

IRSTI 06.81.55
UDC 339.972
JEL M3

<https://doi.org/10.46914/1562-2959-2024-1-4-129-143>

KARGABAYEVA S.T.,^{1*}

c.e.s., associate professor.

*e-mail: ksauleshka@gmail.com

ORCID ID: 0000-0001-9932-7676

TOREKULOVA U.,¹

PhD, associate professor.

e-mail: uldana777@mail.ru

ORCID ID: 0009-0000-2900-7319

KENESHBAYEV B.,²

PhD., senior lecturer.

e-mail: keneshbayev_bektur@ayu.edu.kz

ORCID ID: 0000-0002-4504-1418

KARGABAYEVA D.,³

m.t.s., PhD student.

e-mail: kargabaevadinara84@gmail.com

ORCID ID: 0009-0008-4907-3397

¹Turan University,

Almaty, Kazakhstan

²Khoja Akhmet Yassawi

International Kazakh-Turkish University,

Turkestan, Kazakhstan

³Al Faraby Kazakh National University,

Almaty, Kazakhstan

PROBLEMS OF BRAND FORMATION AND DEVELOPMENT IN CASE OF ALMATY CITY

Abstract

The city brand allows creating a special tourist focus and facilitates effective communication with the local community. The objectives of the city brand are to increase the city's recognisability, increase its attractiveness to tourists, attract investment and create a holistic image of the city reflecting cultural values and national identity. The article analyses the problems of formation and development of the city brand of Almaty, the key centre of Kazakhstan, known for its cultural and historical significance. Despite its rich heritage and strategic location, Almaty is facing various challenges in creating an effective brand. The article discusses the main aspects affecting the city's image, such as infrastructural deficiencies, insufficient integration of the local population into the branding processes, as well as competition. branding processes, as well as competition with other cities in the region. On the basis of qualitative and quantitative analyses conducted through surveys and interviews with local residents and tourists, the main barriers to successful brand promotion were identified. The article offers recommendations on improving the city branding strategy, including community engagement, infrastructure development and the use of digital technologies to promote the image of the city. The results of the study may be useful for state and local authorities and all stakeholders seeking to improve the overall perception of Almaty as an attractive place to live and invest.

Key words: city brand, brand identity, brand wheel, tourism, urban development, competitive advantage.

Introduction

In the context of widespread globalization and global crises, every city faces intense competition with major cities worldwide to capture attention, attract tourists, and generate revenue. Research by foreign scholars indicates that a city's brand positively influences its economic and social development, revitalizing the urban environment and drawing in investments [1, 2]. In Kazakhstan, this concept

emerged later; however, Kazakhstani cities have begun to engage in this trend, with city administrations actively working on developing city brands and branding strategies.

Every city possesses its own unique historical and cultural identity, customs, and lifestyle, which should be highlighted when developing a city brand. A city brand establishes a genuine tourist destination and fosters effective communication with the local population. The primary goal of a city brand is to enhance the city's popularity, attract tourists and investments, create a cohesive urban identity, and showcase its cultural values and national consciousness.

The process of developing a city brand involves defining a positive image of the city, conducting thorough research and analysis of various aspects of the city, and ultimately creating the brand itself. City branding conveys the true values, aspirations, and unique identity of the city. This article focuses on the branding efforts of Almaty.

A crucial step in creating a city brand is designing a city logo. Attention must be given to specific graphic symbols that represent the city's unique qualities, as well as to the region's landscape, climate, historical, national, and cultural attributes. This approach leads to a comprehensive understanding of the region and helps identify its distinctive features, resulting in a harmonious overall image.

The logo of Almaty reflects the growth of the city's tourism industry (figure 1). It incorporates historical, natural, cultural, and social characteristics of the region. According to the brand developers, the logo should retain its cultural and historical essence while aligning with modern development trends. The apple at the center symbolizes the core of the city, while the seven surrounding circles represent seven energy pathways. In Kazakh culture, the number seven holds sacred significance, embodying the traditions of the people and their aspirations for a brighter future. The inscription in Latin letters below the logo conveys the metropolis's openness and hospitality towards its visitors [3].



Figure 1 – Logo of Almaty city

Note: Compiled by the authors based on source [3].

The study addressed issues related to regional and city marketing, highlighting challenges in developing an effective city branding strategy. It is essential to involve stakeholders – namely, city administration, businesses, and residents – in this development process. By addressing the identified challenges and enhancing the city's strengths, it is possible to improve the local government's reputation, elevate the quality of life for residents, boost population growth, and positively impact the city's brand image.

Materials and methods

To study the needs and expectations of residents and tourists of Almaty, a survey of local residents and tourists of the city was conducted.

Respondents participated in the survey in person on the street and on phone filled out answers in a Google form. The survey comprised ten questions and was completed by six hundred city residents and guests aged 25 to 50. Among the respondents, 59% were women and 41% men. Since younger residents are often the most active and mobile, 70% of respondents were around the age of 35.

One of the questions asked was, «Do you like the city of Almaty?» The responses to this question are presented in figure 2.

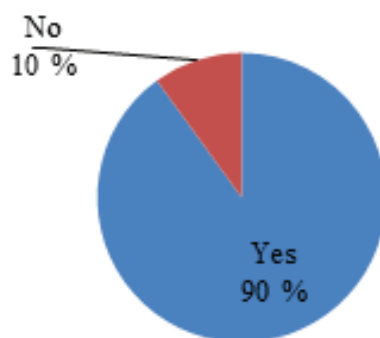


Figure 2 – Do you like the city of Almaty? the answer to the question

Note: Created on the survey results.

Most respondents answered “yes,” indicating a generally positive perception of the city.

Responses to the following questions provided insights into the perceived advantages and disadvantages of Almaty. Table 1 presents the most commonly mentioned pros and cons of the city.

Table 1 – Respondents’ Answers on the Advantages and Disadvantages of Almaty

Advantages	Disadvantages
Natural Environment, beautiful city landscape and surrounding mountains.	Ecological Issues, concerns about air pollution.
Ski Resorts, attractions like Medeu and Shymbulak.	High traffic volume and frequent traffic jams.
Well-developed city infrastructure.	Poor road quality, particularly in suburban areas.
A rich offering of theaters, museums, circuses, and cinemas.	Inadequate garbage collection and city cleanliness.
Known as a «City of Youth.»	Concerns regarding seismic safety.
The city serves as a financial and business center.	Insufficient parking spaces available.
Recreational Areas, includes parks, shopping and entertainment complexes, and restaurants.	Presence of wild markets and fairs.
Educational Opportunities, a high concentration of educational centers.	Few recreational facilities.
Good conditions for pedestrians and city buses, bicycle paths and places for sports have been created.	Insufficient development of infrastructure and transport on the outskirts of the city.
Note: Created on the survey results.	

Residents’ opinions regarding the attractions of Almaty were addressed in the next question of the survey. The responses are presented in table 2.

Notable mentions among the city’s sights included the Tabagan Mountain Ski Resort, Sharyn Gorge, Turgen Waterfall, and Yesik Lake. Additionally, the Almaty Metro was recognized as a positive aspect, with suggestions to expand it by constructing stations in suburban areas with larger populations.

When asked about where they obtain information regarding events and activities in the city, most respondents – predominantly young people – indicated that they rely on the Internet and social media platforms, such as Facebook, Tengri News, Instagram and Tik Tok (figure 3). Furthermore, residents mentioned that they also receive information about the city from friends and relatives.

Table 2 – Common answers from respondents about the sights of Almaty

Place	Main attractions
1	Kok-Tobe Hill, a popular hill with a cable car, a rotating restaurant, and panoramic views of the city.
2	Medeu Ice Rink, a world-renowned high-altitude ice rink, offering opportunities for ice skating and admiring the stunning mountain scenery.
3	Shymbulak Ski Resort with slopes for all levels of skiers and snowboarders, as well as stunning mountain views.
4	Parks, First President Park, Panfilov Park, Republic Square
5	Big Almaty Lake, Charyn Canyon, Kolsai Lakes outside the city
6	Almaty metro, a modern and efficient metro system with unique station designs.
7	Almaty Arena and Halyk Arena sports complexes
8	Theaters and Central State Museum of Kazakhstan
9	Mosques, Zenkov Cathedral
10	Kazakhstan hotel

Note: Created on the survey results.

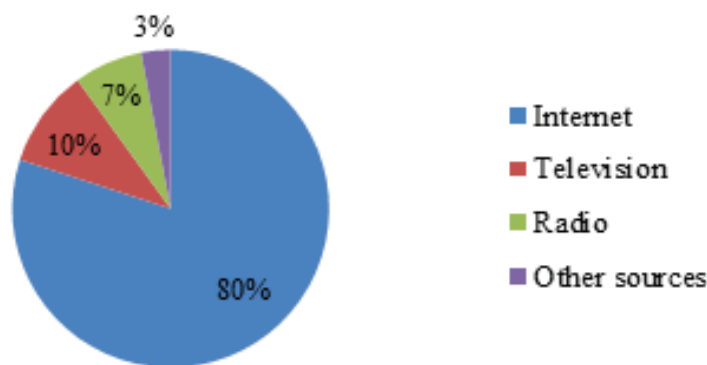


Figure 3 – «Where do you find information about cultural events and activities happening in the city?» responses to the question

Note: Created on the survey results.

In response to the question, “What role does mass media play in building and developing a city’s brand image?” 45% of respondents indicated that it has a negative impact. They noted that the media frequently covers unpleasant events and crime, which can detract from the city’s image. When asked “Is there enough information about the city?” most respondents expressed that there is inadequate information available about the city’s resorts and recreational facilities, and that festive events are not well advertised. They also pointed out the lack of social advertisements highlighting the city’s history and insufficient tourist information.

In the survey question, “What measures should be taken to enhance the attractiveness of the city’s image?” respondents provided the following suggestions:

- ◆ improve the environmental situation;
- ◆ ensure access to sports and recreational facilities for the public;
- ◆ increase public transport availability and create pedestrian-friendly conditions;
- ◆ develop the metro system further;
- ◆ repair roads in smaller areas on the outskirts of the city;
- ◆ construct modern buildings;
- ◆ produce and broadcast videos about Kazakhstan on high-rated foreign channels;
- ◆ host international image-building events;
- ◆ enhance public safety measures;
- ◆ promote city events through media and posters.

At the conclusion of the survey, two related questions were posed regarding residents' willingness to change their place of residence and their reasons for such a decision. The majority of respondents indicated that they do not wish to relocate to another city and offered several suggestions for enhancing the city's aesthetics. Only two individuals expressed a desire to move from Almaty to the suburbs or surrounding regions, citing air pollution as their primary concern.

In summary, the interviews revealed that many aspects of life in Almaty are not satisfactory for its residents. Addressing these shortcomings and amplifying the city's strengths could improve the local government's rating, enhance residents' quality of life, increase the population, and positively influence the city's brand reputation.

Moreover, local mass media should act as a vital link between the governing bodies and the community. They should highlight the issues that concern residents and advocate for solutions, as well as timely communicate plans for upcoming events in the city.

The establishment and evolution of a city brand is a strategic undertaking aimed at creating and promoting a unique and attractive image of the city. In order to analyze a city's brand effectively, it is essential to do a complete analysis of the city, identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats.

Strengths make the city of Almaty unique and attractive for living, working and relaxing, contributing to its development and prosperity. And weaknesses require attention and an integrated approach to solving in order to ensure sustainable development and improve the quality of life in Almaty.

Table 3 – SWOT analysis of Almaty city

Strengths	Weaknesses
<p>Almaty is surrounded by the picturesque mountains of the Trans-Ili Alatau, making it an ideal destination for lovers of nature and active recreation. Major natural features include: Medeu is a high-mountain sports complex, famous for its skating rink and ski slopes, Shymbulak is popular ski resort, Big Almaty Lake is one of the most beautiful places in the vicinity of the city, attracting tourists and local residents [4].</p> <p>Almaty has a rich cultural heritage and many attractions, such as: Ascension Cathedral is one of the tallest wooden buildings in the world. Central State Museum of the Republic of Kazakhstan is the largest museum in Kazakhstan, where the history and culture of the country is presented. Panfilov and Arbat streets, decorated with murals, create a unique atmosphere for walking.</p> <p>Almaty is an important economic center of Kazakhstan, playing a key role in the financial and business life of the country. The city is home to many banks, international companies and large corporations. A modern transport network, including an international airport, railways and highways, providing excellent connections with other regions and countries [4].</p> <p>Almaty is known for its educational and scientific institutions, and the city is a center for scientific research in various fields.</p> <p>Almaty has a temperate continental climate, with hot summers and mild winters, making it comfortable to live in. Numerous parks and green areas improve the quality of life and create a favorable environment [4].</p> <p>Almaty is a multinational city, which is reflected in its cultural diversity and rich social life. Cultural events, festivals and exhibitions are regularly held here, which help strengthen interethnic ties and mutual understanding.</p>	<p>Almaty faces transport infrastructure problems. The city often suffers from significant traffic jams, especially during rush hours, resulting in long delays and inconvenience for residents. Despite the availability of metro and bus routes, the public transport system is not always efficient enough to cover all areas of the city [4].</p> <p>Environmental issues remain an important issue for Almaty. Due to high levels of vehicular traffic and industrial activity, the city often faces air pollution problems, especially during the winter. The waste management and recycling system in Almaty needs modernization and improvement.</p> <p>Almaty, similar to many other major cities, grapples with the issue of social inequality. There is a significant income gap between different social groups, leading to economic and social tension. Uneven access to quality health, educational and social services in different areas of the city.</p> <p>The city is located in a seismically active zone, which makes it vulnerable to earthquakes: Almaty is at risk of earthquakes, which requires constant attention to building standards and safety measures.</p> <p>Some parts of the city's infrastructure are in need of modernization: in some areas of the city, the water supply and sewerage systems are outdated and require updating. There are problems with the reliability and stability of energy supply, especially during periods of peak consumption.</p>

Continuation of table 3

Opportunities	Threats
<p>Almaty is an important tourist center due to its unique natural and cultural heritage: the Trans-Ili Alatau Mountains, high-altitude Lake Issyk, Charyn Canyon and other natural sites attract tourists all year round. Festivals, exhibitions, concerts and other cultural events contribute to the development of cultural tourism. Medeu and Shymbulak attract winter sports enthusiasts not only from Kazakhstan, but also from other countries.</p> <p>Almaty is the economic center of Kazakhstan with developed financial and business structures. The city is the country's financial hub, with the headquarters of many banks and financial institutions located. Developed infrastructure and support for innovation make Almaty attractive for new businesses and start-ups, especially in the field of IT and technology. Almaty has a favorable geographical location and is an important transit hub between Europe and Asia, which contributes to the development of international trade and investment. The city is known for its educational and scientific institutions, which contribute to the development of intellectual potential.</p> <p>Cultural diversity and diversity contribute to the social and cultural life of the city.</p> <p>Modern infrastructure and opportunities for further urbanization offer prospects for improving the quality of life. A well-developed transport network and the planned expansion of the metro improve connections between different parts of the city and facilitate the movement of residents and visitors. The active development of new residential complexes and the modernization of old areas helps improve living conditions and attract new residents.</p> <p>Opportunities for the development of environmentally friendly technologies and sustainable urbanism. Implementation of programs to reduce air pollution, develop green areas and environmentally friendly transport. Investments in renewable energy projects such as solar and wind.</p>	<p>Almaty, like any large city, faces a number of threats that can hamper its development and the well-being of its residents. Almaty is one of the most polluted cities in Kazakhstan, due to the high concentration of cars and industrial enterprises. Air pollution adversely affects residents' health and diminishes their quality of life. The city is located in a seismic zone, which makes it vulnerable to earthquakes. This requires special attention to building codes and emergency preparedness.</p> <p>Rapid urbanization and migration in Almaty are leading to infrastructure overload, population growth and increasing social inequality. This puts pressure on the healthcare system, education and housing.</p> <p>The city's economy is affected by a variety of factors, including external economic conditions and fluctuations in energy prices. Economic instability can result in job losses and a decline in the population's standard of living. Almaty suffers from significant traffic congestion, which is associated with a high level of motorization and insufficient development of public transport. This leads to wasted time, increased fuel costs and additional air pollution.</p> <p>Deteriorating infrastructure, including roads, water and sewer systems, requires significant investment to upgrade and maintain.</p> <p>Climate change could result in more frequent and severe extreme weather events, including droughts and floods. This could negatively impact agriculture, water resources and the city's overall resilience to natural disasters.</p> <p>Population growth and economic inequality can contribute to increased crime rates, which affects residents' overall sense of safety and can reduce a city's attractiveness for investment and tourism.</p>
<p>Note: Compiled by the authors based on source [4].</p>	

Almaty offers numerous opportunities for growth across various sectors, including tourism, economics, education, culture, and sustainable development. The effective harnessing of these opportunities can foster the city's ongoing prosperity and enhance the quality of life for its residents.

But the city of Almaty with a population of one million faces many threats that require an integrated approach to overcome them. Measures are needed to improve the environmental situation, develop infrastructure, prepare for seismic risks and solve social problems. Sustainable development of the city should include the introduction of innovative technologies and management methods, as well as the active participation of the local community in resolving these issues.

Taking into account the strengths and weaknesses, opportunities and threats of the city of Almaty, we propose to develop a brand wheel for the city of Almaty, which will help clearly define the key elements of the brand that will be used to promote it. We know, the brand wheel includes the core of the brand, its attributes, values, benefits and personality.

Thus, we propose to consider the Almaty city brand wheel from our point of view.

Attributes: Mountains, green parks, clean lakes, ski resorts. Museums, theaters, architectural monuments, traditions. Financial and business center of Kazakhstan, developed infrastructure. Universities, research institutes, international schools. Opportunities for mountain sports, trekking, mountaineering.

Benefits: The pleasure of living and visiting a city rich in cultural events and natural beauty. A sense of belonging to a dynamic and cosmopolitan community. Access to quality urban infrastructure and services. Educational, career and business opportunities in a fast-growing city.

Values: Friendliness and openness of city residents. Support for new technologies and start-ups. Committed to conservation and environmentally friendly solutions. Respect for cultural traditions and diversity.

Personality: Almaty is open to new ideas and people from different countries. The city is constantly developing and modernizing. Almaty successfully combines urban dynamics and natural beauty. The city preserves its unique traditions and culture.

Brand essence: Almaty is a city that combines a rich cultural heritage with dynamic economic development and unique nature. In Almaty you will find harmony between the modern urban rhythm and the beautiful nature of the Trans-Ili Alatau mountains.

Formation and development of the brand Almaty requires a deep understanding of its unique characteristics and capabilities. Using the brand wheel concept will help city officials identify key brand elements and promote them effectively.

To comprehend a city's brand and formulate an effective strategy, it is essential to explore and appreciate the city's culture. This involves examining the factors that have shaped the city and understanding those that influence the values associated with its brand. By gaining insight into the city's culture and way of life, one can highlight the value of the city's brand and strategize for its development. A comprehensive branding strategy for the city must be developed and managed effectively.

A city's brand strategy serves as a model of its reputation, functioning as a strategic tool for embodying the city's values and acting as a catalyst for long-term success. The objective of this strategy is to create value that ensures the best possible living conditions for both residents and visitors. While the city itself may be viewed as an administrative space where people reside, the city brand encapsulates the emotions and psyche of the community.

Brands act as distinct identifiers among competing products and services, helping to reduce market uncertainty and save consumers time in their decision-making processes. Anholt [5] identified the strengths and weaknesses of the country's image according to six key parameters: culture, politics, commercial and human assets, investment potential and tourist attractiveness. Kavaratzis' [6] research highlights the importance of creating a framework that describes the processes of city branding and promotes economic development, investment and tourism, and the resolution of social problems; his approach to solving the problem can help cities strengthen their position in a competitive environment and increase the loyalty and engagement of local residents. When establishing a city brand, it is crucial to develop a strategy that highlights the city's historical evolution while showcasing its culture and traditions.

Branding is the process of identifying and showcasing personal qualities. In the context of city branding, it is essential to highlight the city's uniqueness in comparison to others. External communications should target specific groups, such as tourists or investors.

Government attention towards enhancing the city's value, competitiveness, and appeal to tourists has grown significantly. According to Burgess [7], city marketing focuses on leveraging the city's strengths and promoting it effectively [8]. The researchers provide relevant examples of how social platforms can influence the creation and distribution of branded content to target audiences [9]. Analyzing the interactions and presence of these cities on social media provides insight into how municipalities can more effectively engage with their communities and distribute brand messages, which will allow cities to increase their visibility and attract both tourists and investors. It goes beyond mere promotion for tourist attraction and financial gain; it encompasses the city's reputational value. While a marketing strategy often emphasizes profit from sales and consumption, a branding strategy seeks to establish enduring relationships with its audience.

Kleinova K., Urgeova J. looked at how policies and other government decisions can have both positive and negative effects on overall image, and they emphasized the role of not only government but also cultural and economic factors such as tourist attractiveness, exports, and national labor force in creating a holistic and attractive image of a country [10].

Muteshi K.H., Maina S.M. explore the interesting and increasingly relevant topic of country branding in a competitive global environment, proposing to move beyond a superficial perception of a country brand to a deeper, marketing-mix-based one. Countries are forced to compete not only for the attention of tourists, but also for investors, students, and potential residents [11]. Rather than limiting themselves to beautiful visuals, as most countries do, they emphasize the need for strategic country branding, which requires an understanding of a holistic approach to marketing.

Echattabi H. demonstrate the possibility for regions to independently form their own unique identity and attract investment based on local characteristics; the scientists emphasize the synergistic effect between regionalization and place marketing, which helps regions to attract resources and investment more effectively, thereby improving their economic potential [12].

Shaalán M., Durugbo C. focus on branding concepts and practices that play a key role in shaping positive images of cities and metropolises, highlighting multiple aspects including branding strategies, culture and creativity, identity and quality, which highlights the multifaceted nature of the city branding process [13]. This diversity of concepts provides insight into how different elements interact and influence the success of a city brand in attracting tourists.

Wahdania Suardi and other focus on three processes that urban branding goes through: planning and infrastructure, observation of other places, and brand representation on social media [14]. The use of different media formats, such as websites and social media, highlights the importance of digital platforms in contemporary branding, which is especially relevant in the era of digitalization.

Dejanovic A., Ljubojevic C., Lukic J. emphasize the importance of the city's history and culture, including language, customs, myths, symbols, and values [15]. This approach confirms that successful branding cannot be achieved solely on the basis of statistical data – a deep understanding of local traditions and cultural characteristics is necessary. This is important for creating an authentic brand that reflects the “core” of the city and its uniqueness.

Lukic J. and Dejanovic a note that an important point in the formation of city branding is the characteristics of the local population, their hospitality, friendliness and lifestyle [16]. These aspects form a unique atmosphere of the city, which can significantly affect its attractiveness to tourists and investors. In the digital age, when information about cities is instantly available through social networks and other platforms, local residents become “ambassadors” of their city, influencing its reputation and image. Taking into account the research of the above mentioned scientists, we conducted research on the issue of formation and development of branding of the city of Almaty. Our people are distinguished by hospitality, friendliness, and the city has its own unique way of life.

Results and discussion

Almaty has seen a steady increase in domestic tourism, especially noticeable after 2020. The pandemic has contributed to an increase in the interest of Kazakhstanis in traveling within the country, which has caused an uptick in tourist numbers coming to Almaty [17].

The indicators of domestic tourism in Kazakhstan have been on the rise for the second consecutive year. Official statistics reveal that in the first half of 2022, the number of domestic tourists accommodated in various facilities surged by 26% compared to the same period in 2021, reaching a total of 2.7 million (up from 2.1 million in the second quarter of 2021).

This figure for the first half of 2022 exceeds pre-pandemic levels, surpassing the 2 million recorded in the second quarter of 2019 by 600,000 tourists.

Accommodation establishments provided services amounting to 67.7 billion tenge, marking a 52% increase compared to the first half of 2021, when the figure was 44.6 billion tenge. This amount also surpasses the pre-pandemic level from the second quarter of 2019, which was 50.9 billion tenge.

Additionally, there has been a nearly 2.5-fold increase in the number of foreign tourists accommodated, reaching 292,000 compared to just 123,000 in the first half of 2021. From June 1 to August 8, 2022, over 100,000 foreign tourists from more than 160 countries visited Kazakhstan.

Almaty, in particular, is a major attraction for foreign tourists, as evidenced by the rapid growth in tourist numbers. By the end of 2022, the city welcomed a total of 1.8 million tourists, representing an increase of 588,561 (or 0.7 times) compared to the same period the previous year. Domestic tourists in Almaty rose by 1.4 times to reach 1 million, while the number of foreign tourists soared by 2.8 times to 270,100.

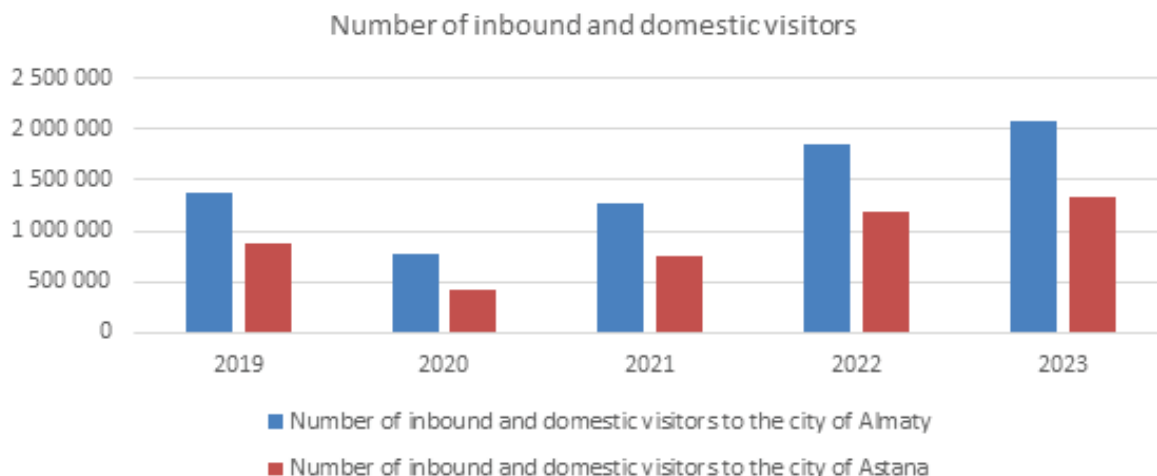


Figure 4 – Visitors to the city of Almaty and Astana

Note: Compiled by the authors based on source [18].

The number of accommodation establishments in Almaty has seen a notable increase of 17%, reaching a total of 383 units. This includes: 5-star hotels: 8 (2% share); 4-star hotels: 17 (4.5% share); 3-star hotels: 6 (1.6% share); uncategorized accommodations (without guest certificates): 238 (62.1% share). Other types (including chalets, houses in resort areas, guest houses, boarding houses, and camps): 114 (29.8% share).

Additionally, the total accommodation capacity in Almaty’s hotels has risen to over 24,300 beds, reflecting a 13.3% increase. The total volume of services provided by these accommodation facilities has reached 37 billion tenge, marking a significant doubling in service volume compared to previous periods.

In recent years, Almaty has been actively developing its tourism infrastructure. New hotels and entertainment complexes are being built, which helps attract tourists. The city also promotes its cultural and historical attractions, such as museums and historical monuments [17].

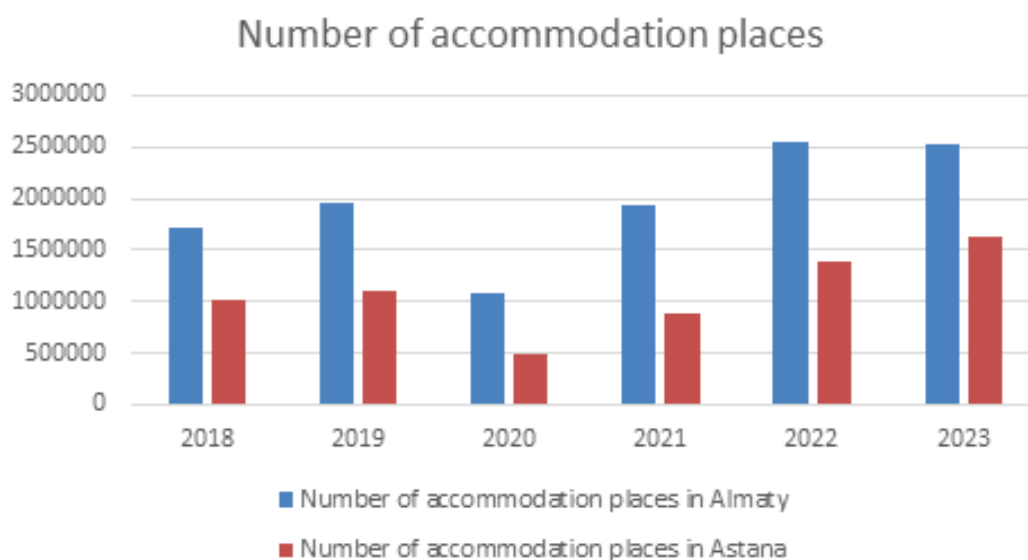


Figure 5 – Number of accommodation places in the city of Almaty and Astana

Note: Compiled by the authors based on source [18].

Almaty attracts significant investment in the tourism industry. For example, from 2019 to 2022, investment in the city's tourism infrastructure increased significantly, which contributed to improving the quality of service and expanding opportunities for tourists. Investments in the tourism sector increased by 47.7%, reaching 106.4 billion tenge or 6% of the total investments in fixed assets. As can be seen from Figure 5, accommodation locations in the city of Almaty have increased every year, this suggests that the flow of tourists into the city is increasing every year and they need to be accommodated in various hotels. Over the past 5 years, 12 hotels with 1,345 rooms have opened in Almaty, including chain hotels (Hilton, Accor and InterContinental) [18]. As you can see, the growth of indicators indicates an increase in the attractiveness of the city of Almaty. The largest number of tourists come to Almaty during the summer months, when the city offers many cultural events and natural beauty. Winter tourism is also developing thanks to ski resorts and other winter activities.

Analyzing the competitive environment of the city of Almaty and the position of other cities in the Central Asian region and on the international stage requires taking into account many factors, including economic development, infrastructure, attractiveness for investors and quality of life. If we consider the main competitors and the position of Almaty in comparison with other large cities in the region, we can identify the competitive advantage of the city of Almaty. Thus, the city of Astana, the capital of Kazakhstan, attracts significant investment due to its status as the political and administrative center of the country. The city is actively developing, including through major infrastructure projects and international events. Astana is known for its modern architecture and developed infrastructure, which makes it attractive for business and tourism. Thanks to planning and investment, Astana offers a high quality of life with modern housing conditions and developed public services.

Tashkent is an important economic, cultural center and capital of Uzbekistan, actively developing thanks to reforms aimed at attracting foreign investment and improving the business climate. Tashkent has a developed transport network, including a metro, and many new projects to improve urban infrastructure. The city offers a good quality of life with access to quality educational and health services. In recent years, various tourist tours have been organized to Tashkent and Samarkand, which are very attractive to residents of Almaty and throughout Kazakhstan.

Bishkek, the capital of Kyrgyzstan, is seeking to attract investment even as it faces economic challenges and political instability. Bishkek is developing its infrastructure, but it requires significant improvements to the transport system and urban environment. The quality of life in Bishkek is lower compared to Almaty and Tashkent due to limited economic opportunities and infrastructural problems.

Almaty has a strong competitive position due to economic development, developed infrastructure and high quality of life, which we noted in the SWOT analysis of the city. We also noted that the city faces a number of challenges, including air pollution and traffic congestion, that require solutions to maintain and strengthen its competitiveness. Comparison with other major cities in the region, such as Astana, Tashkent and Bishkek, shows that Almaty has significant potential for further growth and development, while remaining an attractive location for investment and residence.

The primary concern for the residents of Almaty is the city's ecological state, as highlighted by a survey indicating that Almaty ranks among the top one hundred most environmentally hazardous cities in the world, specifically holding the 95th position. The air quality in the city is severely affected, with a pollution level classified as seventh, compared to a standard level of nine, which is considered high. Notably, 65% of atmospheric pollution is attributed to vehicular emissions, with 11,877 stationary pollution sources recorded. The majority of these pollutants originate from the city's fuel and energy enterprises [17]. To address these pressing issues, a shift towards green energy consumption is imperative to replace traditional fuel-energy sources. The city's pollution problem is exacerbated by traffic congestion, suggesting that the development of metropolitan areas could alleviate both ecological and traffic challenges. Additionally, enhancing recreational facilities and parks accessible to the public could significantly improve the environmental situation.

Almaty also holds considerable potential as a regional tourism hub, particularly in mountain skiing and winter tourism. Ongoing efforts are focused on developing the necessary infrastructure to support this growth. To attract international visitors, it is crucial to produce promotional videos showcasing Almaty and distribute them through renowned international television channels. Social media has emerged as a vital marketing platform, leading city officials to engage foreign bloggers to report on Almaty and its surrounding regions [19].

Despite these initiatives, there seems to be a disconnect between consumers and city branding efforts, as many residents remain unaware of local events and initiatives. To combat this, recent budget allocations have been dedicated to enhancing communication from local authorities regarding state

and central efforts aimed at regional development across various sectors [19], ensuring that residents receive the necessary information about city activities.

Considering the problems branding of the city of Almaty, it is need to enhanc strategic approaches to overcome existing challenges and improve the overall image of the city. New parks and green spaces need to be created to combat air pollution. This will not only improve the environmental situation, but also boost the city’s appeal for both residents and tourists. Invest in public transport, increase the fleet of electric buses and expand metro networks. Introduce stricter emission standards for industrial enterprises and transport, modernize heating networks. It is necessary to conduct information campaigns among the population about caring for the environment and the importance of environmental responsibility, for example, not leaving garbage behind after vacation. The city administration should also collaborate with non-governmental organizations and universities to carry out environmental initiatives and activities, such as cleaning areas.

To improve the urban environment, it is necessary to develop smart city technologies. The “Smart Almaty” project is operating in the city, it is necessary, within the framework of this project, to develop technologies for managing traffic, lighting, utilities and other aspects of city life. So, in New York, smart trash cans have been developed that report when they are full. Unfortunately, our citizens still don’t even sort their garbage.

To strengthen the cultural and historical heritage, it is necessary to create tourist routes around the city and its immediate surroundings, which include the historical and cultural attractions of the city of Almaty. To preserve and promote heritage, investment in the restoration and conservation of historical buildings and monuments is necessary, thereby highlighting the cultural richness of the city. It is also necessary to support museums and galleries, organize exhibitions and cultural events.

Of course, to promote the city’s image, it is necessary to use digital marketing, that is, actively use social networks, websites and mobile applications, create interesting content with stories about the unique characteristics of the city and notify about upcoming events.

To improve the image and competitiveness of the city in the international arena, it is essential to make business relations with sister cities, conduct cultural festivals and joint research, joint business forums to attract investment, and exchange experiences in the development of urban infrastructure, which will improve the quality of life in both cities.

Conclusion

The formation and development of the brand of the city of Almaty is a complex and multidimensional process that requires an integrated approach and the active participation of all interested parties. Despite the existing problems, such as insufficient integration of the local population, infrastructure difficulties and competition with other cities, Almaty has significant potential for creating a unique and attractive brand. The application of the proposed recommendations, such as the involvement of citizens in branding processes, the development of infrastructure and the use of modern digital technologies, can significantly improve the image of the city and contribute to its further development. It is important that state bodies, business and local communities work together to achieve this goal, thereby creating a competitive and attractive image of Almaty for both tourists and investors. The future of the Almaty brand depends on joint efforts and sustainable strategies aimed at identifying and promoting the uniqueness of the city.

Thus, the development of the brand of Almaty should be aimed at solving existing problems by the administration and using the strengths and opportunities of the city to create an attractive and sustainable image. Investing in the city’s ecology, improving transport infrastructure, managing urbanization, preserving cultural heritage and active marketing efforts will help Almaty become a more competitive and attractive city for residents, tourists and investors.

REFERENCES

- 1 Lucarelli A., Berg P.O. City Branding: A State-of-the-art Review of the Research Domain // Journal of Place Management and Development. 2011. No. 4(1). P. 9–27.
- 2 Hanna S., Rowley J. Place brand practitioners perspectives on the management and evaluation of the brand experience // The Town planning review. 2013. No. 84(4). P. 473–493.
- 3 Тойшибекова А. В Алматы представили туристический бренд города. – 2016 / Kazinform. URL: <https://dixinews.today/articles/zhizn/23856/>

- 4 Абуев А. Туризм в Казахстане: исследование отрасли, проблематика и перспективы. – 2023. URL: <https://optimism.kz/2023/11/22/turizm-v-kazahstane-issledovanie-otrasli-problematika-i-perspektivy>
- 5 Anholt S. How the world sees the world: the Anholt nation brands index // *Journal of Advertising Research*. 2005, no. 45(3), pp. 296–304.
- 6 Kavaratzis M. From city marketing to city branding: towards a theoretical framework for developing city brands // *Place Branding*. 2004. No. 1.
- 7 Burgess J. Selling places: Environmental images for the executive // *Regional Studies*. 1982. No. 16. P. 11–17.
- 8 Gyeonggi Research Institute. A study on the methodology of developing city brand Identity: cases of cities in Gyeonggi Province. 2007.
- 9 Branding Cities in the Age of Social Media: A Comparative Assessment of Local Government Performance / Efe Sevin in *Social Media and Local Governments*. 2016, pp. 301–320.
- 10 Kleinova K., Urgeova J. Country image and branding of Slovakia // *Zeszyty Naukowe SGGW Polityki Europejskie Finanse i Marketing*. June 2011. P. 50–58.
- 11 Muteshi K.H., Maina S.M. Beyond Nation Branding to Building Country Brands through Marketing Mix // *The International Journal of business & management*. 2020. Vol 8. Issue 5. P. 11–14.
- 12 Echattabi H. Place branding and marketing and advanced regionalization in Morocco // An opportunity for strengthening investment attractiveness. *Revue Alternatives Managériales Economiques*. 2024. Vol 6. No. 3. P. 100–114.
- 13 Shaalan M., Durugbo C. City branding as innovation for tourism development: systematic review of literature from 2011 to 2023. April 2024. *Management Review Quarterly*.
- 14 Suardi W., Nurmandi A., Mutiarin D., PriyoPurnomo E., Pribadi U., Purwaningsih T., ZarinaZulkifli M., Younus M. A Historical Review for City Branding. Hyper Competition, Challenges, and Improvement Opportunities // *Journal Bina Praja*. March 2023. No. 15(1). P. 85–99.
- 15 Dejanovic A., Ljubojevic C., Lukic J. Defining and managing city brand essence: case study of Vranje // *Marketing*. December 2023. No. 54(2). P. 112–122.
- 16 Lukic J., Dejanovic A. The role and importance of people dimension in city branding in digital age // *Zbornik Mes, Conference: Mediji i ekonomija*. September 2022. No. 1(8).
- 17 Маулетбай С. На пиар Алматы за рубежом в 2021 году планируют потратить более 545 млн тенге. 2020. URL: <https://informburo.kz/novosti/na-piar-almaty-za-rubezhom-v-2021-godu-planiruyut-potratit-bolee-545-mln-tenge.html>
- 18 Бюро национальной статистики агентства по стратегическому планированию и реформам Республики Казахстан. Статистика туризма. Динамические ряды. URL: <https://stat.gov.kz/ru/industries/business-statistics/stat-tourism/dynamic-tables/> (дата обращения: 21.06.2024)
- 19 Алматы стал лидером по количеству прибывших иностранных туристов. URL: <https://ru.sputnik.kz/amp/20240404/almaty-stal-liderom-po-kolichestvu-pribyvshikh-inostrannykh-turistov--43429383.html>

REFERENCES

- 1 Lucarelli A., Berg P.O. (2011) City Branding: A State-of-the-art Review of the Research Domain // *Journal of Place Management and Development*. No. 4(1). P. 9–27. (In English).
- 2 Hanna S., Rowley J. (2013) Place brand practitioners perspectives on the management and evaluation of the brand experience // *The Town planning review*. No. 84(4). P. 473–493. (In English).
- 3 Tojshibekova A. (2016) V Almaty predstavili turistichekij brend goroda. / *Kazinform*. URL: <https://dixinews.today/articles/zhizn/23856/>. (In English).
- 4 Abuev A. (2023) Turizm v Kazahstane: issledovanie otrasli, problematika i perspektivy. . URL: <https://optimism.kz/2023/11/22/turizm-v-kazahstane-issledovanie-otrasli-problematika-i-perspektivy>. (In English).
- 5 Anholt S. (2005) How the world sees the world: the Anholt nation brands index // *Journal of Advertising Research*, no. 45(3), pp. 296–304. (In English).
- 6 Kavaratzis M. (2004) From city marketing to city branding: towards a theoretical framework for developing city brands // *Place Branding*. No. 1. (In English).
- 7 Burgess J. (1982) Selling places: Environmental images for the executive // *Regional Studies*. No. 16. P. 11–17. (In English).
- 8 Gyeonggi Research Institute. A study on the methodology of developing city brand Identity: cases of cities in Gyeonggi Province. 2007. (In English).
- 9 Branding Cities in the Age of Social Media: A Comparative Assessment of Local Government Performance / Efe Sevin in *Social Media and Local Governments*. 2016, pp. 301–320. (In English).

- 10 Kleinova K., Urgeova J. (2011) Country image and branding of Slovakia // Zeszyty Naukowe SGGW Polityki Europejskie Finanse i Marketing. P. 50–58. (In English).
- 11 Muteshi K.H., Maina S.M. (2020) Beyond Nation Branding to Building CountryBrands through Marketing Mix // The Internationak Journal of business & management. Vol. 8. Issue 5. P. 11–14. (In English).
- 12 Echattabi H. (2024) Place branding and marketing and advanced regionalization in Morocco // An opportunity for strengthening investment attractiveness. Revue Alternatives Managériales Economiques. Vol. 6. No. 3. P. 100–114. (In English).
- 13 Shaalan M., Durugbo C. (2024) City branding as innovation for tourism development: systematic review of literature from 2011 to 2023. Management Review Quarterly. (In English).
- 14 Suardi W., Nurmandi A., Mutiarin D., PriyoPurnomo E., Pribadi U., Purwaningsih T., ZarinaZulkifli M., Younus M. (2023) A Historical Review for City Branding. Hyper Competition, Challenges, and Improvement Opportunities // Journal Bina Praja. March. No. 15(1). P. 85–99. (In English).
- 15 Dejanovic A., Ljubojevic C., Lukic J. (2023) Defining and managing city brand essence: case study of Vranje // Marketing. No. 54(2). P. 112–122. (In English).
- 16 Lukic J., Dejanovic A. (2022) The role and importance of people dimension in city branding in digital age // Zbornik Mes, Conference: Mediji i ekonomija. No. 1(8). (In Russian).
- 17 Mauletbaj C. Na piar Almaty za rubezhom v 2021 godu planirujut potratit' bolee 545 mln tenge. 2020. URL: <https://informburo.kz/novosti/na-piar-almaty-za-rubezhom-v-2021-godu-planiruyut-potratit-bolee-545-mln-tenge.html>. (In Russian).
- 18 Bjuro nacional'noj statistiki agentstva po strategicheskomu planirovaniju i reformam Respubliki Kazahstan. Statistika turizma. Dinamicheskie rjady. URL: <https://stat.gov.kz/ru/industries/business-statistics/stat-tourism/dynamic-tables/> (data obrashhenija: 21.06.2024). (In Russian).
- 19 Almaty stal liderom po kolichestvu pribyvshih inostrannyh turistov. URL: <https://ru.sputnik.kz/amp/20240404/almaty-stal-liderom-po-kolichestvu-pribyvshikh-inostrannykh-turistov--43429383.html>. (In Russian).

ҚАРҒАБАЕВА С.,*¹

Э.Ф.К., қауымдастырылған профессор.

*e-mail: ksauleshka@gmail.com

ORCID ID: 0000-0001-9932-7676

ТӨРЕКУЛОВА Ұ.,¹

PhD, қауымдастырылған профессор.

e-mail: uldana777@mail.ru

ORCID ID: 0009-0000-2900-7319

КЕНЕШБАЕВ Б.,²

PhD., аға оқытушы.

e-mail: keneshbayev_bektur@ayu.edu.kz

ORCID ID: 0000-0002-4504-1418

ҚАРҒАБАЕВА Д.,³

Т.Ф.М., докторант.

e-mail: kargabaevadinara84@gmail.com

ORCID ID: 0009-0008-4907-3397

¹«Туран» университеті,

Алматы қ., Қазақстан

²Қожа Ахмет Ясауи атындағы Халықаралық

қазақ-түрік университеті,

Түркістан қ., Қазақстан

³әл-Фараби атындағы Қазақ ұлттық университеті,

Алматы қ., Қазақстан

АЛМАТЫ ҚАЛАСЫ МЫСАЛЫНДА БРЕНДТІ ҚАЛЫПТАСТЫРУ ЖӘНЕ ДАМУ МӘСЕЛЕЛЕРІ

Андатпа

Қала бренді ерекше туристердің назарын аударуға және жергілікті қоғамдастықпен тиімді байланыс ортануға ықпал етеді. Қала брендінің мақсаты қаланың танымалдылығын, туристер үшін қала гартымдылығын

арттыру, инвестицияларды тарту, мәдени құндылықтарын және ұлттық сәйкестігін көрсететін қаланың толық келбетін жасау болып табылады. Мақалада Қазақстанның маңызды орталығының бірі, өзінің мәдени және тарихи маңыздылығымен әйгілі, Алматы қаласы брендінің қалыптасу және даму мәселелері қарастырылған. Алматының бай мұрасына және стратегиялық орналасуына қарамастан, тиімді брендін жасау үдерісінде түрлі қиындықтарға тап болады. Мақалада инфрақұрылымдық кемшіліктер, брендинг үдерсіне жергілікті халықтың жеткіліксіз бірігуі, сондай ақ аймақтың басқа қалалармен бәсекелестік, қала имиджына әсер ететін маңызды аспектілер қарастырылған. Сапалық және сандық талдау негізінде, жергілікті халықтан және туристерден сауаланама жүргізу арқылы брендті табысты жылжыту үшін негізгі кедергілер анықталған. Мақалада қоғамдастықтың қатысуы, инфрақұрылымды дамыту және қала имиджын жылжыту үшін цифрлық технологияларды пайдалануды қоса айтқанда, қаланың брендинг стратегиясын жетілдіру бойынша ұсыныстар берілген. Зерттеу нәтижелері Алматыны өмір сүру және инвестициялар үшін тартымды жер ретінде ойды жақсартуға ұмтылатын мемлекеттік, жергілікті билік органдарына және барлық қызығушылық білдірген органдарға пайдалы болады.

Тірек сөздер: қала бренді, брендтің сәйкестігі, бренд деңгелегі, туризм, қаланың дамуы, бәсекелестік артықшылық.

КАРГАБАЕВА С.Т.,*¹

к.э.н., ассоциированный профессор.

*e-mail: ksauleshka@gmail.com

ORCID ID: 0000-0001-9932-7676

ТОРЕКУЛОВА У.,¹

PhD, ассоциированный профессор.

e-mail: uldana777@mail.ru

ORCID ID: 0009-0000-2900-7319

КЕНЕШБАЕВ Б.,²

PhD., сениор-лектор.

e-mail: keneshbayev_bektur@ayu.edu.kz

ORCID ID: 0000-0002-4504-1418

КАРГАБАЕВА Д.,³

м.т.н., докторант.

e-mail: kargabaevadinara84@gmail.com

ORCID ID: 0009-0008-4907-3397

¹Университет «Туран»,

г. Алматы, Казахстан

²Международный казахско-турецкий университет им. Ходжи Ахмеда Ясави,

г. Туркестан, Казахстан

³Казахский национальный

университет им. аль-Фараби,

г. Алматы, Казахстан

ПРОБЛЕМЫ ФОРМИРОВАНИЯ И РАЗВИТИЯ БРЕНДА НА ПРИМЕРЕ ГОРОДА АЛМАТЫ

Аннотация

Бренд города позволяет создать особый туристический фокус и способствует эффективной коммуникации с местным сообществом. Целями бренда города являются повышение узнаваемости города, увеличение его привлекательности для туристов, привлечение инвестиций и создание целостного образа города, отражающего культурные ценности и национальную идентичность. В статье анализируются проблемы формирования и развития бренда г. Алматы, ключевого центра Казахстана, известного своей культурной и исторической значимостью. Несмотря на богатое наследие и стратегическое расположение, г. Алматы сталкивается с раз-

личными вызовами в процессе создания эффективного бренда. В статье рассматриваются основные аспекты, влияющие на имидж города, такие как инфраструктурные недостатки, недостаточная интеграция местного населения в процессы брендинга, а также конкуренция с другими городами региона. На основе качественного и количественного анализа, проведенного посредством опросов и интервью с местными жителями и туристами, выявлены основные барьеры для успешного продвижения бренда. В статье предлагаются рекомендации по совершенствованию стратегии брендинга города, включая вовлечение сообщества, развитие инфраструктуры и использование цифровых технологий для продвижения имиджа города. Результаты исследования могут быть полезны государственным органам, местным органам власти и всем заинтересованным сторонам, стремящимся улучшить общее восприятие г. Алматы как привлекательного места для жизни и инвестиций.

Ключевые слова: бренд города, идентичность бренда, колесо бренда, туризм, городское развитие, конкурентное преимущество.

Article submission date: 01.07.2024