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Topical Symbols of Kyiv as a Tourism Brand

Símbolos actuales de Kiev como marca turística

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Abstract

The attention to branding, from theorists as well as from practitioners, had remained at a very high level for the 2000s and 2010s. Many new branches of branding theory have emerged, and place branding was among them. Actually, place branding has become an umbrella term, a generic definition for three areas of study and practice: nation branding, region branding, and city branding. Every year, new scientific, journalistic, business articles, and books on place branding emerge, there are even several specialized periodicals devoted to this field of branding. This study aims to identify the most relevant and effective symbol of the Ukrainian capital city Kyiv as a tourism brand. Questionnaire surveys and the content analysis of literature and mass media are used. Key segments and sub-segments of the target audience of Kyiv tourism branding are determined, as well as the key factor of influence on the formation of the opinion regarding the tourism symbols of Kyiv. The most common popular symbol is compared with the real resources of the city. Thus, a set of relevances is found appropriate for the development of effective branding of Kyiv.

Keywords: recreation, identity, place branding, urbanism, greening.

Resumen

El foco en una marca, tanto desde la teoría como desde los profesionales que la aplican, se ha mantenido en un alto nivel entre los años 2000 y 2010. Varias ramas sobre teorías de marcas han surgido, y la marca de lugar se encuentra entre estas propuestas. Actualmente, la marca de lugar se ha convertido en un término genérico para tres áreas de estudio y práctica: marca nacional, marca regional y marca de ciudad. Cada año, nuevos especialistas científicos, periodistas, artículos de negocios y libros sobre marcas emergen, sumando varias revistas especializadas sobre el tema. El presente estudio propone como objetivo identificar los más relevantes y significativos símbolos de la capital de Ucrania, Kiev, como marcas de turismo. Para ello fueron aplicadas encuestas y análisis de literatura y medios masivos de comunicación, y se determinan los segmentos y subsegmentos clave

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del público objetivo de la marca turística de Kiev, así como los factores clave de influencia en la formación de opiniones sobre símbolos turísticos de esta ciudad, comparando el símbolo popular más común con los recursos efectivos locales. Consideramos entonces que es apropiado mantener un conjunto de aspectos relevantes para el desarrollo de una marca efectiva en la ciudad de Kiev.

Palabras clave: recreación, identidad, marca de lugar, espacios verdes.

Introduction

Global trends, such as the continuation of urbanization and intraregional decentralization, the growth of tourism importance for the global economy, the increase of migration flows, and the mobility of labor resources, contribute to the increase of the topicality of city branding. The attention to branding, from theorists as well as from practitioners, had remained at a very high level for the 2000s and 2010s. There many new branches of its theory have emerged, and place branding was among them. Actually, it has become an umbrella term, a generic definition for three areas of study and practice: nation, region, and city branding. Every year, new scientific, journalistic, and business articles and books on place branding emerge, there are even several specialized periodicals devoted to this field of branding. For the first time, the concept of place branding become theoretically meaningful and widespread in the early 1990s, with the emergence of the books of Ashworth and Voogd (1990), as well as Kotler *et al.* (1993). The authors of the second book put forward the thesis: the main segments of the target audience for place branding should be the following: new residents; corporate headquarters; tourists and conventioneers; investors and exporters. As can be stated, in practice it is not always possible to differentiate clearly the groups of tourists and conventioneers, it would be better to combine them into the category of tourists, and the importance of the investors to the city is far greater than the importance of exporters.

Since then, hundreds of articles and a number of books on place branding have appeared. The most influential and profound ones among them are the works of Anholt (2010), the research of Tanklevska *et al.* (2021), the work of Dinnie (2015), and the common work of Kavaratzis *et al.* (2015). The suggestion in the last mentioned book is particularly valuable, it says that the target audience should be divided into three main groups: tourists, investors, and new residents; in addition, the authors appreciate the definition of the sales object (the city is the seller, and its target audience representatives are the buyers) as the place identity (Kavaratzis *et al.*, 2015). In general, this book is a valuable attempt to summarize the theoretical results of the publications on the issues of city branding over two decades. The purpose of the study is to identify the most relevant, and therefore an effective symbol of Kyiv as a tourism brand. In order to achieve this purpose, it is necessary to identify key segments and sub-segments of the target audience of Kyiv tourism branding, and also the key factor of influence on the formation of the opinion regarding the tourism symbols of Kyiv. Moreover, it is necessary to compare the most common popular symbols with the real resources of the city.

Literature review

For several years, the experience of many theorists and practitioners in the field of management has been persistently suggestive: when considering the parallels between a private company and a city branding, one should not forget about the concept of "inner client". This concept is widespread in business. After all, the attitude of the company's staff to those brands which are sold by the company has a great influence on the credibility of communications with external customers, that is, with buyers. Actually, the idea of the great importance of existing and potential residents of the city as one of the main segments, and sometimes the main segment of the target audience of the city branding was expressed in the literature in the early 1990s too. However, as may be considered, the clearest and most comprehensive formulation of the importance of the residents had been done in the work of Braun *et al.* (2013):

> Firstly, they are target groups of place marketing itself and therefore the main audience of several marketing actions. Secondly, residents are an integrated part of a place brand. Their characteristics, behaviour, and reputation could make a city more attractive to visitors, new residents, investors, and companies. Thirdly, residents could function as ambassadors for their place brand. They are in the position to give credibility to any message communicated by city authorities. (Braun *et al.*, 2013)

Braun *et al.* (2013) rightly pay attention to the difference between the branding of a private enterprise and the branding of a city. This difference should be taken into account by brand managers in democratic countries: brand, like any other innovation, should get the approval of the community, in accordance with democratic procedures, whereas the corporative culture of many private companies allows the introduction of new brands, logos, symbols, slogans without the counting of their employees' opinion (Auanasova *et al.*, 2019).

In the history of city branding implementation, there are many cases of the resistance of a part of the local population to the introduction of a brand, if the brand implementation descended from the top management of the city. Such resistance was caused by a large difference in the opinion about the city brand, between the authorities and a large part of the community. In particular, when the Hamburg authorities began to position the city as a city of rich and creative people, to increase the number of tourists, this positioning led to public protests. A significant number of residents believed that a new branding policy would lead to gentrification, and it would harm the poor townspeople (Braun *et al.*, 2013). In Russia in the 2010s, the leading author of the place branding issues was Vizgalov (2011). Like some of his Western European predecessors, he advocated the thesis in his work of 2011: a successful city brand should not be invented, it should not be artificially constructed, based solely on the needs of the target audience, but it

should be based directly, as much as possible, on the existing self-identity of the city, on those unique features of the city which are in the minds of the city community majority (Vizgalov, 2011). Some scientists also agree with his appeal to distinguish a slogan, a logo, or a city symbol from the brand of the city, and not to reduce branding to the creation and use of the brand book (Vizgalov, 2011). This error has been repeatedly cautioned by leading Western researchers of place branding too (Kavaratzis *et al.*, 2015). To distinguish—but not to avoid, because a successful city brand is impossible without the expressive simple image. D. Vizgalov in his work writes that "a city brand is a city identity which is systematically expressed in bright and attractive ideas, symbols, values, images, and which has been completely and adequately reflected in its image" (Vizgalov, 2011).

In the publications of many practitioners of tourism branding, and some theorists, the symbol of the city as a tourist destination is often identified with the brand of the city. In opposition to this substitution of concepts, most influential theorists consider the symbol, the image of the city, as one of several dimensions of the brand of the city, moreover, this dimension is very important (Almeyda-Ibáñez and Babu, 2017). In the literature on the issues of city branding, it was important for this study, in particular, to outline clearly the correlation of the role of a logo, a simple image as a symbol of a more complex phenomenon, a complex of images, representations, and activities. As an example, Gilmore writes about the success of the rebranding of post-francoist Spain, that these efforts "incorporate, absorb and embrace a wide variety of activities under one graphic identity to form and project a multi-faceted yet coherent interlocking and mutually supportive whole" (Gilmore, 2002). In general, Gilmore in the above-mentioned work argues that a brand should be based more heavily on those images, symbols, differences, associations, and unique offers which are already in the city, than on artificially created symbols. Most of the aforementioned works are characterized by a multidisciplinary approach to the study of place branding, and by a high degree of enthusiasm that motivates practitioners to engage in this branding area. However, the crystallization of consensus on a set of definitions, methods, and techniques of city branding, nevertheless, has not been finished. As for the methodology practiced in the research on the issues of place branding, the methods of expert assessment, case study, sociological surveys, interviews, focus groups, and content analysis dominated (Fedorchenko and Fedorchenko, 2020).

In Ukraine, the theoretical study of place branding and, in particular, city branding, has recently started. One of the first such works is the article by a young Kyiv researcher Koval (2017). Mostly, in Ukraine, the discussions on the topic of city branding took place in journalism and in-corporate documentation, in the process of city management, but they were almost absent in academic processes. At the end of the 2010s, Ukraine was in the Top 10 European countries by population. According to the Ukrainian state estimate, around 3 million people live in Kyiv—the capital of this country, and Kyiv is in the Top 10 European capital cities by population. The majority of Ukrainian non-governmental experts determine the value of this indicator as about 4 million. Almost all the experts have recognized that the population of Kyiv was increasing during the 2010s. Very low living standards compared with the metropolises of the EU countries, as well as the emigration outflow of many highly skilled professionals from Kyiv, as well as the threat

of infrastructure collapse are big problems of the Ukrainian capital city. In order to cope with these challenges, the city needs to attract financial flows. So, in a similar situation with a private company, the city is facing the need for effective branding. Unlike many cities in the world, Kyiv had no effective strategy for developing its brand. The image of the Archangel Michael was the official symbol of Kyiv since the mid-1990s: this image was demonstrated on the forms of municipal administration documents, and on many objects of communal property, including the boards and the interiors of public transport vehicles, for twenty years.

In general, the analysis of sources shows that most modern experts tend to consider the symbol, the laconic image of a city as not the only, but the key dimension (aspect, element) of the brand of the city, and consider the locals (existing and potential inhabitants) as a key segment of the target audience of a city branding, even if it is about the tourism brand. Tourism branding of Kyiv, unlike many other major cities of the world (metropolises), has almost not been covered in the works on place branding. In the final target audience of Kyiv as a tourism brand, that is, in the segment named "Tourists", most of the revenue is brought to the city by foreign tourists. Thus, the most topical (important, promising for effective tourism branding of the city) symbols of Kyiv as a tourism brand are those which are considered as symbols of Kyiv by, first of all, local residents (from the point of view of present and potential inhabitants), and also by foreign tourists, and which are, at once, the symbols which are relevant to the real competitive advantages of the city in the international tourism market.

Materials and methods

This research is based on the application of the general scientific principle of objectivity, the method of comparative analysis, systematization of publications on topics related to the research issue, combined with the use of content analysis, expert survey; sociological methods. The publication of the results of a sociological survey commissioned by the city authorities of the Ukrainian capital city has become of high importance for us to prioritize segments of the target audience of the Kyiv tourism brand. The survey demonstrates that foreign tourists spent, on average, three times as much money per day during their stay in Kyiv, and they also stayed significantly longer, than Ukrainian tourists in Kyiv (Ukrinform, 2018). A month later, in February 2018, the deputy head of the Kyiv City State Administration announced other figures: during 2017, according to him, 1.6 million foreign tourists and 2.5 million Ukrainian ones visited Kyiv; on average, every foreign guest spent about 5 times more per day, than a Ukrainian tourist (Official Portal of Kyiv, 2018). Supposing, that tourism industry professionals are one of those professional groups which are most informed about the motivation of foreign tourists to visit Kyiv. In addition, the assessments of the Kyiv symbols done by this group have influence on the views of foreign guests of the Ukrainian capital city, because the representatives of the tourism industry belong to one of those groups of Ukrainian people, with whom foreigners speak most. Therefore, in the context of this study, experts of the tourism industry in Kyiv who were among the participants and guests of the tourism exhibition UITT 2018, in March 2018, were interviewed. There were the questions on the topic of branding:

- "What is most fascinating, attracting foreign tourists in Kyiv, why do they visit Kyiv instead of another capital city?";

- "Which of Kyiv's symbols (brands) characterize Kyiv most accurately, and what images are associated with the capital of Ukraine, as for you?"

The answers of 102 people were collected. Based on the figure of 4 million as a consensus assessment of Kyiv's population size by the majority of Ukrainian experts, the interview results approximately determined the figure of 3 million as the amount of socially active, influential, adult residents of Kyiv. The whole number of students, 3d and 4d levels of accreditation, in Kyiv, was up to 365 thousand people (Main Department of Statistics in Kyiv City, 2016). Thus, 365 thousand students—this is not less than 10%, and most likely about 12% of active, influential residents of Kyiv. Students, through their better knowledge of foreign languages, to compare with almost all other Kyiv social groups, and for a number of other reasons, communicate more often with foreign tourists than older people of the Ukrainian capital city. In addition, in terms of branding as a long-term project stretching for ten and twenty years, students are more promising as actors of strategic influence on the formation of stereotyped, widespread city symbols, and urban brands, and therefore students are more important as an object of research on brand-forming factors. It is also very important that youth, and student youth primarily, are more active than other age groups on the internet, and in social networks, and this is another advantage of student youth as a subject of influence on the formation of a brand. Although the study of the opinion of the student youth of Kyiv cannot completely replace the study of the opinion of the entire actual population of the Ukrainian capital, such study can create a solid basis for the formation of hypotheses, assumptions about the public opinion of Kyiv inhabitants on the issues of branding.

At the end of 2016 a student Victoria Koval, with the authors' help, organized and implemented a survey, studying the opinion of Kyiv students about the brand of Kyiv. There were the students of higher education institutions who lived at the time in Kyiv and were interested in this city and actively used the Internet. The study covered 15 higher educational institutions of the 3d and 4d levels of accreditation (according to the Ukrainian system of evaluation), including several institutions of art, technical, and economic specialization. In the course of the survey, the answers of 102 people were received. As a result of deleting the responses of those persons whose age, or place of study, or work, did not meet the survey task, 96 respondents remained. Taking the abovementioned figure 365 thousand into account, the theoretical statistical error was about 10%. The mode of age in this set of values was 19 years old (33% of the sample). The mode of the duration of stay in Kyiv: three years (14%). The survey was anonymous, through the Google Forms application, and it was done from November 18 to December 4, 2016. The invitation for the survey was disseminated via Facebook and some other popular social networks on the Internet. There was the open-ended question "What kind of animal, plant, fantastic creature, or something else is like Kyiv? What (whom) do you associate Kyiv with?"

From December 6 to December 12, 2017, a questionnaire survey to examine the opinion of Kyiv experts regarding the brand of Kyiv and the trust in this brand was carried out in a research context. The target audience of the expert survey was students as well as professionally active graduate specialists in the following areas of competence: advertising, public relations, sociology, political science, journalism, and brand management. The purpose of the expert survey was to obtain the necessary information reflected in the knowledge, thoughts, and assessments of those respondents who are competent persons in the branding of goods and services intended for the citizens of Ukraine and, especially, of Kyiv, have professional knowledge of this subject, and/or have gained valuable practical experience of getting consumers' confidence to the goods, services, brands in Kyiv. The survey was implemented using the Internet application Google Forms. There were three open-ended questions in the questionnaire, to encourage respondents to formulate their own thoughts, expert suggestions, creative ideas, and associations. The questionnaire was anonymous, and it contained several auxiliary questions, regarding the sociodemographic characteristics of respondents: age, occupation, position, and city of residence. The questionnaire was distributed electronically, with the ability to respond easily through the Internet, social networks (first of all, Facebook), web forums, and groups, where experts in these specialties communicate often. As a result of the survey, 46 respondents were selected as relevant to the sample, their responses met the selection criteria. According to the age characteristic of this sample, the mod – 19 and 20 years (by 26.1% of the sample, respectively). Among the respondents, students prevailed; fashion – 14. Most of the respondents lived in Kyiv; the mode was 40%.

There were 3 main socio-demographic groups among the respondents: (1) students, beginners (18-21 years old); (2) young specialists (21-35 years old), and (3) specialists of middle age (36-47 years old). Studying the views of Kyiv residents on any aspects of the Kyiv brand, one should not neglect the content of the messages which were disseminated by those organizations and individuals who were regarded as referential sources of information for the residents of Kyiv. Messages from referee sources have a great influence on forming the opinion of those who trust them. In particular, some media outlets were such referential (influential) sources for a large part of Kyiv residents. From January 20 to February 8, 2016, the Sociological Rating Group conducted an all-Ukrainian municipal survey. According to its report, the sample size in Kyiv was 800, the statistical error did not exceed 3.5% (Rating Group, 2017). The activities of national mass media were perceived positively by 44% of respondents (Kyiv inhabitants) (the choices of answers "I strongly approve" or "rather approve"); the activity of local mass media – by 42% of respondents. In the 2010s, the popularity of print media and TV was rapidly decreasing in Kyiv, and most print editing teams and TV channels created their own web versions and new web media, and Kyiv was the most digitalized city in Ukraine, the internet coverage was almost 100% of the city population. Therefore, Internet media played a decisive role in shaping the opinion of socially active Kyiv residents. For many years, the well-known (in Ukraine) web portal Bigmir.net has carried out the rating of Internet media by the number of hosts (unique visitors) from Kyivan users. As of November 2017, the Top 10 of this rating included: segodnya.ua; korrespondent.net; tsn.ua; censor.net; strana.ua; gordonua.com; bigmir.net; telegraf.com.ua; 24tv.ua; 112.ua (Bigmirnet, 2017).

In December 2017, a content analysis of the results of these mass media in the aspect of Kyiv branding was made, by three groups of keywords: (1) "[web address of the media (for example, "112.ua")] the symbol of Kyiv" (in Russian and Ukrainian languages); (2) "[web address of the media (for example, "112.ua")] the logo of Kyiv" (in Russian and Ukrainian languages); (3) "[web address of the media (for example, "112.ua")] the brand of Kyiv" (in Russian and Ukrainian languages). Thirty requests were made, and ten first pages of Google search results were studied for each of them. The quantitative and qualitative characteristics of the use of keywords are presented in more detail in Table 2 below. The leader of the above rating of Internet media, the newspaper "Segodnya", arranged a poll among its readers in regard to the communal official contest for the tourism mascot of Kyiv. The survey was conducted from April 24 to May 11, 2018. If the results of the survey were not falsified (this newspaper repeatedly distributed fake news in some of its other sections in the 2010s), then, out of 3.844 respondents, the answers to the questions about the best tourism mascot were distributed as follows: 43% chose "flower and leaf of chestnut," 27% the option "Founders of Kyiv: Kyi, Schek, Khoryv, and sister Lybid," and 10% "Kyiv cake." Back in 1969, the then-leaders of Soviet Ukraine approved the official Kyiv emblem (Kalnickij, 2009). The central element of this emblem was the branch of flowering chestnut—four leaves and the famous chestnut flower "candle." This symbol, for several decades, was placed on the packaging of many types of goods, it was used in the design of interiors and facades of public houses, and in the design of signboards, in the corporative style of numerous organizations. The activity of these organizations contributed to the enforcement of chestnut as a symbol of Kyiv, in the minds of Kyiv and far beyond the Ukrainian capital city. In addition, in the 1960s, many chestnuts were planted in Kyiv. As a result, Kyiv confectionery products with the corresponding names became popular: the ice cream Chestnut, the cake Kyivan Chestnut, etc. (Galchenko, 2011). In this way, a stable, stereotypical association of "Kyiv – chestnut" was formed.

Even in 2014, nine years after the adoption in 1995 of the new official coat of arms of Kyiv, this time with the Archangel Michael and without chestnut, the popular educational Internet portal, in the section "Preparation for the State Final Certification," for Ukrainian school pupils, offered dictation titled *Kyiv Chestnuts*, that text began with the phrase: "In recent years, chestnut has become a kind of business card, a decoration and symbol of Kyiv" (State Final Attestation, 2014). In 2009, in one of the parks in the center of Kyiv, a sculpture "Bronze Chestnuts" (a monument to the chestnut fruit being revealed) was opened; and at the beginning of 2018 a mini-sculpture with a bronze image of chestnut fruit and leaves was opened on the wall of the KSCA, and the newspaper *Segodnya* in its report called directly the chestnut as a symbol of Kyiv (Segodnya, 2018). After all, the most similar and frequent choices of target audience different segments representatives were compared, obtained in the process of this research, on the one hand, and the results of the ranking of European capital cities by the criterion that corresponded to the identified priority of the target audience.

Results and discussion

The active discussion of a brand of Kyiv by city authorities, the public, and the expert community started only at the beginning of the 2010s. In 2012, Kyiv authorities announced a competition to create a tourism logo for Kyiv. The logo-winner has been actively disseminated by the Kyiv city authorities since 2014, it was rather widely used since 2017 in the design of interiors of communal facilities, and many types of promotional products. That logo consisted of four consequently located spots of various configurations and colours. One of the spots, the green one, was easily identified as a simplified image of the chestnut fruit. The other spots were too simple to be identified definitely. According to the explanations of the logo creators, the spots were: a droplet (symbolizes the Dnieper river), a chestnut (symbolizes a large number of parks), a dome (the historical monuments of the city), and a heart-comfortable life (Adme.ua, 2012). In July 2017, the Kyiv City State Administration (KSCA) adopted a new version of the "Strategy for the City of Kyiv until 2025." The term "city brand" was used only once, it was mention in the list of operational goals, tasks, and measures to promote Kyiv as a tourism center (Kyiv City Administration, 2017). In March 2018, the city administration announced a competition for the creation of a tourism mascot of Kyiv, while emphasizing that the mascot would not replace the existing logo, but would be used in parallel. Consequently, the search for topical symbols of Kyiv as a tourism brand is urgent, given the global trends in the theory and practice of branding, as well as the activity of the Kyiv community top management for the needs of the Ukrainian capital city. In a process of study key segments and sub-segments of the target audience of Kyiv tourism branding was identified. These groups are the following:

1. Foreign tourists.

2. Kyiv residents.

2.1. Students.

2.2. Specialists in the tourism industry.

2.3. Specialists in brand management, advertising, public relations, sociology, political science, journalism.

It was also identified as the key factor of influence on the formation of the opinion regarding the tourism symbols of Kyiv. This factor is the use of a certain symbol of Kyiv as the dominant symbol by (1) the city administration and business corporations in the preceding 50 years; (2) the most popular 10 web mass media. According to the results of this study of the opinion of Kyiv specialists in the tourism industry, the leader of the answers about the objects which are the most fascinating, attracting foreign tourists in Kyiv, the reason to visit Kyiv instead of another capital city, can be formulated in the following way: "Beautiful landscapes, a harmonious combination of park areas with architecture, especially golden-domed cathedrals". The second place among the answers was the vote for parks – 24% of respondents; the third one was for architecture – 16%. The answers to other questions are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Images and symbols associated to Kiev, by the sub-segments of residents
Table 1. Imágenes y símbolos asociados a Kiev, por subgementos de residentes

Symbol, image	Sub-segment the share of respondents in this sub-segment, in percentage (only shares 5% and higher are included)		
	Specialists in the tourism industry	Students	Specialists in brand management, advertising, public relations, sociology, political science, journalism
The Motherland Monument	30%	-	-
Temples	27%	-	-
Chestnut(s)	25%	23%	20%
The Center	-		17%
The city of opportunities	-		13%
Political, politics	-		13%
Khreshchatyk Street	-		11%
Green city	-		9%
Dragon	-	6%	

Source: own elaboration. Fuente: elaboración propia.

As is shown, tourism experts' opinion on the perception of Kyiv symbols by Kyiv residents has a lot to do with the ideas of a significant sub-segment of Kyiv residents (students of all the main specializations). The results of content analysis of the 10 most popular web mass media in the aspect of Kyiv branding are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. The content analysis of ten most popular web mass media in the aspect of Kyiv branding
Tabla 2. El contenido de análisis de los diez sitios más populares de mass media respecto a marcas en Kiev

Media	Keywords and the amount of mentions
segodnya.ua	Chestnut – 6, the founders of Kyiv – 2, Archangel Michael – 1
korrespondent.net	Chestnut – 4, Archangel Michael – 1, Andriyivskyy Descent – 1
tsn.ua	Chestnut – 2, the Motherland Monument – 2, "Dynamo" (football team) – 1, Andriyivskyy Descent – 1
censor.net	Chestnut – 2
strana.ua	Chestnut – 2, the Motherland Monument – 1
gordonua.com	No data for selected keywords
bigmir.net	Chestnut – 3, the Motherland Monument – 1, Andriyivskyy Descent – 1
telegraf.com.ua	No data for selected keywords
24tv.ua	Chestnut – 2, Andriyivskyy Descent – 1
112.ua	Chestnut – 1

Source: own elaboration. Fuente: elaboración propia.

Compared one of the choices of Kyiv residents, namely chestnut(s) as the main symbol of Kyiv for the key segments of the target audience, with the ranking of European capitals, done by Gaertner (Philipp Gärtner Blog, 2017) on the criteria of greening (greenness), that is, the proportion of trees and shrubs in the city whole square. According to this rating, published in 2017, Kyiv ranked first among the metropolises of Europe—the capital cities with a population of more than 2 million people. Kyiv was leading by a great margin from the closest rival, Berlin: the value of NDVI coefficient proposed by Gaertner was 0.399 for Kyiv, while 0.246 for Berlin (Philipp Gärtner Blog, 2017). At whole, in most of the polls conducted by us, Kyiv as a tourism brand was associated, first of all, with parks, trees, green areas, with a high level of greening, and specifically with chestnuts. Having got that coincidence among two key segments and three key sub-segments of the target audience, the result was compared, namely chestnust/trees/parks as the main symbol of Kyiv, with the ranking of European metropolises, done by Gaertner on the criteria of greening. The coincidence between the leading place of Kyiv in this rating was found, and the leading place of the greening (chestnuts, parks) in the perception of Kyiv in the minds of its residents.

So, using a set of direct and indirect indicators, it can be determined with a high degree of probability, which symbols of Kyiv as a tourism brand are the most relevant, that is, promising, effective for the use in the branding of the Ukrainian capital city as an object of tourism. The most natural, deeply rooted symbol of Kyiv, in the consciousness of local residents, should be presented for the local community and the visitors of Kyiv as the chestnut branch with the blossom or with the fruit of this tree. As for the loyalty to this symbol, all the groups studied were similar not only to each other in this aspect but were also relevant to the real position of Kyiv in the ranking of the greenest major metropolises in Europe. Therefore, its recommended to make adjustments to the branding strategy of Kyiv city administration and tourism business. Based on the views of most modern opinion leaders in the literature on the issues of branding, the one's regard that groups which have become the subject of research were those whose opinion is the most influential, and significant in the process of effective branding of the city. The representatives of the key sub-segments of city residents would be much more motivated, confident, and thereby more persuasive in the process of the promotion of the city tourism brand if the tourism symbol is relevant (habitual, conventional) to them.

Conclusions

In the case of Kyiv, the results of this research as the footing for the correction of the existing official city symbols, and logos, as well as the messages of tourism companies, which are used in the promotion of Kyiv as a tourism brand. The symbol "chestnut branch" is a product of a complex of relevances, historically formed as organically inherent in Kyiv. This symbol and its natural justification—the Kyiv parks and forests, and first of all chestnuts, – should become the object of designers' study, of branding strategy and tactics, along with the consideration of Kyiv chestnuts and, in general, green spaces, as a priority in the activities of the city authorities and residents of Kyiv for the improvement of the capital of Ukraine. Similarly, it is supposed that the money of the community could be saved in many other cities and towns using this approach and

methods to identify the leading symbol: just measuring the opinions of local students, tourism industry specialists, and brand management, advertising, public relations, sociology, political science, journalism specialists as the key segments of the target audience of the city tourism branding; moreover, measuring the local traditions of using the certain symbols of the city, and also the leading messages of modern Top 10 popular web mass media.

Of course, an absolutely precise, definite identification of the leading symbol of the city needs the including the polls of potential and actual tourists, and also the full-scale sociological study with the representation of the city population. However, if the application of the approach and methods presented in this research would reveal the high-level coincidence (correlation) in the opinions of the key segments of the target audience (like in the case of Kyiv, with a chestnut), then any expensive additional sociological studies are hard to be necessary.

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