

# The Visual City Branding of Tanjungpinang City – Riau Islands

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## ABSTRACT

The uniqueness of Tanjungpinang, the capital of Riau Islands Province, Indonesia has a potential of developing its city branding broadly. This study aims to give a visual recommendations for Tanjungpinang as part of their city branding with its Malay-Chinese history and culture. The data collected by conducting forum group discussion, interview, and observation. Firstly, Focus group discussion was held with participant who has been living in the city for more than 20 years and describe with one word how they feel and think about Tanjungpinang. As they stated, “island”, “beaches”, “food”, “seafood”, “cultural festival”, and “people culture” defined Tanjungpinang the most. We also collect the data from in-depth interview with stakeholders who have had a big impact to the development of Tanjungpinang. Secondly, we observe the everyday daily routine and its environment to complete the visual. Thirdly, we identify and illustrate the visuals and other design elements of Tanjung Pinang’s visual identity such as the color scheme, the typical motifs, the characteristics of people, the culture, the culinary and the coastal tourism as visual recommendations. The result shows that the visual city branding of Tanjungpinang city can be created and built by identify the uniqueness which are from its culinary (*gong-gong*, *otak-otak* and *ikan dingkis*), its coastal tourism (*kelong*, coral reef, and coconut), its characteristics of people (friendly and warm characters), its cultural activities (togetherness, hardworking, and teamwork delivered through objects such as *pompom*, *becak*, and *dragonboat*). The visual key is featuring the friendly and warm characters of the people and also their behaviour, daily and cultural activities and social life as the most interesting impact and the most important asset.

**Keywords:** *Visual City Branding, Tanjungpinang, Kepulauan Riau*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Riau Islands (*Kepulauan Riau/Kepri*) is a province in Indonesia. It borders by several neighboring countries: Vietnam, Malaysia, and Singapore. The origin of the name Riau Islands is from the name *Riau*, allegedly derived from the word “boisterous”, meaning crowded, busy, and noisy, because *Kepri* was once the center of trading for business. Based on Indonesia Law (*Undang-Undang*) No. 25 of 2002, Riau Islands included in the 32<sup>nd</sup> province in Indonesia which come under the City of Tanjung Pinang as capital city, Batam City, Bintan Regency, Karimun Regency, Natuna Regency, Anambas Island Regency, and Lingga Regency.

The capital city itself, Tanjungpinang known as *Kota Gurindam* (city of thousands poem), has always been the center visits for both locals and foreign tourists, located on a strategic and densely populated sea and air transportation border and has international market opportunities.

Tanjungpinang City was formed through Law No. 5 of 2001, signed by Indonesian former President Abdurrahman Wahid on June 21 and known as inauguration day year 2001 No. 85. Tanjungpinang area has about 239,5 square kilometers, mostly are sea. From the famous culinary seafood, the beauty white sand of Trikora beach and small religious islands where can be accessed by small boat, such as Penyengat Island and Senggarang Island. This city still keeps the tradition through language, cultural festival and food. The socio-culture of the population are broadly heterogenous consisting of mixed tribes and ethnic groups such as Malay’s native or partly from Batak, Minang, Javanese, Chinese, Bugis and other tribes from this nation. Some residents are islanders who lives directly contact with the sea with tropical climate ranging from 18 – 30 degrees Celcius, and air humidity is around 86% to 99% for the highest. The uniqueness of this city has a potential of developing its city branding broadly, by using visual branding as part of promotional tools.

A brand is to identify from one product to another. The brand is what created in the mind. The whole process of brand creation consists of its design and marketing [1]. Indeed, that brand's image has become the main important aspect to its brand rather than the 'real' thing the brand represents. The brand identity encompasses everything from how it looks to how it sounds and feel to the audiences [2]. However, in order to make this brand success completely, the physical assets thus important too. It's the simplest form of branding to create physical differentiation from the competitor. Also, by creating the identity, a brand can compete in the market to attract customer's awareness through the branding strategy. This branding strategy is part of the brand management to increase the brand equity for the customer to receive the value of the product [3].

There are many ways to create successful branding strategies. It considers the needs, desires, and aspirations of customer and involved in making their key decisions during the process. One of the aspects that helps the brand to connect and communicate directly to the customer is by visual. Branding is therefore the act of creating a physical asset of attributes such as brand name, brand identity, strapline, etc, along with less tangible assets, such as the emotional benefits offered by the brand [1]. In short, branding is a creative process that could influence value, customer loyalty, image, the return margin, etc. so, they hired a designer to develop this creative process through visual to attract customer, such as packaging, logo, maskot, souvenir, even employee's uniform. Visuals is a broad term encompassing many kinds of representational, such as photography, illustrations, drawings, paintings, prints, graphic elements and marks, and elemental images such as pictograms, signs, or symbols. Designers also consider using color, typography, symbolism, and production, even if it is subconsciously [4].

When visualizing, every component of it contributes to communication, think of how the idea would look like, and start to draw. One of the most popular form of imagery in visual communication is illustration. A handmade unique visual that works in a variety of media with identifiable styles that brings a different perspective, vision, and idea to become an original art form. An illustration considered as basic design elements of visual brand identity [4]. Color is also a powerful and highly provocative design element. Color is often used symbolically and can be associated with a brand and chosen to express a brand's personality. Pattern is a consistent repetition of a single visual unit or element within a given area. The uniqueness and creativity in a pattern can be part of the visual message [5].

A city branding theory is still in an emergent phase that rise in research for talent attraction, tourism promotion, the hosting of sporting and cultural events, investment attraction, and other goals for urban development and regeneration [6]. According to Ashworth (2009), place branding is the idea of discovering or creating some uniqueness which differentiates one place from others in order to gain a competitive brand value and normally created through: (1) personality association, (2) flagship building; (3) hallmark events. The research of Kuala Lumpur Brand, which carries the values of the city as modern, vibrant, progressive, value for money and

tolerant, represented by the tagline "Kuala Lumpur Can Do It". Using the brand and iconic place, and partnership between the private and public sectors, to ensure that the brand is successfully impressed [7]. From another journal of city branding, found that the visual attractive of iconic buildings play a major role in promoting the city and its image and has positive impact on the Quality of Life as they are fitting well to the existing context. By this, it can be an appropriate tool for city branding with context sensitive [8].

Another research on city branding vs cultural branding, shown that some cities failed to brand their cities by creating non-relevant taglines, while neglecting of the city cultural resources that has already known by public as the city image. The conclusion of the study stated that city image is the characteristic of the city naturally emerge without any intervention from government, while city branding is to be created to give perception and reputation of the city [9]. The previous study has identified the perception of Tanjungpinang city has been mentioned. There are 3 things that appeared in stakeholder's mind: (1) seafood culinary; (2) coastal tourism; and (3) people character [10]. Culinary can approach interactions between people and become the tourist attraction for a particular city, for example Copenhagen as food destination of the New Nordic Cuisine [11]. Food can become useful in achieving the economic aims and city branding strategy, but those food representations of the archipelago can be found in others neighborhood area too. The uniqueness of originality and authenticity of foods that fits into our culture are important considerations as our identity expressions [12]. Food culture has a value in itself that representatives of an era, time or geography as a means to develop a tourist destination, and as a tool for regional development or marketing a region for identity purposes [13].

As cities to attract tourists, need the concept of visualization as brand strategy to pursuit the recognition in compete globally. During a brief interview with expats and foreign tourists for the reason visiting the city of Tanjungpinang. Most of them say that besides the nature coastal beach, the character of Indonesian people themselves is very friendly and warm, especially those who live in small island like Tanjungpinang. Some of those who were coming is to visit their family members in Tanjungpinang and often celebrate spiritual activities together. The city of Tanjungpinang from the historical era is known from its proximity between each ethnicity. It has been proven since the 19th century, from the marriage of Tik Sing (Son of Chinese Leader in Tanjungpinang) with a Semarang's girl. The reception was carried out in the city of Tanjungpinang and also Penyengat Island through 'Malay wedding style'. At that time Penyengat Island was the royal palace of Riau-Lingga Sultanate, by Sultan Mahmud Syah III from 1770 -1811 and Raja Engku Puteri Hamidah as his queen. This Malay sultanate has an important role in the development of Malay kingdom. It was told that Engku Puteri was the foster mother of Oei Tik Sing and attended the wedding ceremony. Since then, the noble value of understanding and respect others, living together in diversity that they believe in has been built until now. The tolerance of living together and united became a way of living for the people in daily basis life. It

shows on how the people of Tanjungpinang from different ethnic and race respect the beliefs and culture of others. At that time, Pulau Penyengat was used as headquarters ground in Malay land and on the other side, Pulau Senggarang has the most living Chinese immigrants. Both of these *pulau* (islands) are the most visited island in Tanjungpinang city. To reach the islands, the locals using pong-pong boat as daily transportation. The purpose was for children and adults who study and work in Tanjungpinang city. In short, the pong-pong boat could be the media for accustomed the atmosphere of togetherness, to feel the same way. A vibrant cultural life is seen as one prerequisite in branding a city to appeal to the creative class and several cities have made efforts to revitalize their cultural life in this respect [14]. In this case, the researcher has conducted in-depth interview with one of the writers in Tanjung Pinang, stating that the culture in this hometown is very strong and perceive, but need to be revitalized due to the present of foreign influences that effect the authenticity of local culture.

Since the Chinese immigrants landed in Tanjungpinang city as workers who cook *gambir* (an extract derived from the leaves of *Uncaria gambir*, mostly found in Indonesia and Malaysia), the economic has risen up and Chinese hold the most important role in business industry. This ethnic of group known for their skill in trading and hardworking, especially the expansion to Singapore has provide most benefits for Chinese as their same language and fate. They started to build houses and stores near the port. The becak (Rickshaw) as trading transportation from port to the stores and vice versa, carry import and export items. This environment has been maintained until this era, even though the economic has changed dramatically in these few decades. But, the spirit of hardworking from the people itself maintained and hopefully this could affect most of the people as positive impact to work harder and build Tanjungpinang's economic again. Another influence is the blended cultural festival, Dragon boat race. A Chinese tradition to reminisce late minister Qu Yuan and they believe in getting rid of misfortune and disease. The wooden boats shaped and decorated in the form of dragon and the 16 participants as a team who paddling the boat. It is said the winning team will have good luck and a happy life in the following year. In Tanjung Pinang itself, this competition has started since 1992 with the name of Bintan Dragon Boat Race and appointed in 100 Wonderful Events of Indonesia. Besides the health and fitness benefits, this sport is a perfect way to improve communication, strengthen bonds and encourage teamwork attract the local and tourist join this competition.

## 2. METHOD

Qualitative research is a form of research in which the researcher or a designated coresearcher collects and interprets data, making the researcher as much a part of the research process as the participants and the data they provide [15]. In this study, we focused on qualitative methods by conducting focus group discussions, in-depth interview, and observation. There are many different types of qualitative research each with its own purposes and

structures [16]. Whereas with qualitative research, the researcher able to take more comprehensive and holistic approach in researching a phenomenon. The discussion in this study focused on visual city branding with its identity and culture, that involves most of the stakeholders.

The output from this study is to give a visual recommendation with all of the information collected and visualize through illustration. To begin the visual process, there are steps and ways starting from collect user-centered research data, synthesize, analyze information, communicate results and design implications that play a role in how the design community can establish expertise and build credibility [17]. The methods that have been used are:

- a. Focus group discussion involves people sitting around a table to gauge the opinions, feelings, and attitudes about a product/service/brand. In this study, the participants were divided into two groups (3 and 4 people) from Tanjungpinang locals who has live in the city for more than 20 years and describe with one word how they feel and think about Tanjungpinang. The answers diverse but similarity indicated. We conclude the responses by categories and use it for further analysis.
- b. We collect the data from in-depth interview with stakeholders, tourists, governments and locals that has big impact with the development of Tanjungpinang.
- c. Content analysis is done to generates meaning of unstructured information from FGD's data, also to discover the compatible illustration's concept from the interview.
- d. Observations of their daily living was done to obtain identity through fashion, transportation, food, plants and architecture to complete the visual.
- e. Collage was used by participants to visually express their thoughts, feelings, desires, and other aspects of their life. The researcher used the information from above methods that mentioned and interpreting to specific visual for collage.

## 3. RESULTS

The behavior of the locals from history and culture of Malay-Chinese identified as the most interesting impact to the social life. These ethnic groups bring closeness and their culture to the citizens. The governor also stated that the Riau Islands people is the most important asset to develop this city. In results, we identify the visual and other design element that could express Tanjungpinang's identity the most:

### 3.1. Identify the color scheme

We identify the color scheme that define Tanjung Pinang the most from the color of historical building, iconic building, and residential building as seen in Figure 1.



Figure 1 Color scheme of Tanjung Pinang's city

### 3.2. Identify the typical motifs

The typical motifs identified from their daily living environment as seen on Figure 2.



Figure 2 Typical motifs of Tanjung Pinang's city

### 3.3. Identify and illustrate the characteristics of people

Characteristics of People that refers to a set of morals and beliefs that define the way we treat each others. We identified the people character of 'friendly' and 'warm personality' that visualized into illustration combining with the color scheme and typical motifs as seen on Figure 3. The cultural habits is where the people trading in the morning and gather together in the *kopitiam* (coffee house) for breakfast.

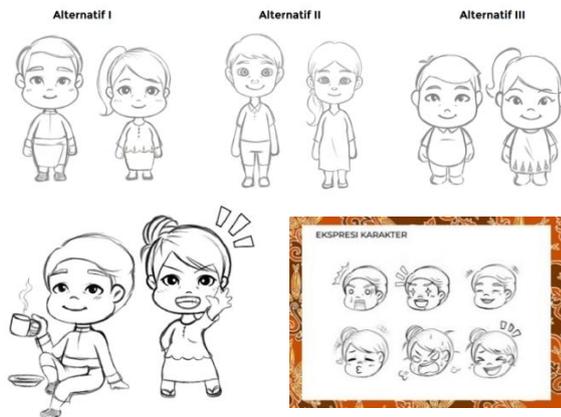


Figure 3 Characteristics of Tanjung Pinang's people

### 3.4. Identify and illustrate the Daily and Cultural Activities

The way of everyday living daily routine, special event, trading and business to build the connection between each family and neighborhood.

a. **Togetherness** between each ethnic was seen fostered until now through the link of pong-pong transportation between each small islands. The existence of community interaction and social need became the aspect of building a habit of closeness in this city (see Figure 4).



Figure 4 Togetherness (researcher)

b. **Hardworking** shows from the rickshaw drivers that working everyday in the traditional market as a reflect that the economy of Tanjung Pinang city is developing and growing (see Figure 5).



Figure 5 Hardworking

c. **Teamwork** is always maintaining through a competitive sport Dragon boat race that held regularly each year. Besides the bond of each paddler, the local people also actively helping each other to enliven the celebration of this Chinese festival (see Figure 6).



Figure 6 Teamwork

### 3.5. Identify and illustrate of Tanjung Pinang Culinary

Tanjungpinang, whose name is taken from the position of a beach tree that juts into the sea known its islands landmark with the seafood and fish as their food and business resources such as *gong gong*, *otak-otak merah*, and *ikan dingkis* often mentioned, because the city is physiography of 70% ocean and 30% land.

a. **Gong-gong** (see Figure 7) is a species of sea snail, with yellowish-brown shell color and often found in any seafood restaurants in Tanjung Pinang. The best cooking technique for *gong gong* is to boil it, with peanut dipping sauce. This seafood considered as one of the most popular and must eat food when visit Tanjung Pinang. The shell itself could be used for decorations. In Tanjung Pinang, we can find *gong-gong* architecture building near the harbor as the icon of this city. This shows that how this delish food influenced the Tanjung Pinang's culinary industry.



Figure 7 Gong-Gong

b. **Otak-otak merah** or red fishcake (see Figure 8) is one the most popular dishes in Tanjung Pinang city too. Even otak-otak can be find in any other cities in Indonesia, but in Tanjung Pinang, the *otak-otak* has own uniqueness in color and taste. Most of the *otak-otak* is made from mackerel fish in white color. However, the Tanjung Pinang's otak-otak is combination of mackerel and octopus, also the red color is coming from the chilly that add in. It gives out the authenticity of seafood flavor. The fishcake is wrapped in coconut leaf and grilled over a wood charcoal fire for the best taste. Otak-otak most found in weekend during family road trip to the beach and considered as marine street food.



Figure 8 Otak-otak merah

c. **Ikan dingkis**, a fish type that serve during the season of Chinese New Year (see Figure 9). Even though the city occupied by most of local ethnic, but Chinese celebration and festival have tourism and economy impact. The local people are open minded and take part in another ethnic's event. They show participation and respect to the religion and sometimes contribute to certain event. As in Chinese culinary tradition in New Year, fish give the meaning of prosperity throughout the year. *Ikan dingkis* only harvest during Chinese new year's season and most fishmonger will do their business in traditional market and *Tambak Street* (used to Malay's region land). This fish not only eaten by Chinese people, but also the local are waiting for this moment. The believes influenced the local as part of this prosperous thing.



Figure 9 Ikan dingkis

### 3.6. Identify and illustrate the Tanjung Pinang Coastal Tourism

Due to Tanjungpinang’s geographic, besides culinary, coastal tourism has become part of foreign attraction. Bintan island or Negeri Segantang Lada was known as the Pirate Island since the 12th century. The total area of 60.057 square kilometres is 96% of sea area. The island has beaches with beach-front hotels and resorts and closest to Singapore city. Bintan island is the second promoting island for best tourist destination after Bali. The expansion of transportation access from Singapore to Bintan Regency, located 60km from the city of Tanjungpinang, surrounded by Trikora beach, which comes from the name of “three corrals” with 25 km long. This long stretch of white beach as a popular seaside playground for locals but also those coming from foreign country. In addition, the Ministry of Tourism held yearly coastal tourism competition in this regency, called Bintan Triathlon and Tour de Bintan, a sport event that is followed by foreigners. Bintan has a better prospect in leisure industry and nature coastal tourism with most of the tourists visited are came from foreign country such as Singapore, Korea, and Japan. Bintan also known its reputation for Singaporean as short ferry trip away to easy weekend trip with the price is significantly cheaper than in Singapore.

- a. **Coral reefs** (figure 10) in Trikora beach, is a destination that should not be missed when visiting Tanjung Pinang. Along with the truly beauty of underwater experience, the local and tourism industry still rely heavily on the reefs.
- b. **Coconut trees** (figure 11) are found along the beach, people often book a lodge, enjoy the view with sea breeze while drinking coconut water from fresh young coconut.
- c. **Kelong** (a wooden house above the sea) where the fish farming as part of tourism destination too (see figure 12). The fisherman also built boardwalks and small kelong houses, which are rented out to tourists.



Figure 10 Coral Reef



Figure 11 Coconut Tree



Figure 12 Kelong

## 4. CONCLUSION

The visual key of Tanjung Pinang’s city branding is featuring the friendly and warm characters of the people and also their behaviour, daily and cultural activities and social life as the most interesting impact and the most important asset. However, for tourist to really understand and feel the warm and friendly of Tanjungpinang’s people, require certain time of social interaction. Through the visual identity of tanjung Pinang, we expect tourists have the first impression of its branding and easier to experience the social life in Tanjungpinang city. These visuals recommendations will be an opportunity for expanding the other marketing and promotion tools such as media promotion and visual brand identity.

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