to research seven cities for the web-based study and completed the research for Amsterdam, London, New York City, Paris,

Hong Kong, Singapore and Sydney. However, research on Hong Kong and Singapore was excluded due to a lack of correspondence in city originality, cultural scheme, focused areas of tourism and branding with the other five cities and the case study of Manchester. Additionally, if data were collected from more diverse organisations that represent stakeholders in Manchester branding (e.g. Manchester City Council), in-depth reasons and explanations on the topics of Manchester branding and their future plans could be researched.

## 11.6 Further Study

Additional research is desirable to progress the findings of the study further:

### Adaptation of communication theory to city brand message(s)

Studies could be extended to the emotional impact of visual images on tourism websites identifying a brand message of cities. This approach could be extended to such issues as the role of tourism websites in image communications. For example, the research on communication theory between senders and receivers (e.g. Shannon & Weaver, 1949) can be utilised in exploring relationships between sender and receiver in terms of designing and responding to messages from the visual design. In this potential study, the theory can help build a foundation of understanding of how intentional messages of senders (designers) can be delivered to receivers (viewers) through details of visual design (e.g. form, colour and theme). Subsequently, Barthes' mythology in terms of urban cultural artifacts and their image production can be adapted to city image. The majority of cultural attractions in cities are tangible and physical facilities. The attractions and design features, such as their architecture, show how window displays of shops and museum exhibitions can be studied with reference to theory. Thus, this potential study can be developed as part of the communication between the design of urban cultural production and audiences.

### Mixed approach with the marketing perspective

Existing literature from a marketing perspective is based on quantitative methods such as user surveys. For further research with this topic the author suggests a different form of quantitative approach. For instance, a series of surveys with official tourism website practitioners to investigate how they visually employ cities' official branding strategies and guidelines for the design of the websites. In the same manner, the approach could be extensively applied to the city authorities in relation to branding, e.g. a culture team, a

city marketing team or a branding consultancy. From the results of surveys from the two sectors, the research could address a broad sense of how city image is curated through the design intention of tourism websites. Exploration and observation of practitioners would provide valuable and detailed empirical data for further research. For example, participating in real work processes and decision-making procedures within teams in organisations, such as website design and marketing. Moreover, it could result in the development of generalisable design tools and systems about the city image-making process that could be applied within these organisations.

### Comparative case studies

Two comparative cities in the UK or in continental or cross-continental case studies could be considered. For example, a city of similar geographic size, reputation and popularity with tourists could be researched as a comparison case study. Although the author conducted a number of interviews about Manchester's image and primary attractions from a stakeholder's perspective, there are two topics that still need to be researched: i) specific decision-making procedures about museum exhibition themes; and ii) locally successful and popular, but internationally less-familiar, cultural attractions such as music or club events or other distinctive forms within a sub-culture heritage. Based on the case studies, new knowledge about effective case studies in city branding can be developed. For example, setting unique criteria in the selection of cities, attractions, venues and stakeholders can be used in further studies. Nonetheless, this case study will help to better understand what and who is involved in city branding via tourism websites.

In short, the above agenda for further research aims to set more precise boundaries and stimulating methodological approaches to city image via the design of tourism websites. It would also suggest the value in applying design management to organisations in relation to city branding.

## 11.7 Concluding Remarks

In this section, the author would like to propose further thoughts about the research: *cultural city branding and its visual representation via tourism websites:*

Overall, the research concluded that the original city image could be blended into a new one through the fusion of visible designs that are shared between the audience and stakeholders in the development of branding. As discussed in this thesis, the ultimate aim

of city branding is to help a city be recognised as a culturally vibrant place with a diversity of content of cultural attractions. This requires a sufficient amount of time, intellectual and practical know-how, and practice. Furthermore, the cultural side of cities depends on a host of different decision-makers and stakeholders, such as local residents, creative professionals and policy makers (Vivant, 2011; Anholt, 2007; Florida, 2004; Landry, 2000).

Fundamental issues of producing a cultural city image should consider the historical background, preservation of cultural heritage, and constant development and promotion of the heritage, nationally and internationally, while acknowledging the present and future of cities and citizens. Throughout this research, significant issues emerged of two aspects of creating a city brand via the design of tourism websites: i) the globally successful cities, such as London and New York City constantly improve their city image via the content development of their tourism websites. The websites rapidly respond to tourists' needs through developing attractions and introducing them to the tourism market; and ii) similarly, post-industrial cities, such as Manchester are clearly aware of the importance and competitiveness among cities in terms of cultural city image making.

For example, the cities could pay more attention when it comes to developing city image via official tourism websites; co-development of marketing strategies as to how to improve a relationship between official tourism websites and small and lesser-known museums in enriching the city image in tourism. The case study explicitly showed that the city seeks to shift images from the past to a culturally exciting present/future. In doing so, what is Manchester leaving out of their brand story? What do they not want to show on their tourism websites and why is this important to acknowledge when thinking about a city's brand or image? Moreover, the city is keen to be considered as a culturally vibrant city so the city image will help to (re)build the city's visual identity and increase tourism. The interviews with practitioners and academics explained that Manchester is still struggling with its less established reputation and the shortage of major attractions to be recognised as a culturally legible city. To improve the city's image, diverse professionals in creative industries such as museums and tourism websites are trying to enhance the city's image by developing and promoting the city's attractions and events with creative and unique themes.

This interaction between city image, city branding and culture involves design creativity. Evidence of design creativity can be shown through the presentation of content on the tourism websites. Understanding the impact of good design in the visual creation of a

cultural city image can be part of the basis for developing a creative design approach to enhance a city's 'cultural' image. Therefore, the major findings and the themes of the discussion of this research can be a meaningful contribution in terms of exploring city branding, through the examination of the design of tourism websites.

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## APPENDICES

- A. Glossary
- B. Interview Guide
- C. A Sample of Coding Analysis
- D. Primary Context on the Design Features in City Branding Used in the Thesis
- E. Cross-Analysis of the Official Tourism Websites of the International City Brands:  
Description of the Attributes
- F. Cross-Analysis of the Promoted Key Design Features: The Textual Examples
- G. The Positioning of Museums, Galleries and Exhibitions in the Attributes
- H. Measurement of Primary Categories
- I. Cross-Analysis of the Visual Text on the Official and Unofficial Tourism Websites of  
the International City Brands
- J. Cross-Analysis of the Coherence between the Visual and Textual Messages on  
Branding

## A. Glossary

Two groups were systematically designed: i) Part One was developed by me based on my understanding and interpretation about the terms; and ii) Part Two was constructed through researching existing literature.

### Key words

- Brand message
- City branding
- Design
- Image-making
- Strategy
- Visual text

## Part 01.

**Architectural practice:** Use of architectural design in reshaping cities' images through redesigning undeveloped or deteriorated areas and buildings: Planning, designing, engineering, constructing, marketing a visual form and style of architecture, e.g. iconic contemporary buildings, refurbished streets and districts.

**Brand function:** Central elements of branding that function to communicate with specific targets, thanks to messages of visual design features: brand image creation, positioning and storytelling etc.

**Brand message:** Potential meanings and implications of a city in terms of selected primary cultural attractions in the city. The examples of frequently promoted attractions or associated events via a visual window function to deliver an intentional message, from a city's stance, e.g. the focus on museums for London via its official tourism website.

**City brand heritage:** An extended definition of cultural heritage within a city brand including design products, designers and brands of design product. Part of the scope of city brand heritage addresses architectural design, commercial products, city-based designers and "home-grown" global brands with their origins in the city.

**City brand image:** A visual image of a city as a destination, which characterises a part of the city's visual identity. It originates along two channels: i) frequently promoted images via the media and in print; and ii) images perceived by the audience through their experiences or imagination of certain sources. The image representations include the natural environment, history, industrial heritage, cultural attractions and contemporary design.

**City brand personality:** A refined and subsequent concept of the idea of city brand identity. A defined and specific characteristic of a city that exerts a powerful influence on visits to the destination. Building a city brand personality is connected to the enhancement of a positive image of a city for its audience.

**City brand portfolio:** A list of the existing content of primary attractions that together comprise a city's cultural and design heritage. The main examples of a brand portfolio reflect topics visually curated via tourism websites, and visual materials frequently used for promoting a city.

**City brand vision:** Imagining, planning and shaping a positive future of a sustainable city as a valuable brand with important cultural assets including design features of primary attractions.

**City's visual/cultural identity:** Readable characteristics determine, visually or culturally, what the city is as a brand. Urban culture production, such as art museums, are one of the central communication tools in the construction of a brand identity for cities.

**Creative originality:** A city-driven creative infrastructure of businesses, practitioners and cultural heritage that influence the development and sustainability of the field of design. Consequently, it plays a role in creating the identity of a city in terms of curated visuality.

**Cultural city:** Defining a city as a culturally distinct venue with a solid infrastructure and sufficient commercial attractions. It reflects a global phenomenon of city branding to meet the increasing number of people wanting creative tourism, who actively seek a place of originality, excitement and local creativity.

**Cultural city branding:** The process of activity in the construction of a city as an individual brand with a culturally-attractive image. The conceived brand is then encoded in various semiotic modes, including language and images, and is communicated via the media.

**Curating design:** Design process of selecting, organising and displaying visual images and text for the presentation of tourism websites. The main idea of curating design in characterising city brand personality involves conceptualisation, visualisation and thematisation.

**Design asset:** An extended definition of cultural heritage in a city. Valuable and sustainable designs as considered part of the assets belong to a city. These designs can either be tangible (e.g. architectural design or fashion products) or intangible (e.g. designers, design technologies or a visual style).

**Design communication:** A meaning or a message from a visual feature of design that incorporates a method of communication with multiple audiences in the context of city branding. Ultimately, successful design communication incorporates brand communication, and this is planned at the research stage.

**Design context:** Topics of design in a city which involve visual design features and promotional texts as a means of (re)branding hard and soft design to enhance visual city

branding. For example, major museums, world-class and local fashion designers and commercial products ranging from a single department store to a wholly redesigned street.

**Design features:** Visual and contextual elements, which define the form, purpose, meaning and value of the design product for city branding through tourism media.

**Design feature-based city branding framework:** A conceptualised idea that frames the roles and impacts of design features in the context of city branding. From the content of the framework, part of the scope of the brand's essences lies in identifying some of the brand strategies in terms of design culture.

**Heritage asset:** A tangible asset for a place, city or nation, which is accumulated over a significant period of time. It addresses distinguished achievements of history, arts, science, technology, geography or the environment, which have maintained its notable contribution to culture and knowledge.

**Image production:** Visual images of a city that are presented via the promotional media for city branding. Utilisation of visual features of cultural attractions and architectural design is one of the most common strategies in producing an attractive city image.

**Primary attractions:** Cultural attractions based upon heritage, popularity and reputation, which are most frequently promoted to tourists via the media: e.g. museums, theatres, shops or parks.

**Premium design:** Frequently-cited examples of specifically selected design features of attractions in city branding. It indicates the main content of the visual and textual themes used in promoting the city.

**Sensing a city brand:** Emotional responses to a specific city through either direct or indirect experiences of the unique environment and local visual attractions.

**Stakeholders in city branding:** A person, community or organisation who owns a share in city branding and its profitability. In this thesis, a list of the major collaborative stakeholders in the promotion of the city as a culturally visible venue includes: practitioners in the fields of tourism websites, branding agencies, public companies, city councils and cultural institutions.

**Strategic design:** A design plan or design action to achieve a specific end by enhancing city branding. It intends to trigger a specific market and positive responses from an audience.

**Strategic branding:** Strategic planning and marketed city branding tactics aim to increase its brand value to achieve future economic profit at the international level.

**Text design:** Supporting elements in word form for extensive city branding, such as a promotional heading of a product advertisement in association with a central theme of selected key visual images on tourism websites.

**Visual city branding:** Focus on the effectiveness of visual images conveyed through the design features in accelerating city branding via the media. Communicating with visual text instantly delivers a message about the prime design assets of a city.

**Visual context:** Contents and potential messages of visual images, e.g. photos or paintings and associated words, which create a story or theme on tourism websites for communicating city branding visually to audiences.

**Visual design practice:** The use of design for city image improvement by the stakeholders engaging in city branding. Related to planning, engineering and construction, it includes architectural design and refurbishment of districts to refine the cultural, social and visual environment of a city.

## Part 02.

**Branding** (Koller, 2008: 431): Involves the construction of a brand, i.e., the development of a brand “personality” that is reduced to a set of core values. The brand thus conceived is then encoded in various semiotic modes, including language and images, and communicated in discourse.

**City image** (Ashworth and Goodall, 1989): Organisations now realised that successful marketing lies not in the product but in the crafted images. Taking the cue from the product marketing discipline, the importance of image is transplanted onto city marketing, through tourism circle where destination image has a powerful influence in the purchasing process.

**Curation** (Oxford Dictionary): Select, organise, and look after the items in collection or exhibition.

**Design** (Oxford Dictionary; Lawson, 2006: 3): A plan or drawing produced to show the look and function or workings of a building, garment or other object before it is made. Both a noun and a verb and can refer either to the end product or to the process.

**Identity** (Oxford Dictionary): The characteristics determining who or what a person or thing is.

**Image** (Harmaakorpi, 2008: 173): Usually means the public view formed of a person, company or community, which is often purposefully developed and which is directed at selected target groups.

**Stakeholders** (Cambridge Dictionaries Online): (1) A person or group of people who own a share in a business. (2) A person such as an employee, customer, or citizen who is involved with an organisation, society, etc. and therefore has responsibilities towards it and an interest in its success.

**Strategy** (Wylie, 1989; Gray, 2015: 24): A plan of action designed in order to achieve some end; a purpose together with a system of measurement for its accomplishment. In modern English, ‘strategy’ and ‘strategic’ have attracted up-market and respectful devotees who have discovered that undisciplined employment of the idea of strategy triggers positive responses from an audience.

**Vision** (Cambridge Dictionaries Online): The ability to imagine how a country, society, industry, etc. could develop in the future and to plan for this.

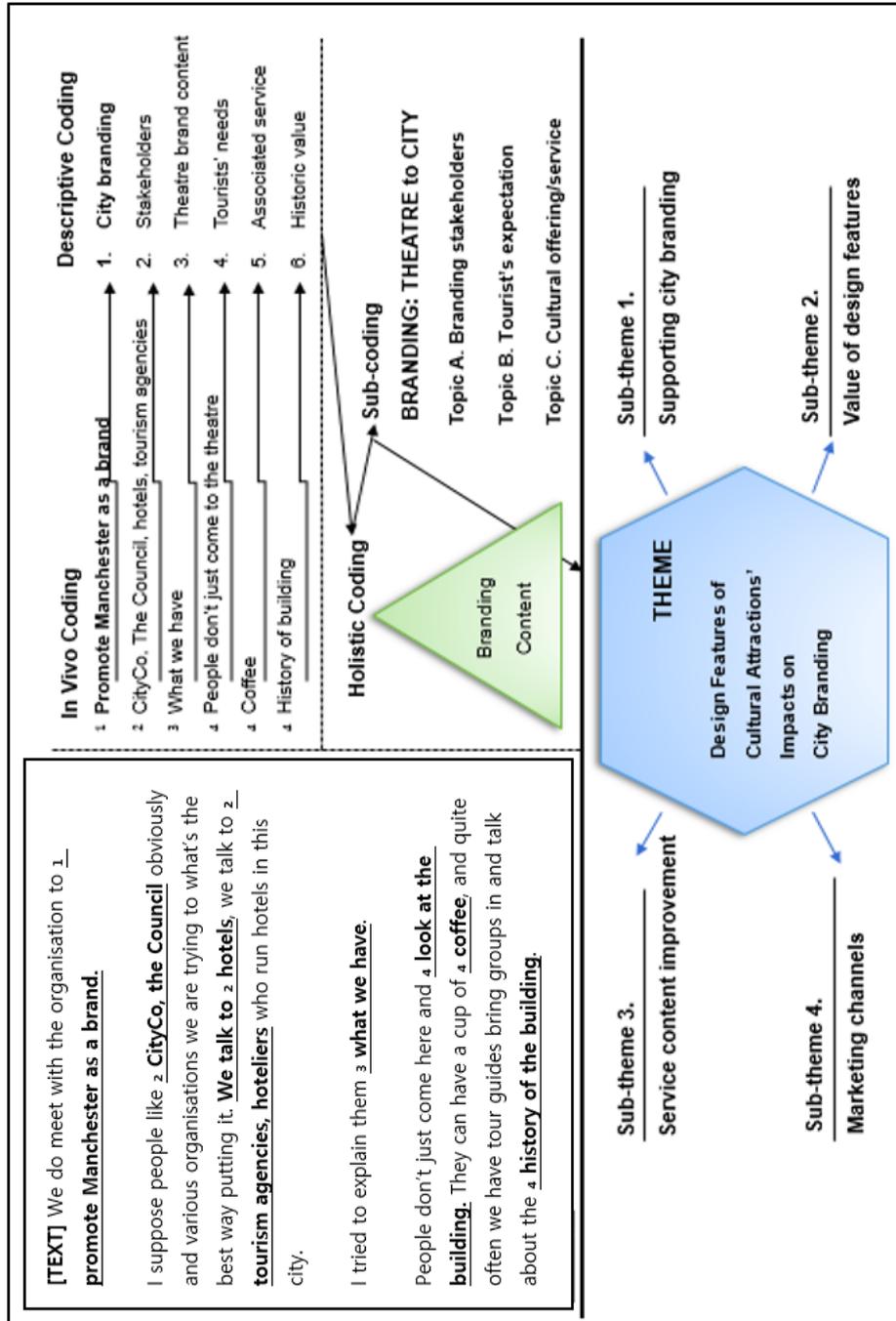
## B. Interview Guide

Time: 30 minutes / Mode: face-to-face

**Outline Questions:** The questions consist of two forms: i) pre-structured common questions before the interviews; and ii) improvised questions during the conversations with the interviewees (IP).

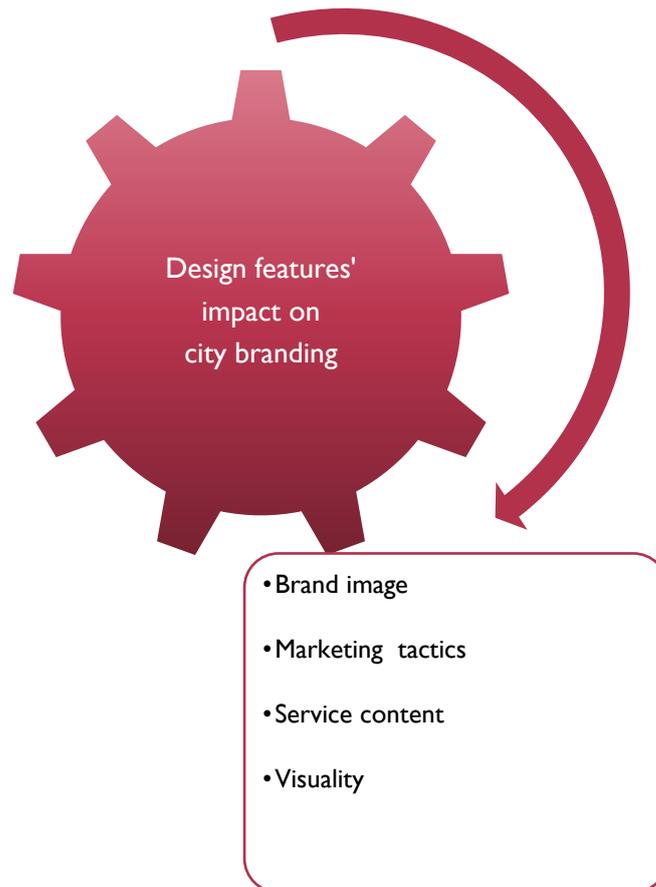
Questions	Category of topics
<b>Group 01</b>	<b>Stakeholder</b>
What's your role in this organisation?	Official role
What is the role of your organisation relating Manchester's image?	City image
How does your organisation support the Manchester brand?	Brand engagement
How do academics contribute to the city's branding? (IP)	Brand enhancement
<b>Group 02</b>	<b>City image</b>
What are the four key terms associated with Manchester's image?	Perceived image
What image of the city is presented in official/unofficial tourism website?	Media presentation
<b>Group 03</b>	<b>Primary attractions</b>
What are the primary attractions in Manchester?	Key players
What are the popular cultural attractions in Manchester? Would you say they are the primary attractions in Manchester?	Term definition
<b>Group 04</b>	<b>Design</b>
Who are the members of your team that come up with content for Manchester's official/unofficial tourism website? [probe for roles and names] What are they actively promoting?	- Team structure - Key content
How does your team make decisions about the website design? (IP) How does your team make decisions about the exhibition theme? (IP)	Decision-making
How do you select the content and visual images? (IP)	Content development
Do you have a guideline for your website design? (IP)	Guidelines
What is the role of architectural design in promoting the city's image?	Role in city image
How do the exhibition themes in museums support the city's branding? (IP)	Content
<b>Group 05</b>	<b>Branding</b>
How is the city's brand different from product brands in terms of the branding procedure and its impact? (IP)	City branding procedure
What does the term "high-profile" mean for your theatre? (IP)	Reputation
What is your strategy for improving the library to support Manchester's branding?	Strategy development

# A Sample of Coding Analysis



NB: interview number 6.

## Key Context on Design Features of Cultural Attractions in City Branding



## Summary of the Key Terms of Manchester's Image

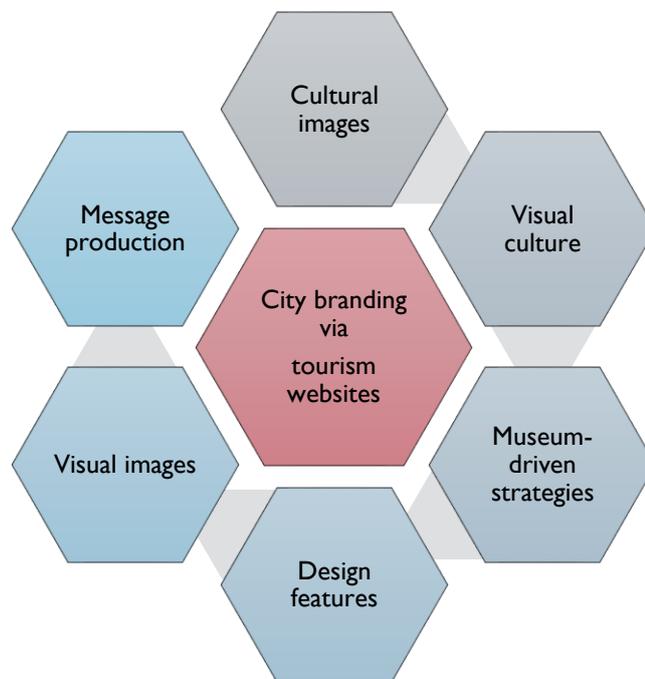
Interview No.	Key term 1	Key term 2	Key term 3	Key term 4
1	Original	Modern	Cultural	Historical
2	Sport	Night life	Shopping	Cultural
3	Music	Eat	History of Industrial Revolution	History of contemporary science
4	Arts	Expanding	Dynamic	Northern Quarter
5	Edge	Young	Music	Intelligent
6	Character	Culturally exciting	Friendliness	Actual physical environment
7	Innovation	Creativity	Rain	Cosmopolitan
8	Shock City	Cold War city	Science city	Play city
9	Original	Modern	Industrious	Progressive
10	Cultural	Sport	Architecture	Nightlife

Source: the interviews.

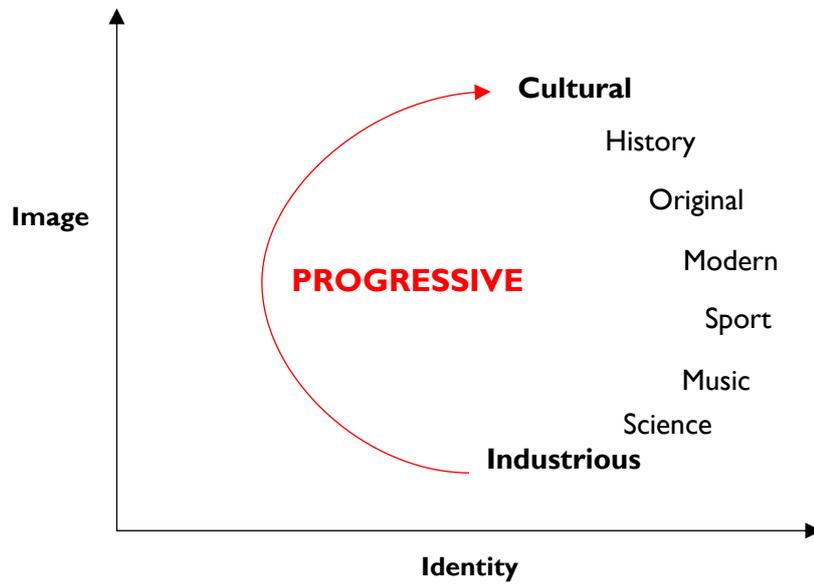
## C. Primary Context on the Design Features in City Branding Used in the Thesis

- Contextual Mapping Exercise
- Matrix of Manchester's Image
- Design-Based Brand Platform
- Key Brand Features of Museums for City Branding
- Design Function of Museums for Branding
- Matrix of the Core Design Features in City Branding
- Design Feature-Based City Branding Framework

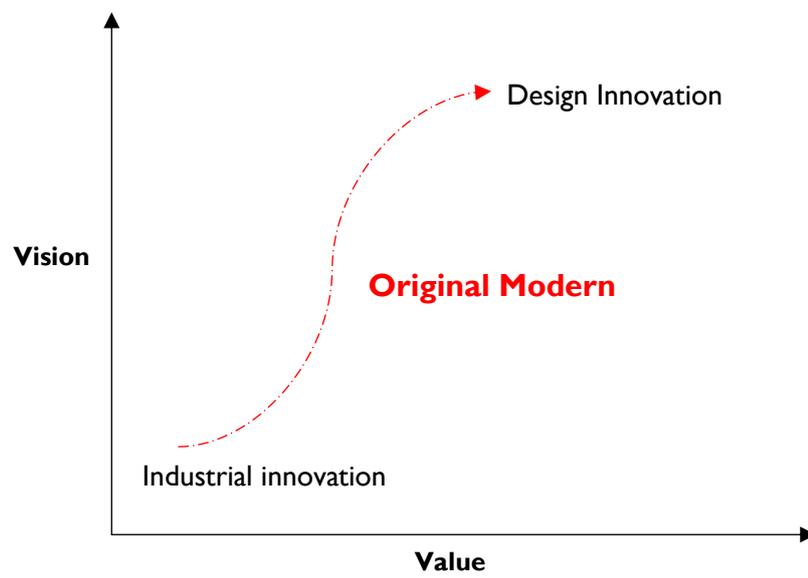
## Contextual Mapping Exercise



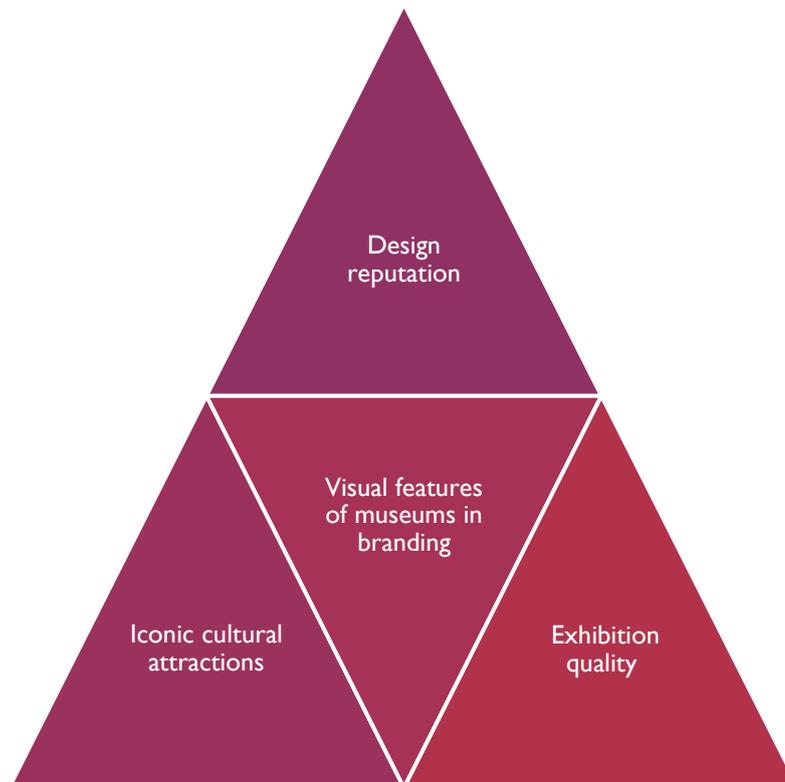
# Matrix of Manchester's Image



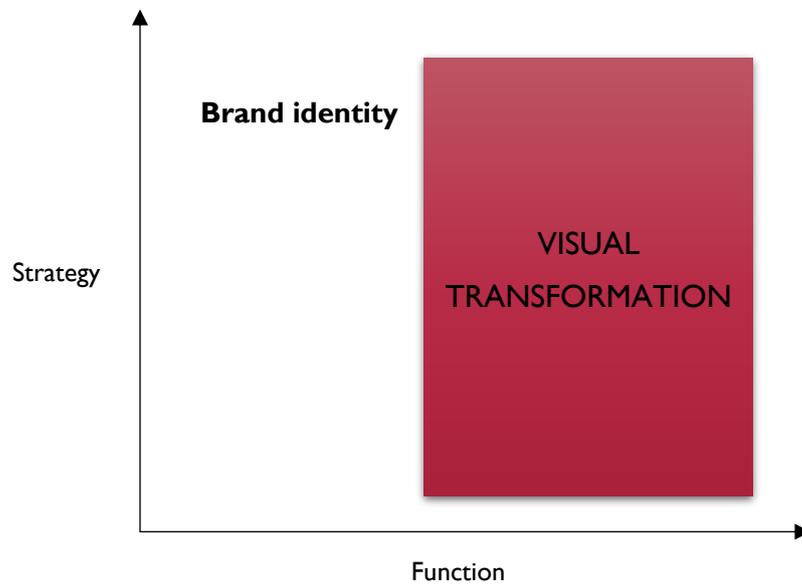
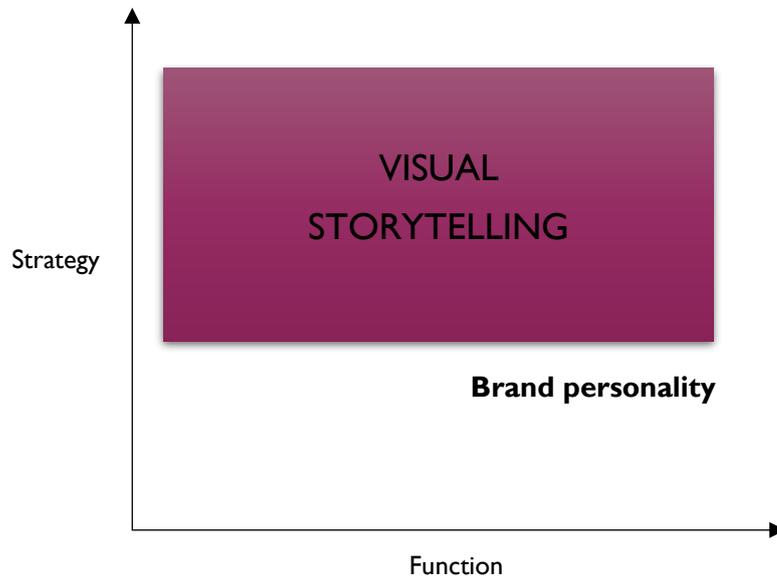
## Design-Based Brand Platform in Manchester



## Key Brand Features of Museums for City Branding

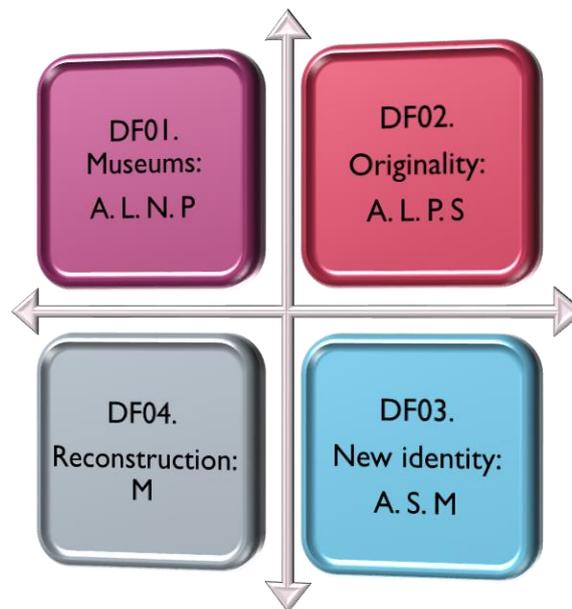


## Design Function of Museums for Branding



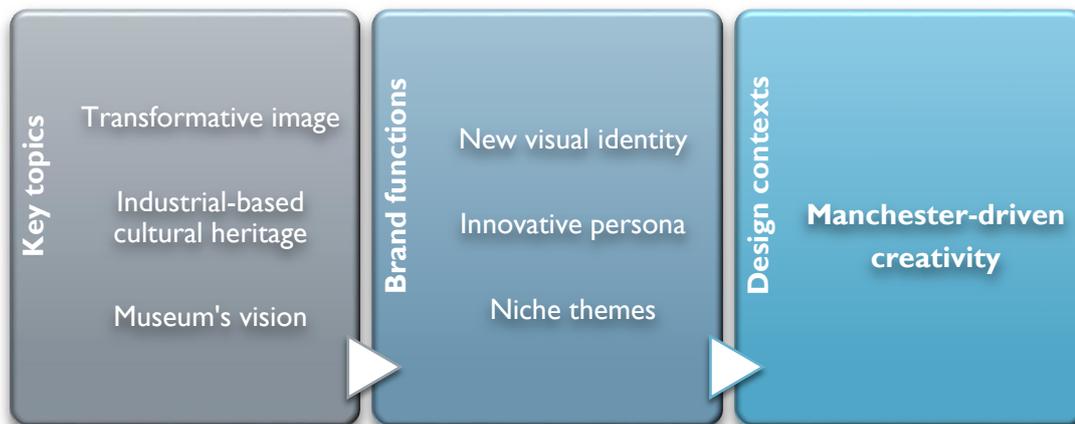
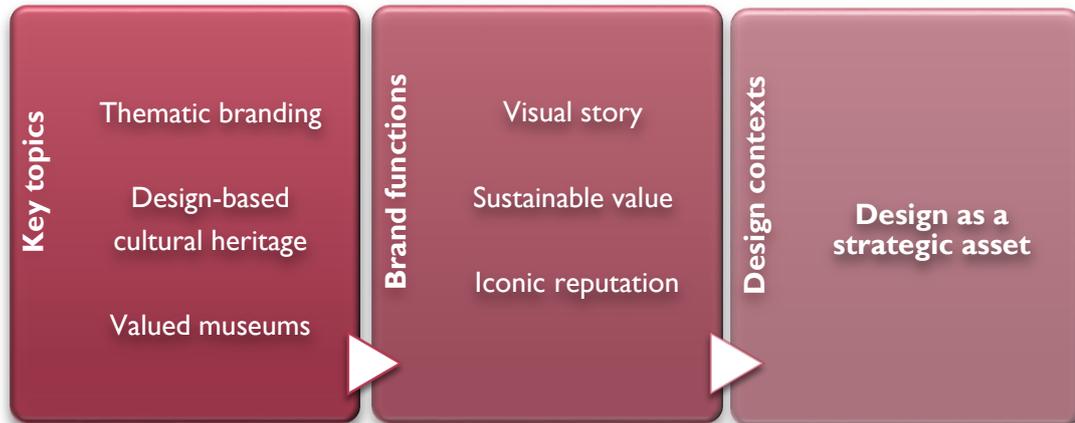
NB: (top to bottom) Design Function of Museums for Branding International Cities: Amsterdam, London, New York City, Paris and Sydney; Design Function of Museums for Branding Manchester.

## Matrix of the Core Design Features in City Branding



NB: DF (design feature); A (Amsterdam); L (London); M (Manchester); N (New York City); P (Paris); S (Sydney).

## Design Feature-Based City Branding Framework



NB: (top) International cities; (bottom) Manchester.

## D. Cross-Analysis of the Official Tourism Websites of the International City Brands: Description of the Attributes

The official tourism websites are composed of a range of various attributes from What's On which informs a calendar of current major events to shopping, including fashion, jewellery, and bookstores. Each city in this study chooses different and similar titles, and focuses on their strengths. The titles form a category, which consists of the cultural productions such as museums/galleries. In this section, the general description of the most informative titles on the websites will be examined. The following description of the attributes involves the examples of Hong Kong and Sydney, as the original content of the research involved the two cities.

**Art & Culture & Entertainment:** The category explains the cities' main cultural activities, including art exhibitions, movies, musicals, festivals, and sport events. Some cities e.g. New York City uses the title of Art & Culture whilst others categorise in a different sense. For example, Hong Kong uses 'Art & Performance' and, Singapore names as 'Arts & Entertainment'. Exhibitions in museums and galleries are the major theme, and that reflects the various themes of the exhibitions from the major museums and galleries. In the website of London, there is no title of 'Art & Culture', but 'Theatre' and 'Art & Exhibitions' are the categories. In Sydney's, 'History of Sydney', 'World Heritage', and 'Aboriginal culture', 'Spas and Wellbeing' and 'Events' are included in the section.

**Art and Exhibitions:** The category consists of current exhibitions and the relevant activities of the museums and galleries. 'Exhibitions' is an independent category in some cities: 'Art and Exhibition' in London and 'Exhibitions' in Paris. In particular, London uses the section to introduce the dynamism of museums and galleries as major cultural institutions of the city. For example, the search engines under the category are more varied than other cities' such as 'Art Fair' and 'Auction'. From blockbuster exhibitions at iconic museums/galleries to small scale exhibitions in local galleries all are introduced.

**Beauty & Wellness:** The category is related to wellbeing such as spa. In London, the section is included in the section of 'Sport'. In Sydney, 'Spas and Wellbeing' is shown as the section, and it is included in the category of 'Art and Culture'. In Hong Kong and Singapore's, the section of 'Beauty & Wellness' is separated from the section of sport.

**Concerts:** The range of music performance from jazz to classic is the theme. Organising concerts with performers from local artists to internationally well-known celebrities attracts tourists. Both outdoor and indoor concerts are introduced. The lists of summer programs in iconic places of New York, London and Paris are highlighted on the websites.

**Design:** This category is shown on Singapore's which features the new statement on design value of the city. In the section of 'Your New Singapore-Design & Architecture (from the table on the website), the heading explains how the city considers the importance of design and their design quality on museums and architecture of the city. The following quote is the reference:

"Exceptional concepts with practical designs: Singapore may not be a large city, but there's no lack of design and architecture marvels on the island. Celebrate engineering wonders with buildings and monuments designed by renowned architects and admire noteworthy landmarks with exceptional aesthetic appeal, spread across the city. You also find the finest in architectural masterpieces, providing inspiration for design excellence"  
([www.yoursingapore.com](http://www.yoursingapore.com)).

**Dining:** A diverse and multi-cultural inspiration in food and drink culture. The main attractions are the celebrity chef restaurants in London, cooking classes, and traditional local food restaurants. The interior and concept of specially designed concept restaurants show the cities' design aspect.

**Events & Festivals:** The category highlights the events and festivals of the cities, from film festivals to special sport events. In general, the events and festivals in summer are the key attractions. The titles of this category are different in different cities, they are: 'Special Events' in London, 'Summer Events' in NYC, 'Celebrations & Festivals' in Paris, 'Festivals in Amsterdam', 'Outdoor Entertainment' in Sydney, 'Events & Festivals' in Hong Kong, and 'Cultural Festivals' in Singapore. The range of the theme, from royal ceremonies to outdoor movie theatres, shows the city's cultural heritage. On London's website, it is the historical events e.g. celebration of The Queen's Coronation day; in New York City's, the theme includes 'Celebration Brooklyn' and 'the Museum Mile Festival'; in Hong Kong, 'Hong Kong Chinese New Year Celebration' and 'Dining Events and Award'; and Amsterdam's 'Fashion Week'.

**Fairs & Trade Show:** Opening International fairs and trade shows to the public is the theme. In the website of Paris, there are over 1600 fairs with a rich variety of themes, from

agriculture, hotels and restaurants to perfumes and cosmetics. In Hong Kong's, expanding the scale of the 'Food Expo' in summer and 'Wine Auctions' as international business reflects the food culture market of the city.

**Heritage:** The historical buildings and places are the theme of the section. World heritage in London and Sydney show the important history of the cities. Cultural heritage and declared monuments in Hong Kong, and the colonial heritage sites and traits in Singapore are the main heritage attractions.

**Itineraries:** A type of tour for day out sightseeing or outdoor activities in the venue of major cultural attractions. In general, the program is designed in terms of a number of days and playful attractions for families. Popular tourism places such as museums, iconic architecture and monuments, palaces, zoos, parks, and museums are suggested.

**Markets:** Historical street markets and indoor markets are introduced as part of experiencing shopping. The major items of the markets are clothes, art and antiques, and food.

**Monuments:** The historic value and storytelling of the monuments are the major themes. On the website of Paris, institutional buildings, castles, and unusual monuments are defined as monuments. The role of the symbolic monuments e.g. Eiffel Tower is capturing the history and beauty of the city and the nation.

**Museums/Galleries:** The major types of museums are science museums, historical museums and art museums. Both museums and galleries are the central attractions in the cities in terms of art and culture. The categorisation of museums and galleries is placed in different sections of the cities; 'Arts & Exhibitions' in London, 'Arts, Culture & Entertainment' in NYC, 'Exhibitions' in Paris, 'Arts & Culture' in Sydney, 'Arts & Performance in Hong Kong, and 'Arts & Entertainment' in Singapore. In the websites of Hong Kong and Singapore, museums are allocated in the section of 'Heritage'. The titles of museums are different in some cities; arts museums in Hong Kong and Singapore instead of museums. The websites of London, New York and Singapore introduce 'museums and galleries' as a set. 'Museums' in Sydney and 'Arts Museums' in Hong Kong, and art museums and galleries are separately categorised in Singapore.

**Must-See:** The category informs tourists about the most popular attractions which represent the cities. The 'Top 10 Attractions' of the cities plays a role as the fundamental cultural attractions. There are two types of major attractions in terms of iconic architecture. One is

historical outstanding buildings such as Buckingham Palace in London, the Empire State Building in New York City, and the Eiffel Tower in Paris. Another is world-famous museums such as the Metropolitan Museum in NYC and British Museum in London. Additionally, London and other cities use the title of 'Top 10 Attractions': Paris uses 'What to See': Amsterdam uses 'Attractions & Sights': Hong Kong uses 'Highlight Attractions'.

**Night Life:** The entertainment attractions are clubbing, cabarets, wine bars and so on. This category Introduces the cities' club culture and entertainment facilities at night. In London and New York, a variety of the clubs is shown from university students' clubs to comedy clubs.

**Outdoor Activities:** Similar to itineraries.

**Place of Worship:** A range of religious places in different culture such as temples, cathedrals, Mosques and chapels for worship. On Paris' and Hong Kong's, this category exists.

**Shopping:** The historic and culturally vibrant shopping districts and streets, including department stores, markets, shopping centres, and local shops. Historic architecture, trendy fashion events, and shopping streets attract tourists. The commonalities of the shopping culture of the cities are high street fashion, luxury brands, vintage, and local designers. The category of 'Shopping' focuses on international retail fashion brands. Bookstores, jewellery, home furnishing (fabrics and ceramics), and art museum shops are also the main categories. Increasingly, local designers e.g. 'Dutch Design' in Amsterdam and 'Sydney Fashion Designers' are introduced. Experiencing tour of real shops is a part of the tourism, such as 'Gotham's Garment Center' in NYC and 'the Manly Tour', a bride-to-be tour in Sydney. Ready-to-wear in Paris, Royal brands in London, and gourmet food shops in Sydney show the cities' cultural heritage in shopping. In Singapore, Holland Village, a trendy culture spot of cafes, fashion stores and art galleries and Little India market are featured as the shopping areas.

**Shows:** The section is shown on the website of Paris as 'Theatres'.

**Sightseeing Tours:** The section shows the types of tours in terms of transportation and themes e.g. bus tours, cruise tours, cycling tours, driver tours and walking tours. The themes of the tours are the cultural heritage, specific cultural districts or content in the cities, such as the Buckingham Palace tour in London and 'Harlem Spirituals' in New York City. In Sydney,

Paris and New York, the themes of their food/cooking tour are designed as a variety of entertainment attractions, e.g. Asian Food Bus Tour in NYC and Gourmet Safaris in Sydney.

**Sport:** The section is a variety of popular sports game of the cities. The use of the titles for sport is different in each city. For example, 'Sport' in London, 'Summer Events' in NYC, 'Sports & Games' in Paris, 'Beauty & Wellness' in Amsterdam, and 'Sports & Recreation' both in Hong Kong and Singapore. The events of the sport are held at the popular parks and stadiums. Brand sponsorships e.g. Sainsbury's Anniversary Games in London are introduced as a part of the major events.

**Theatres:** Performance of plays, musicals, and other forms of art and music are described in the category. In London's the title of 'Theatre' is one of the major cultural attractions with various themes from children's theatres to historic pub theatres. In New York City's, 'Broadway' represents the cultural district of theatres. In Sydney's, 'Theatre & Shows' introduces a variety of the programs. In both London's and New York City's, the programs of theatre district tours are some part of their sightseeing tourism sections.

**Transportation & Travel Card:** The Oyster card in London, Paris Pass, and I Amsterdam City Card are the recognisable travel cards. All the cards show the visual design quality with the service. The Paris Pass has three types of cards such as shopping, museum and travel. The I Amsterdam city card uses the brand slogan 'I Amsterdam' for the name of the card.

**What's On:** The category is an introduction of current major events in different sectors, from special art exhibitions to sport events in summer. London, Amsterdam and Singapore use the title of 'What's On' as a primary category. Paris uses 'Explore Major Events'. In the category, London focuses on theatre, art and exhibitions, special events, sport and London's next big events. Amsterdam highlights festivals & events, exhibitions, music, museums, and Singapore focuses their categories in a broad sense; arts and culture, dining, family, nightlife, sports, nature and wildlife, beauty and wellness and entertainment. Museum exhibitions and sport are the commonalities between the cities.

## E. Cross-Analysis of the Promoted Key Design Features: The Textual Examples

The categorisation of the frequently cited textual examples on the official tourism websites of the five international cities:

- Amsterdam
- London
- New York City
- Paris
- Sydney

## London: The Connectivity between the Examples in Frequency and the Main Message of the Text

The following tables and figure shows the example of London's official tourism website; the connectivity between the most frequently cited examples and the main message in the analysis of the text. The data of the origin of the examples shows the historical meaning and the value of the examples, which represent the city's major cultural attractions.

- **London 01: a brand portfolio of primary attractions on London's official tourism website**
- **London 02: the most frequently cited examples on London's official tourism website**
- **London 03: the statistics of the most frequently cited examples of primary attractions from London's official tourism website**

NB: Titles of categories: 'Museums' (museums/galleries), 'Art centres' (performing-art centres), 'Entertainment' (entertainment facilities), 'Sports' (sport facilities).

## London 01: A Brand Portfolio of Primary Attractions on London's Official Tourism Website

	Example	History	Types of attraction		Example	History (established/opened year)	Types of attraction
1	Greenwich	15 <sup>th</sup> century (palace)	Historic place	19	Museum of London	1976	Museum
2	V & A Museum	1852	Museum	20	National Portrait Gallery	1856	Gallery
3	British Museum	1753	Museum	21	Royal Museums Greenwich	1676 (Royal Observatory)	Museum
4	Natural History Museum	1881	Museum	22	Fortnum & Mason	1707	Tea store
5	Science Museum	1857	Museum	23	Selfridge & Co.	1909	Department
6	Hyde Park	1637	Park	24	Alfries Antique Market	1976	Market
7	Tate Modern	2000	Gallery	25	Royal Botanical Garden	1759	Garden
8	National Maritime Museum	1937	Museum	26	Westminster Abbey	1918	Historic building
9	Regent's Park	1835	Park	27	Notting Hill	1820s	Cultural district
10	Kew	19 <sup>th</sup> century	Historic place	28	Camden Lock Market	1970s	Market
11	Madame Tussauds	1884	Museum	29	Brick Lane Market	20 <sup>th</sup> century	Market
12	National Gallery	1824	Gallery	30	Sherlock Holmes	1887 (first publication)	Literary character
13	Buckingham Palace	1761	Palace	31	Kate Middleton	2011 (wedding)	The Royal family
14	Covent Garden	1552	Cultural district	32	Wimbledon	1877 (tennis) 1928 (race stadium)	Sport stadium
15	Kensington Palace	17 <sup>th</sup> century	Palace	33	Harrods	1834	Department
16	Westfield London	2008	Shopping mall	34	Harvey Nichols	1831	Department
17	London Eye	1999	Entertainment	35	Ritz	1906	Hotel
18	Tower of London	1066	Historic building	36	House of Fraser	1879 (1849 in Glasgow)	Department

## London 02: The Most Frequently Cited Examples on London's Official Tourism Website

	Example	Frequency	Museums	Shopping	Historic venues	Parks/gardens	Cultural districts	Celebrities	Entertainment	Sport	Hotel
1	Greenwich	9			1						
2	V & A Museum	7	1								
3	The British Museum	6	1								
4	Natural History Museum	6	1								
5	Science Museum	6	1								
6	Hyde Park	6				1					
7	Tate Modern	5	1								
8	National Maritime Museum	5	1								
9	Regent's Park	5				1					
10	Kew	5			1						
11	Madame Tussauds	4	1								
12	National Gallery	4	1								
13	Buckingham Palace	4			1						
14	Covent Garden	4					1				
15	Kensington Palace	4			1						
16	Westfield London	4		1							
17	London Eye	3							1		
18	Tower of London	3			1						
19	Museum of London	3	1								
20	National Portrait Gallery	3	1								

21	Royal Museums Greenwich	3	1								
22	Fortnum & Mason	3		1							
23	Selfridge & Co.	3		1							
24	Alfries Antique Market	3		1							
25	Royal Botanical Garden	3				1					
26	Westminster Abbey	3			1						
27	Notting Hill	3					1				
28	Camden Lock Market	3		1							
29	Brick Lane Market	3		1							
30	Sherlock Holmes	2						1			
31	Kate Middleton	2						1			
32	Wimbledon	2								1	
33	Harrods	2		1							
34	Harvey Nichols	2		1							
35	Ritz	2									1
36	House of Fraser	2		1							
Total	36		11	9	5	3	2	2	1	1	1

## F. The Positioning of Museums, Galleries and Exhibitions in the Attributes

The following table shows the strategic segmentation and applicability of museums from art exhibition to shopping. Each city uses the reputation and the vast content of its famous museums.

	Amsterdam	London	New York City	Paris	Sydney
Must-See (Must-do)	Attractions & Sights	Top 10 Attractions	-Must-see -What-to-do -Top Attractions	What to see	Must-do (in each category)
Art & Culture & Entertainment	Museums & Galleries	Art& Exhibitions	Arts, Culture & Entertainment	Exhibitions	Arts & Culture
Art Exhibitions	Museums & Galleries	Art & Exhibitions	Exhibitions	Exhibitions	Exhibitions
Design	n/a	n/a	Design Zone exhibition for kids in New York Hall of Science	n/a	n/a
Sightseeing Tours	Attractions & Sights	Sightseeing Tour	10 Top Tours	Guided Tours	n/a
Itineraries	n/a	Itineraries	Suggested itineraries	Trips & Outdoors	Family Holidays
Heritage	n/a	World Heritage Sites	n/a	n/a	World Heritage in Arts & Culture
Museums	Museums & Galleries	In Art & Exhibitions -Top 10 Museums	In Must See NYC In Arts, Culture & Entertainment	In Arts & Culture	Museums
Galleries	Museums & Galleries	Top 10 Galleries	Galleries	In Museums	Art Galleries
Dining	Eating & Drinking	Food and Drink	Dining	Eating Out	Dining in Sydney Opera House
Shopping	Fashionable Museum: museum shops	Shopping	Shopping	Shops in Museums	Shops in Sydney Opera House
Travel Card	I amsterdam City Card	Oyster Card in a separate box, not in a category	n/a	Paris Pass: Travel, museum, shopping	n/a

## Iconic Museums of the International Cities

City	Name of Museums	Type	History (established year)
Amsterdam	Anne Frank House	Biographical/ Historical house museum	1960
London	Madame Tussauds London	Wax model museum	1835
London	Tate Modern	Art museum	2000
London	The British Museum	Art museum	1753
New York City	Guggenheim	Art museum	1937
New York City	Metropolitan Museum of Art	Art museum	1870
New York City	The Museum of Modern Art (MOMA)	Art museum	1929
Paris	Les Arts Decoratifs	Decorative art museum	1882
Paris	The Louvre	Art, Design/Textile museum	1793
Sydney	Sydney Living Museums	The trading name of the Historic Houses Trust of New South Wales	1980

## Iconic Museums in Manchester

City/Location	Name of museums	Type	History (established year)
Salford Quays	Imperial War Museum North	War museum	2002
Central Manchester	Manchester Art Gallery	Art museum	1823
Central Manchester (owned by The Manchester University)	Manchester Museum	Archeology/Natural history museum	1867
Central Manchester	Museum of Science and Industry	Science museum	1983
Central Manchester	The People's History Museum	History of Manchester	1990 (Renamed the People's History Museum in 2001)
Salford Quays	The Lowry	Theatre and gallery complex	2000
Central Manchester (owned by The Manchester University)	The Whitworth	Art gallery	1889 (Reopened in 2015)

## G. Measurement of Primary Categories

The following table shows the extreme of categorise of five international cities' official websites. Through the research, the highest main category is NYC's Suggested Itineraries and the lowest main categories is Sydney's Fashion & Shopping and Family Holiday. Although there are many more existing main categories on the cities' websites, I limited the extreme of numbers from 1-10:

Number	Categories of examples	Numbers of sub-categories	City
<b>1</b>	<b>Suggested Itineraries</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>NYC</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>Must See NYC</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>NYC</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>Arts &amp; Culture</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>NYC</b>
4	Art & Exhibitions	12	London
	Arts & Culture	12	Sydney
	Food & Wine	12	Sydney
5	Arts, Culture & Entertainment	11	NYC
	Shopping g	10	NYC
6	Shopping	10	Paris
7	Eating out	9	Paris
	Eating & Drinking	9	Amsterdam
8	Food & Drink	8	London
	Shopping	8	London
9	Tourist Attractions	7	London
	Parks & Outdoors	7	London
	Activities & Excursions	7	Amsterdam
	Shopping	7	Amsterdam
10	Fashion & Shopping	6	Sydney
	Family Holiday	6	Sydney

## Amsterdam

Number	The main categories	Number of sub categories
<b>1</b>	<b>Eating &amp; Drinking</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>Activities &amp; Excursions</b>	<b>7</b>
	<b>Shopping</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>Attractions &amp; Sights</b>	5
4	Museums & Galleries	4
	What's On	4

NB: 'Festivals' and 'I amsterdam City Card' have no sub-categories.

## London

Number	Main categories	Number of sub-categories
1	<b>Art &amp; Exhibitions</b>	<b>12</b>
2	<b>Food &amp; Drink</b>	<b>8</b>
	<b>Shopping</b>	<b>8</b>
3	<b>Tourist Attractions</b>	<b>7</b>
	<b>Parks &amp; Outdoors</b>	<b>7</b>
4	What's On	5
5	Markets	4
	Family	4
	Clubbing	4
6	Theatre	3
7	Sightseeing Tours	2
8	Special Events	1
	Sport	1
	Museums	1
	Galleries	1
	Afternoon Tea	1

NB: 'Music', 'Itineraries', and 'World Heritage Sites' do not have sub-categories. 'Museums and Galleries' are located under 'Art & Exhibitions'.

## New York City

Number	Main categories	Number of sub-categories
<b>1</b>	<b>Suggested Itineraries</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>Must See NYC</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>Arts &amp; Culture</b>	<b>16</b>
4	Art, Culture & Entertainment	11
5	Shopping	10
6	Sports	3
7	Top Tours	1
	Events	1
	Tours & Attractions	1

NB: 'Broadway', 'TV Show Tapings', 'Neighbourhood Highlights', 'By Bur Tours & More', 'By Attraction Passes' do not have sub categories. 'Arts & Culture' is located under 'Top Attractions' and 'Arts, Culture & Entertainment' is located under 'What to Do'.

## Paris

Number	Main categories	Number of sub-categories
<b>1</b>	<b>Shopping</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>Eating Out</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>Sightseeing Tours</b>	<b>4</b>
4	Parks & Gardens	3
	Monuments	3
5	Museums	2

NB: 'Exhibitions', 'Celebration & Festivals', 'Fairs & Trade Shows', 'Shows', 'Sports & Games', 'Theme Park', and 'Place of Worship' do not have sub-categories.

## Sydney

Number	Main categories	Number of sub-categories
1	<b>Arts &amp; Culture 12</b>	<b>12</b>
	<b>Food &amp; Wine 12</b>	<b>12</b>
2	Fashion & Shopping 6	6
	Family Holidays 6	6
3	Nature & Parks 5	5
	Beach Lifestyle 5	5

NB: All the main categories have sub-categories.

## H. Cross-Analysis of the Visual Text on the Official and Unofficial Tourism Websites of the International City Brands

### Selected tourism websites

- Amsterdam
- London
- New York City
- Paris
- Sydney

	Official tourism website	Unofficial tourism website
<b>Amsterdam</b>	<a href="https://www.iamsterdam.com">https://www.iamsterdam.com</a>	(1) <a href="https://www.timeout.com/amsterdam">https://www.timeout.com/amsterdam</a> (2) <a href="https://www.amsterdamtourist.com">https://www.amsterdamtourist.com</a> (3) <a href="https://www.localamsterdamtours.com">https://www.localamsterdamtours.com</a>
<b>London</b>	<a href="https://www.visitlondon.com">https://www.visitlondon.com</a>	(1) <a href="https://www.timeout.com/london">https://www.timeout.com/london</a> (2) <a href="https://www.londontown.com">https://www.londontown.com</a>
<b>NYC</b>	<a href="https://www.nycgo.com">https://www.nycgo.com</a>	(1) <a href="https://www.timeout.com/newyork">https://www.timeout.com/newyork</a> (2) <a href="https://newyorktours.onboardtours.com">https://newyorktours.onboardtours.com</a> (3) <a href="https://www.wheretraveler.com/new-york-city">https://www.wheretraveler.com/new-york-city</a>
<b>Paris</b>	<a href="https://en.parisinfo.com">https://en.parisinfo.com</a>	(1) <a href="https://www.timeout.com/paris">https://www.timeout.com/paris</a> (2) <a href="https://www.bonjourparis.com">https://www.bonjourparis.com</a> (3) <a href="https://www.parisdigest.com">https://www.parisdigest.com</a>
<b>Sydney</b>	<a href="https://www.sydney.com">https://www.sydney.com</a>	(1) <a href="https://www.au.timeout.com">https://www.au.timeout.com</a> (2) <a href="https://www.greatersydney.org.au">https://www.greatersydney.org.au</a> (3) <a href="https://www.localsydneytours.com">https://www.localsydneytours.com</a>

## Amsterdam

Attributes	Example 1 (Official)	Example 2 (Unofficial)
Primary example	Museums	Cityscape
Tone	Mysterious narrative: -Curiosity on the events -Dramatisation of movement	Vaguely–narrative: -Formality & picturesque
Themes	Museum at night tourism	Cityscape in scenery
Text effect	<i>Museums after midnight-Discover Amsterdam's museums in a contemporary new light-after dark!:</i> -Brings an attention to the night tourism of museums	<i>20 great things to do in Amsterdam-discover world-class art, fabulous flea markets-and how to eat herring:</i> -Descriptive on a variety of the attractions
Storyline	The new event of museums	Unclear
Concept	Storytelling with vagueness and intensity: What's happening there	Night scenery cityscape with the reflection of the image on the river
Composition	Photo shooting from backside of the people is interesting	Full photo shot to show the city's geographical characteristic in urban planning
Colour	Contrast effect: -Visual effect of the neon colours of the museums with the light effect and black silhouette of the people	Bright and night colour effect: -A range of blue in colour scheme and the clarity and brightness of the reflection of the buildings on the river
Brand communication	Museums	Cityscape (non-specific)
Official city brand identity	Brand logo on the top of the screen	Disconnected
Official city brand story	Indirectly connected: The logo iterates the name of the city and implies the brand story	Disconnected
Cultural capital	Museums: -Redesigning content for tourism with the use of light design of the museums	General: Focus on art, markets and dining (text description)
<b>Design meaning</b>	Transformational and flexible design of the museums: -A museum itself for design value and exhibition themes -Competitiveness with major museums in other European cities	Visionary and imaginative city: -Promoting and iterating the city's cultural facilities -Accessibility day and night -Competitiveness with major European tourist cities

## London

Attributes	Example 1(Official)	Example 2 (Unofficial)
Primary examples	British Museum, Madame Tussauds, Big Ben -Iconic and popular places	Gravity
Tone	Well-organised -Calm & Formality	Future-oriented -Tension & Dramatisation
Themes	World popular historical places	3-D science fiction thriller
Text effect	<i>London's story</i> in a series of the images of famous features	<i>What's hot in this week</i> in introducing current events
Storyline	A representational city of world-class museums	A conversational scene in the film
Concept	A set of selected historic features	Trendy and contemporary
Composition	A series of the historical examples in linear composition: -A variety of the symbolic heritage	Singular closer-up: imaginative effect: -Curiosity on the relationship between the image and London
Colour	Contrast effect: -Architecture in neutral and deep red of the Royal family -Centralising the figure of the Royal family/Implying the Madame Tussauds	Monochromatic effect: -Elegantly curated colour planning -Consistency of the light grey tone intensifies audience's attention
Brand communication	Dual branding: -Iconic attractions and the Royal Family	A film/American actor
Official city brand identity	Brand logo on the top of the screen	Disconnected
Official city brand story	Disconnected	Disconnected
Cultural capital	Museums: -Significance of the architectural style and the traditional value of the Royal family	Advancement of digital technology in visual effect for the film
<b>Design meaning</b>	Sustainability of the historic value of the cultural heritage: -Exhibitions of the museums -Major museums promote their significant exhibitions via media -Development of artists, genres, and themes -London has a reputation in museums, artists.	Challenge and technology advancement of human being: -Revitalisation of the British film industries -Britain was a leading movie industry and London was the central place before WWII. -Digital technology contribution to the creative industries locally and globally

## New York City

Attributes	Example 1 (Official)	Example 2 (Unofficial)
Primary examples	-The Lincoln Center, a sport stadium -American football league	Wasabassco
Tone	Informative-narrative: -Speedy -Simplicity and clarity	Liveliness, performativity: -Intensity -Dramatisation
Themes	A series of the events at the world famous cultural facilities	A performance in a club
Text effect	Dual functions of the text for information and heading effect	<i>Best things to do this week</i> -Celebrate nine years of Wasabassco in introducing current events
Storyline	Richness of the city's events as heritage	Imaginative: - Brings a curiosity what is happening after the performance
Concept	A series of selected event features in typography without images of the features	Classical and exotic: -Contrast to the modern looking of the city
Composition	A set of big events in a linear composition: -Consistency of the display	Singular close-up: -Visual effect in the explosion of fire performance -Brings an attention to the image
Colour	Contrast effect: -White typography on a black box in red and blue background of the American flag and the fireworks	Classic deep tone: -Imaginative effect on the time of the performance whether 21 <sup>st</sup> century or early 20 <sup>th</sup> century
Brand communication	Dual branding: -Iconic facilities and their events	Club (sub culture)
Official city brand identity	-Brand logo on the the top of the screen	Disconnected
Official city brand story	Disconnected	Disconnected
Cultural capital	-Performing art centres, stadium -A variety of event content	Thematic design and events
<b>Design meaning</b>	The roles of the major cultural institutions and sport facilities: -Cultural events of the iconic art-performing centre and the major sport league of the grand sport stadium	Club culture and the primary cultural offering: -A part of the urban sub-culture -Introducing lesser-known but popular place; the life style and trend of club culture; varied themes of the events and the design of the club

## Paris

Attributes	Example 1 (Official)	Example 2 (Unofficial)
Primary examples	Eiffel tower	Fabrics
Tone	Romantically-narrative: -Calm & elegant	Feminine dynamism: -Vibrant & confident
Themes	Scenery cityscape with the electric light effect of iconic monument	Textile design / fabric shopping
Text effect	<i>Paris by Night:</i> -Matched with the night view	<i>The Hot List:</i> -Indicate the design in city's cultural asset
Storyline	Duality in the one image: -The Eiffel Tower and cityscape	A collection of well-designed fabrics
Concept	A full shot of the cityscape in night	A richness and variety of the fabrics
Composition	Spotlight of the iconic monument in a horizontal layout	A display of vertical allocation of the fabrics
Colour	Contrast effect to highlight the monument: -Brightness of the light effect of the monument with dark and blue background	Colourful effect to show the design quality: -Variation: off white to flamboyant red
Brand communication	Softly curated with brand logo and the website name in colour	Disconnected
Official city brand identity	Brand logo on the top of the screen	Disconnected
Official city brand story	Disconnected	Disconnected
Cultural capital	Expression of the city's attractions through showing the scenery view	Solid infrastructure in product design industries and luxury textile
<b>Design meaning</b>	Reputation and the new design of the historic monument: -Eiffel tower is a symbolic feature of modernity -Use of an iconic visual feature in enhancing the city image	-Pride of the history, creativity, designers, industries in fashion/lifestyle/product design -Brand portfolio of global brands in design products

## Sydney

Attributes	Example 1 (Official)	Example 2 (Unofficial)
Primary examples	Beach and cityscape	Cruise and cityscape
Tone	Emotionally-narrative: -Relax and excited	Excitement: -Young and intensity
Themes	Holiday leisure: -Suggesting experiencing the city from multiple perspectives	Party entertainment on cruises near the city
Text effect	<i>Experience Sydney in 360°</i>	<i>Sydney's best outdoor parties: Go al fresco with these six open-air parties</i>
Storyline	Panoramic view of the city	Party-mood at night
Concept	A set of cityscapes and the natural environment surrounding	A night scenery of the cultural facility on nature
Composition	Emphasis on the natural distinctiveness: -Main image of the panoramic view of the city and the three small images of the beach life	Contrast effect: -Two themes on the cruise and the cityscape at night
Colour	Emphasis on the natural distinctiveness: -Soft and focus on the varied spectrum of blue of the sky and the sea	Contrast effect: -Two themes with the light effect on the cruise and the cityscape at night
Brand communication	Emphasis on the brand logo	None
Official city brand identity	Disconnected	Disconnected
Official city brand story	Disconnected	Disconnected
Cultural capital	Visual significance of the panoramic view of the city	Expanding the visual attractiveness of the city from day to night
<b>Design meaning</b>	Visual sustainability of the value of the urban image implies: -Development of city-based designers, artists and programmes of events/exhibitions -Potential design contents in the creative industry	New city brand image: -Focus on young and vibrant activities for broader audience -Coordination of the visual themes to enhance the city's image

## I. Cross-Analysis of the Coherence between the Visual and Textual Messages on Branding

- Amsterdam
- London
- New York City
- Paris
- Sydney

# Amsterdam

## City brand communications via the design of the official tourism website

- Message(s)
- Visual images
- Text
- Cultural context
- Brand meaning

Communication	Official tourism website	Brand meaning
Main message of the text	The city branding and thematic design -Emphasis on the thematic places -Museums, fashion districts -The value of the past and present	Thematic attractions -The use of the city brand identity -Brand value of the iconic museums -Place marketing
Main messages of the visual images	Redesigning museums -Suggested a vision for city image -Differentiation with the use of museums for city branding	Creating city image through redesigning cultural institutions -The use of art in museums -Place marketing -Museum branding
Connectivity of the text and the visual images	Connected -Emphasis of art culture and museums -Selection of primary examples	Re-branding-driven cultural image -Re-imaging strategies -Sustainable cultural heritage
Gaps between the text and the visual images	-The text: balancing a variety of historical and contemporary themes in limited tourist attractions -The visual images: focus on the iconic tourist attractions	The lack of diversity in cultural themes to introduce the city -The limitation of the existing content -The possibility of structuring a new content platform for the official tourism website with more local-based themes and places

# London

## City brand communications via the design of the official tourism website

- Message(s)
- Visual images
- Text
- Cultural context
- Brand implications

Communication	Official tourism website	Brand meaning
Main message of the text	The richness of the cultural heritage: -Emphasis on the world-famous places -Historical architecture, museums, the Royal family -The value of the past	Historical value of the places: -The use of the popularity -A variety of cultural productions/cultural industries -Brand value of the iconic museums -Place marketing
Main messages of the visual images	Historic and symbolic heritage: -Historical architecture, museums, the royal family -A series of popular places -A formality of the city's image	Creating a set of cultural heritage-oriented images: -A selection of the classical design -Place marketing -Museum branding
Connectivity of the text and the visual images	Connected: -Emphasis of the historically-valued popular places -Selection of primary examples	Historically-driven cultural image: -Value on tradition -Sustainable cultural heritage
Gaps between the text and the visual images	-The text: -Balancing a variety of historical themes in main tourist attractions -The visual images: -Focus on the iconic tourist attractions, e.g. two museums, the British Museum and the Madame Tussauds in a same page	The lack of diversity in cultural themes to introduce the city: -The limitation of the existing content of the official tourism website -The possibility of creating a new content design for the official tourism website with more lesser-known cultural heritage

## New York City

### City brand communications via the design of the official tourism website

- Message(s)
- Visual images
- Text
- Cultural context
- Brand implications

Communication	Official tourism website	Brand meaning
Main message of the text	The abundance of the cultural heritage: -Emphasis on the world-famous places -Symbolic architecture, museums, parks, brands and events -The value of the diversity and modernity	Dynamism and sustainability of the urban cultural content: -The use of the varied themes throughout places -A variety of cultural productions/cultural industries -Brand value of the iconic museums -Place marketing
Main messages of the visual images	Modern cultural heritage: -Iconic art-performing centre, sport stadium, events -A series of popular places	Creating a set of cultural heritage-oriented images: -A selection of the contemporary design -Place marketing -Event marketing
Connectivity of the text and the visual images	Connected: -Emphasis of the main cultural venues -Selection of primary examples	Events-driven cultural image: -Values cultural tradition, e.g. baseball leagues -Sustainable cultural heritage
Gaps between the text and the visual images	-The text: -Balancing a variety of iconic places and local places in main tourist attractions -The visual images: -Focus and limits on the iconic tourist attractions, e.g. repeating the major cultural facilities in art-performing	The gaps of inconsistency of diversity in cultural themes to introduce the city: -The possibility of packaging an innovative content design for the official tourism website with more lesser-known city-based designers

# Paris

## City brand communications via the design of the official tourism website

- Message(s)
- Visual images
- Text
- Cultural context
- Brand implications

Communication	Official tourism website	Brand meaning
Main message of the text	The richness of the cultural facilities: -Emphasis on the world-famous places includes global brands -Historical monuments, architecture, museums, shopping places	Historical value of places: -The use of the popularity -A variety of cultural productions/cultural industries -The American brand effects -Place marketing
Main messages of the visual images	Re-design symbolic heritage: -Historical monuments with a new visual effect -Lively designed urban place	Recreating a cityscape scene: -Rebranding city through design -The redesign of new light design effect of the iconic monument -Night tourism promotion
Connectivity of the text and the visual images	Connected: -Selection of primary examples	Historically-driven cultural image: -Value on design -Sustainable cultural heritage
Gaps between the text and the visual images	The text: -Balancing a variety of historical themes and global brands in main tourist attractions The visual images: -Focus on the major monument within cityscape	The lack of diversity in cultural themes to introduce the city: -The limitation of the existing content of the official tourism website -The possibility of developing niche markets for the official website with more local-based cultural programmes

# Sydney

## City brand communications via the design of the official tourism website

- Message(s)
- Visual images
- Text
- Cultural context
- Brand implications

Communication	Official tourism website	Brand meaning
Main message of the text	A mix of old and new cultural heritage: -Emphasis on iconic art-performing venue -Historical architecture, museums, theatres -Experiencing tourism	Diversity of thematic content: -A variety of cultural productions/cultural industries -The use of the natural environment to create a theme -Brand value of the iconic art-performing venue -Introducing local value of design, designers and food
Main messages of the visual images	Historic and symbolic heritage: -Historical architecture, museums, the royal family -A series of popular places -A formality of the city's image	Creating a harmony of the cultural and natural heritage: -Designing an entertaining image in terms of leisure in urban life -Place marketing -Specify target
Connectivity of the text and the visual images	Connected: -Emphasis of the historically-valued popular places -Selection of primary examples	General idea about the city image: -Value on geographic location -Sustainable cultural and natural heritage
Gaps between the text and the visual images	The text: -Balancing a variety of tourism themes in main tourist attractions The visual images: -Focus on the natural tourist attractions	The lack of setting an image in identifying the city in cultural offering: -The possibility of constructing multi-cultural topics in visual images for the official tourism website with more local-based design heritage