



A Study on Effective Urban Brand Exclusive Typeface through User Experience Value Evaluation

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Abstract

Background/Objectives: In recent years, many cities have developed exclusive typeface to establish an urban brand identity, and use it for public design purposes. The purpose of this study is to evaluate the user experience value of the urban brand fonts and to suggest the function and direction of the ideal fonts.

Methods/Statistical Analysis: In this study, we investigated the current status through the basic research on the exclusive typefaces that have been developed and currently being serviced. Accordingly, through reviewing the design strategies for exclusive typefaces, we have identified key attributes such as readability, originality, expandability, aesthetics, and unity. The empirical value evaluation model based on the user attitude will be presented and the design value of the exclusive font that was selected as the representative case was confirmed.

Findings: The result of the analysis shows that the users generally evaluated the readability and unity of exclusive typefaces as an important factor for experience value. It is important to design the font in the form of a symbol of the city, but it can be said that it has a higher experience value in that a wide variety of usable designs should be considered first. This means that it is important to design a font in the

form of symbolizing the city but a typeface that can be used in a wide variety should be considered first since it is given higher experience value. Also, in developing an exclusive typeface, it is necessary to clearly distinguish whether the key purpose of the typeface is symbolic or various usability.

Improvements/Applications: We hope that this research result can become a basic guideline for the development of an exclusive typeface. As a result, it is expected that the experience valuation studies on more specific attributes and many cases of exclusive typefaces will continue in the future.

Key Words : Urban Brand, Exclusive Typeface, Experience Value, Font Design, User Attitude.

1 Introduction

In recent years, many companies have been developing brand exclusive typeface in addition to the symbol mark as a strategy to further reinforce their brand identity. The exclusive typeface developed in this way has reached the stage of free distribution for easy use by the general public. Reflecting this trend, more and more cities and municipalities in Korea are developing and using exclusive fonts for public design purposes[1].

The fonts for domestic city brands have been developed and utilized in earnest since the 2000s, resulting in a positive change in the type and scope of the fonts. However, as the number of fonts increases, problems arise in that the distinctiveness and publicity between the fonts are degraded, and the function of the basic functional characteristics of the typefaces is also weakened.

Therefore, it is necessary to evaluate the use of exclusive typefaces and to identify the clear concept and value necessary for the development of the brand exclusive typeface, focusing on users who currently use the special typeface.

The method for this study is as follows.

First, we examine the development status of fonts for urban brands, and examine the fundamental understanding a design char-

acteristics of successful urban typefaces such as Seoul font and Jeju font.

Second, we identify the design strategy and basic requirements to be considered when developing a special typeface, and draw a conclusion on the attributes necessary for user evaluation.

Third, the experiential value evaluation model proposed for the main analysis is modified based on the multi-attribute attitude model of Fishbein. We also propose the function and direction of exclusive typeface for effective urban branding by conducting user evaluation on major attributes.

2 Background and Related work

2.1 Urban Branding and Exclusive Typeface

A brand is defined as ‘a value that can be compared to another’. When a brand provides distinctive value to consumers, and a consumer empathizes with it, buys and uses it, the brand gains true value and power. As the concept of a brand is applied to cities, separate slogans and logos are created for the purpose of forming a differentiated city brand. In recent years, there have been more and more cases to establish the identity of each city and imprint differentiated images to the public by developing urban exclusive typefaces[2].

An exclusive typeface is a typeface that is specially designed and used by a corporation or organization in order to express various text information necessary for an organization’s communication activity in a consistent style. Exclusive typefaces of this kind provide a unified image through various media, and serve as a primary role in continuously exposing history and vision to the public[3].

The exclusive typeface is an important tool of CI strategy in modern society, and management strategy for building and executing future strategy. This strategy is the simplest and most reasonable way to express identity both internally and externally using direct visual tools[4]. The development and use of the exclusive typeface not only integrates the brand identity, but also engages in imprinting differentiated images of the companies or cities. Furthermore, it plays a role in presenting future vision.

Through systematic and logical design modularization, recent urban brand typefaces are mainly utilized to substantialize a unified urban image that implies the symbolism and cultural uniqueness of the city. The city image contains social and cultural aspect that the members of the community pursue. Different characteristics appear in each city according to the times, cultures, and developmental aspects. The exclusive urban brand typeface is the basic means of representing the identity of the city, and is a symbolic representation for differentiating it from other cities[5]. Already, cities around the world are making great efforts to establish the city's identity by developing an exclusive typeface.

Typical examples of city typefaces are New Johnston in London, U.K, Gona / Flag / Nau in Yokohama, Japan, and Frutiger / Hei in Hong Kong.

The New Johnston typeface used for the London Underground in England, as shown in Figure 1, was designed as part of the 1916 London Transport Agency Design Integration Plan. This typeface, better known as the London Underground, gives a very solid impression based on geometric simplicity, making it the first typeface for establishing an identity. This typeface is still applied to the subway route map, common station signs, and various printed materials, and it became a symbol of coexistence with the city.



Figure 1: UK New Johnston

Just like the New Johnston typeface, Figure 2 illustrates exclusive fonts used in Yokohama. Yokohama, Japan, is using 'Gona', 'Flag', and 'Nau', as Japanese designated typeface and the use of 'Helvetica', 'Univers', 'Frutiger', and 'Rotis' is the recommendation for English. These fonts have an intermediate form based on the structure of traditional Japanese typefaces and have been evolved

to deliver the information more effectively through the studies of visual discrimination and effective use of signs.



Figure 2: Japan_Gona / Flag / Nau

Hong Kong's English designated font illustrated in Figure 3 is "Frutiger", which illustrates a modern and simple city image. Frutiger reminisce about traditional image of China in a perfect balance and strong contrast style. "Hei" chosen for Chinese character typeface is not only stable and balanced but also harmonized with the English typeface "Frutiger". In result, it represents Hong Kong by presenting an image of the international city where various cultures coexist. According to the 'Guideline for Hong Kong City Brand Identity' enacted in 2003, fonts suitable for urban images, along with symbols emphasizing dynamism and creativity, are used as designated typeface to maintain consistency in city guides, websites and various brands utilization[6].



Figure 3: Hong Kong_Frutiger/Hei

2.2 Exclusive Typeface Design Strategy

One of the prerequisites of designing an urban brand typeface is the usability for long-term usage, so designs that are too trend sensitive should be avoided. Therefore, it is essential to understand the function of the font design when developing the typeface for special purpose. In addition, it is necessary to have a lot of background knowledge about the various fonts that have been developed. Designated typeface should be easy to use on-site, and should be flexible enough to be applied to various circumstances at the same time. Also, it should be designed to be able to represent various forms of expression by implying readability and clarity[7].

An exclusive typeface design strategy considering various requirements can be classified as follows:

First, the essential function that a text should possess is readability. Exclusive typefaces need to be easy to read since the basic function of a text is to convey information through reading the text information[8]. The insertion of excessive decorative elements to impart distinctiveness has a negative impact on the readability.

Second, the core element of an exclusive typeface is originality. Due to the nature of the typeface, there should be a distinction in the brand identity by applying symbolic graphic motif. In order to gain public interest and empathy among many typefaces, it is an important requirement to develop the fonts to imply distinctive characteristics of each city.

Third, while maintaining the basic module frame suitable for various media and environments, exclusive typeface must be applicable with flexible characteristic expansion. It must be designed in an easily adjustable and adaptable form as the surrounding environment has grown into digital typeface environment.

Fourth, in addition to the core elements of the typeface, a strategy to pursue aesthetic beauty based on a clear concept is also an important factor. If the distinctiveness and uniqueness are expressed too excessively, naturalness could weaken. In addition, strong readability can lead to loss of originality. Therefore, visualization of beauty should be expressed in accordance with the purpose and concept of the exclusive typeface.

Fifth, current Hangeul includes English, numbers, Chinese character, and special characters as well as Hangeul. Thus, visual uni-

formity of each type of character is also an important factor to be considered for the production of an exclusive typeface[4].

3 Experience Value Analysis

3.1 Exclusive Typeface Design Strategy

The user/consumer gains a belief or attitude toward the product that he/she is using or consider purchasing in terms of price, performance, appearance, etc. It can be said that users have a certain kind of attitude toward a design. This is defined as the three components of brand attitude: brand belief, brand evaluation, and purchase intention. As shown in Figure 3, beliefs are cognitive, thought-thinking, evaluation is affective, and purchase intention is a behavioral component. As shown in Figure 4, belief is related with cognitive thinking, evaluation is affective and purchase intention is with behavioral respectively.

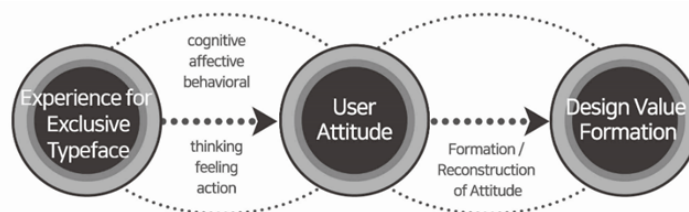


Figure 4: Exclusive Typeface Experience and Design Value

Fishbein presented a multi - attribute attitude model describing the relationship between user's attitude and behavior as a function of user's beliefs on brand attributes and benefits. This model is based on the assumption that it is important to predict the user's behavior more accurately and determine the user's attitude toward the behavior as a model that can be used as a method of evaluating the subject according to important attributes. In this study, Fishbein's multi-attribute attitude model is adapted to analyze the user's attitude toward exclusive typeface, that is, the important factor on the experience value.

Based on the multi-attribute attitude model of Fishbein, the empirical value evaluation model for exclusive typeface to be ap-

plied in this study can be illustrated as follows:

$$A_{et} = \sum_{i=1}^n b_i e_i \quad (1)$$

In this equation,

A_{et} = User's attitude toward an exclusive typeface

b_i = The strength of the belief that an exclusive typeface has attribute i

e_i = Assess the importance of attribute i

n = Number of beliefs highlighted

As we can see from this equation, this model identifies beliefs about specific attributes. In order to measure the attitudes of users, it derives the result by combining belief with weights regarding important factors. Attributes refers to the characteristics of exclusive typeface, beliefs are recognition of attributes, and importance weights reflect the relative importance of attributes to users[9].

This study suggests that the attitude toward the typeface that is experienced by the user's visual characteristics can be explained by the user satisfaction of the typeface design, which indicates that the degree of attitude forms the experience value.

In the case of Fishbein's model, the performance and price are considered as the main attributes for product evaluation, this study considers the satisfaction on readability, originality, expandability, aesthetics, and unity as the factors for experience value.

Attributes that are positively associated with the experience of using and experiencing private fonts are important attributes that affect the value of experience. The positive attribute that users gain by using and experiencing exclusive typeface is a key factor that influences experience value. Also, depending on the weight that reflects the importance of relative attributes, the experience value of the typeface may also vary.

In economics, the concept of value refers to 'the right to be accepted by the object according to the purpose of fulfilling a desire' and in this concept, value is termed 'use value'[10].

Therefore, experience value of the typeface in this study refers to the typeface usage satisfaction that satisfies the needs of the users in a digital font environment.

3.2 Analysis Method and Subject

‘Jeollabuk-do’ font developed in 2000 was the first exclusive urban typeface in Korea. However, Exclusive typeface development and usage have begun in earnest starting with Seoul Hangang font/Seoul Namsan font in 2008 followed by Jeju font in 2010 and many others such as Busan, Gyeonggi, Gwangju, and Ulsan.

Currently, the urban typeface focuses on emphasizing the distinctiveness unlike the corporate fonts that lay emphasis on readability and usability. However, the number of cases where the identity of a city is not clearly displayed due to its focus on font development that lacks discrimination. Therefore, this study analyzes the experience value evaluation on Seoul and Jeju font which are the representative typefaces of Korea. User satisfaction on readability, originality, expandability, aesthetics, and unity are the attributes applied for the analysis. Based on these factors, we will confirm the experience value of the typeface based on user attitude.

The characteristics of the major analysis subjects, Seoul font and Jeju font, are shown in Fig. 5 and Fig. 6 below. The Seoul typeface contains an upright integrity and a graceful/simple blank-space/margin, and expresses the openness of the Hanok and the curvaceousness/curvature of the tile in a formative way. In addition, the name ‘Han River’ and ‘Namsan’, that represent Seoul, were applied to enhance the cultural pride of Hangeul[11].



Figure 5: Seoul Exclusive Typeface

Jeju typeface was developed to represent the symbolic and cultural uniqueness of the Jeju province along with the purpose of developing future-oriented typeface that resembles Jeju as having international reputation of travel destination. Through this, the visual affinity that ‘respect and to be together’ can be settled in the recognition of local residents and foreign tourists. Also, Jeju

typeface was developed to increase the usability for achieving public design infrastructure[12].



Figure 6: Jeju Exclusive Typeface

3.3 Exclusive Typeface Analysis

Through the application of the experience value evaluation model presented in this study, we will evaluate how the user attitude differs according to the attributes (readability, originality, expandability, esthetics, unity) and the relative importance of the attributes while using the exclusive typeface.

A case study of the exclusive typeface for Seoul and Jeju was selected as a case study. The analysis was conducted on 40 college students who mainly use free fonts and 10 professors and design experts specializing in the related field.

An example question for evaluating the experience value of the exclusive typeface is shown in Table 1. below.

Table 1: Initial Set of features used for the experimentation

Strength of Beliefs on Attributes(b_i)									
Readability of 'OO' Exclusive Typeface									
Bad Readability	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Good Readability	
Importance(e_i) of Attributes									
Exclusive Typeface Readability									
Unimportant	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	Important	

The following Table 2~6. summarizes the user analysis results on the Seoul and Jeju typeface through the experience evaluation model.

Table 2: Results for Seoul Hangang Font

Seoul Hangang Font		readability	originality	expandability	esthetics	unity
	b ₁	5.5	4.7	5.5	5.4	5.7
	e ₁	2.7	1.7	1.9	1.5	2.2
Experience Value of Seoul Hangang Font (5.5×2.7)+(4.7×1.7)+(5.5×1.9)+(5.4×1.5)+(5.7×2.2)=53.93						

Table 3: Results for Seoul Namsan Font

Seoul Namsan Font		readability	originality	expandability	esthetics	unity
	b ₁	6.1	5.0	5.9	5.4	6.0
	e ₁	2.7	1.7	1.9	1.5	2.2
Experience Value of Seoul Namsan Font (6.1×2.7)+(5.0×1.7)+(5.9×1.9)+(5.4×1.5)+(6.0×2.2)=57.48						

Table 4: Results for Jeju Hanllasan Font

Jeju Hanllasan Font		readability	originality	expandability	esthetics	unity
	b ₁	4.2	5.9	5.0	5.4	5.6
	e ₁	2.7	1.7	1.9	1.5	2.2
Experience Value of Jeju Hanllasan Font (4.2×2.7)+(5.9×1.7)+(5.0×1.9)+(5.4×1.5)+(5.6×2.2)=51.29						

Table 5: Results for Jeju Gothic Font

Jeju Gothic Font		readability	originality	expandability	esthetics	unity
	b ₁	6.2	4.0	5.4	4.8	5.7
	e ₁	2.7	1.7	1.9	1.5	2.2
Experience Value of Jeju Gothic Font (6.2×2.7)+(4.0×1.7)+(5.4×1.9)+(4.8×1.5)+(5.7×2.2)=53.54						

Table 6: Results for Jeju Myungjo Font

Jeju Myungjo Font		readability	originality	expandability	esthetics	unity
	b ₁	6.4	3.7	5.0	4.5	5.7
	e ₁	2.7	1.7	1.9	1.5	2.2
Experience Value of Jeju Myungjo Font (6.4×2.7)+(3.7×1.7)+(5.0×1.9)+(4.5×1.5)+(5.7×2.2)=52.36						

According to the evaluation results, users consider readability and unity as the most important factors in an exclusive typeface. Calculating the value of experience for each typeface, Seoul Namsan shows the highest experience value. Especially, in the case of Seoul Namsan font, the readability and unity that users consider important shows high value in experience value.

Since the development of Seoul font in 2008, it has been widely used for public signs, outdoor advertising, image, and documents. Rather than the distinctiveness which being the purpose of development under the slogan ‘Design Seoul’, the experience value was granted in the fact that it can be used free of charge without worrying about copyrights, and that it contains fairly good expandability and readability. Similar results can be found in Jeju Gothic and

Myungjo font.

In terms of specific attributes, the Jeju Myungjo font was given the highest experience value for readability, and Jeju Hanllasan font received the highest experience value for originality. It confirms that the concept of developing a typeface that implies a distinctiveness and expandability was effective to be reflected in the evaluation.

In conclusion, the typeface that have already been developed and are being developed should be modified and designed to establish identity and to imply the features such as readability, unity and expandability.

Based on the multi-attribute attitude model of Fishbein, the experience value evaluation model in this study shows that the attributes having strong points complements the weak attributes and finally reflected in forming the experience value. It confirms that the experience value is formed complementarily depending on the environment and the user who uses the typeface. Therefore, in developing a typeface, the font should be designed in accordance with the surrounding environment and the purpose of development respectively.

4 Conclusion

The key purpose of this study is to investigate the possibility of improvement in various types of fonts for urban brand typeface and to study their function and design concept. Urban brand typeface should be designed in a form that can be used in various fields based on the fact that they must act as a symbol of the city that imply clarity and unity. As it is expanding its status as a marketing tool for representing urban brand identity, exclusive typefaces are no longer simply a means of expressing text images.

The fonts selected as representative cases in this study are evaluated as the successful urban brand typefaces due to the distinctive features they imply.

Therefore, a different strategy in the development of future typefaces should be applied since the typefaces to express the symbolism and distinctiveness of the city and the typefaces that needs various usability must be approached from a different point of view

in the development stage. This implies that the typeface should developed and applied based on the user experience value the fundamental understanding and design worthy perspective.

This study evaluated and analyzed the urban brand typeface based on the user experience value of exclusive typeface. We hope that the core attributes of the exclusive typeface presented in this study could be used as a reference for the design concept and the improvement indicator for future research.

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