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## LEVERAGING ASTANA'S TOURISM TO BUILD A "BRAND CITY" REPUTATION



*Aprovechar el turismo de Astana  
para construir una reputación  
de "ciudad de marca"*

*Aproveitar o turismo de Astana para  
construir uma reputação  
de "cidade de marca"*

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## ABSTRACT

The aim of this study is to analyse the potential of Astana, the Republic of Kazakhstan, to become a "brand city" to promote tourism and economic development. A survey of 500 residents in the five economic regions of the Republic of Kazakhstan was conducted to assess perceptions of Astana's tourism characteristics compared to other cities. The data was analysed using SWOT and PESR analysis methods. The results show that Astana has advantages such as its status as a new, modern capital, rich history, geographical location, tourism development and location along the historic Silk Road. Disadvantages include its harsh desert climate and flat landscape. Based on the research, recommendations are made for branding and promoting Astana through the creation of a city logo and slogan, website, advertising campaigns, tourist routes and events to highlight its unique attractions. It is concluded that a systematic, long-term approach is needed by the local government and stakeholders to brand Astana as an attractive tourist destination and economic centre.

### ■ KEYWORDS

Urban development, branding, city marketing, tourism, logo.

## RESUMEN

El objetivo de este estudio es analizar el potencial de Astana, Kazajistán, para convertirse en una "ciudad marca" y promover el turismo y el desarrollo económico. Se llevó a cabo una encuesta entre 500 residentes de las cinco regiones económicas de Kazajistán para evaluar las percepciones sobre las características turísticas de Astaná en comparación con otras ciudades. Los datos se analizaron mediante métodos de análisis FODA y PESR. Los resultados muestran que Astana tiene ventajas como su condición de capital nueva y moderna, su rica historia, su ubicación geográfica, su desarrollo turístico y su ubicación a lo largo de la histórica Ruta de la Seda. Las desventajas incluyen su duro clima desértico y su paisaje llano. Sobre la base de la investigación, se hacen recomendaciones para la marca y la promoción de Astana mediante la creación de un logotipo y eslogan de la ciudad, un sitio web, campañas publicitarias, rutas turísticas y eventos para resaltar sus atracciones únicas. Se concluye que el gobierno local y las partes interesadas necesitan un enfoque sistemático a largo plazo para calificar a Astana como un destino turístico atractivo y un centro económico.

### ■ PALABRAS CLAVE

Desarrollo urbano, branding, marketing de ciudad, turismo, logo.

## RESUMO

O objetivo deste estudo é analisar o potencial de Astana, Cazaquistão, para se converter numa "cidade marca" e promover o turismo e o desenvolvimento econômico. Realizou-se uma enquete entre 500 residentes das cinco regiões econômicas de Cazaquistão para avaliar as percepções sobre as características turísticas de Astaná em comparação com outras cidades. Os dados foram analisados mediante métodos de análise SWOT e PESR. Os resultados mostram que Astaná tem vantagens como sua condição de capital nova e moderna, sua rica história, sua localização geográfica, seu desenvolvimento turístico e sua localização ao longo da histórica Ruta da Seda. As desvantagens incluem seu duro clima desértico e sua paisagem plana. Em base à investigação, são feitas recomendações para a marca e a promoção de Astaná mediante a criação de um logotipo e slogan da cidade, um sítio web, campanhas publicitárias, rotas turísticas e eventos para ressaltar suas atrações únicas. Conclui-se que o governo local e as partes interessadas precisam um enfoque sistemático de longo prazo para qualificar Astaná como um destino

### ■ PALAVRAS-CHAVE

Desenvolvimento urbano, branding, marketing de cidade, turismo, logo.

## Introduction

In today's globalized world economy, the Republic of Kazakhstan, like many others, is actively engaged in implementing innovations and changes to gain international competitiveness following its independence. Achieving this requires qualitative development of both internal and external economic institutions, influencing social and political relations. This process has a positive impact on economic regions, enhances the industrial and social conditions for citizens, increases national income, and attracts foreign currency. However, it's crucial to recognize that the state's economic development relies on regional progress within the country. The Republic of Kazakhstan economic development is regionally focused, divided into five zones aligned with the country's geographical directions: North, East, South, West, and Central. Each zone has unique characteristics related to production complexes and other factors specific to its region, influencing efficiency. This regional approach has led to an improved social and economic standard in Kazakhstan, evident in continuous economic growth, enhanced investment climate, and a reduction in unemployment rates.

Tourism plays a leading role in Kazakhstan's economy, contributing to the stable development of specific regions. Currently, the tourism sector exhibits profitable commercial opportunities and economic growth. To ensure Kazakhstan's successful entry into the global tourism market, branding products and services remains essential. Concepts like local branding, local marketing, and city branding, originating from the Netherlands, emphasize the significant impact of a "brand city" approach. Each city in Kazakhstan has its unique geographical features, products, urban planning, and historical heritage, making it a distinct brand. However, not all city branding efforts hold the same value. Yildirim and Çakici (2022) in the study examine the concepts of "being a brand" and "being a brand city". The authors admit that it is the same thing: to be more attractive. When a brand is created, products or services are more in demand than others because the brand has proven itself, from its motto to its quality. According to Shahini et al. (2022), becoming a real brand is a long and complex process. The same applies to the city brand. What needs to be done in both cases is the same: promotion, good service, high quality and trust.

Kurmanov et al. (2022) believe that being a brand city consists of many other components. These numerous factors influence the process of becoming a city-brand, sometimes positively, sometimes negatively. Marino et al. (2022) emphasize that the joint work of local authorities and city residents can to some extent prevent possible negativity. In this process, if the people of the city do not work according to the local government and do not fulfil their duty to be a brand city, flaws may consequently occur in the project. On the other hand, Pasquinelli et al. (2022) believe that in ensuring and improving the regional economy of the Republic of Kazakhstan, it is necessary to determine both natural and tourist features of cities. To recognize the features of the "brand city" in the marketing of the city, it is necessary to conduct research, develop a strategic plan, conduct expert work according to the criteria of the "city brand", and conduct an analysis. In this regard, the present research work determined the importance of the city of Astana (which was called Nur-Sultan from March 2019 till September 2022), the new modern capital of the Republic of Kazakhstan, in the process of economic development of certain regions by defining the image of a "brand city".

The aim of the Astana brand project is to create a common brand for the city and to tell the world about the strong and developing identity of it. Within the scope of this project, it is aimed to create an identity for Astana and to make it a business and tourism centre all over the world and to raise its profile.

## Materials and methods

In the study, the data collected in accordance with scientific research methods were processed by high-quality SWOT and PESR analysis methods. In the research section, the data obtained by the survey method was evaluated using a statistical package program called SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) for Windows 10.0. During the study of the quality of tourist features of Astana, 500 people from five economic zones of the Republic of Kazakhstan were interviewed.

A survey was conducted in the study. 114 residents of the North Kazakhstan Economic District who live outside Astana took part in it, namely 72 men and 72 women aged 18 to 65 years. Informed consent was obtained from all individuals included in this study. The survey concerned the comparison of tourist characteristics of Astana with other cities on a 5-point scale. Properties that were evaluated by respondents related to the following areas: "Ready to help the people of the city", "language help information the Tourist Information Office", "natural features-mountains, forests, sea water", "historical artefacts in museums, local food culture," "water sports facilities, wind and water sport," "rules of the car, public transport, taxi," "the diversity of the holiday property," "qualitative housing facilities," "night life," "relax and comfortable environment for people", "cleanliness and suitability to health standards".

In addition, another survey was organized, the respondents of which were 165 people, namely residents of the South Kazakhstan Economic District, who live outside Astana. The age of the interviewees ranged from 18 to 65 years, 83 men and 82 women. The survey was identical to the previous one, as it concerned the assessment of tourism characteristics of Astana in comparison with other cities on a 5-point scale. Next, 107 residents of the West Kazakhstan Economic District were interviewed. In particular, 54 women and 53 men aged 18 to 65. They, as well as the previous respondents, determined the level of tourist attractiveness of Astana according to the above-mentioned criteria. During the research, another survey was conducted, in which 53 residents of the economic region of Central Kazakhstan, who live outside Astana, took part. The age of the interviewees ranged from 18 to 65 years, namely 26 men and 27 women. They also evaluated the tourist characteristics of Astana according to the criteria mentioned above.

The comparison method was used, which allowed to reveal the advantages and disadvantages of Astana as a tourist centre. The experience of the Republic of Kazakhstan and other highly developed countries in the course of city branding was compared. This made it possible to establish the most effective approaches to solving this issue in Astana. Based on this method, recommendations were formed that can accelerate Astana acquisition of a brand city and increase its popularity in international tourism.

## Results

### *Tourist characteristics of Astana*

Becoming a brand city entail boosting regional trade, increasing tourism, and attracting population movements. It involves promoting and exporting the city's potential, ultimately enhancing tourism. A strong brand reinforces the city's destination image (Bartczak, 2022). To achieve city branding at a national level, a city typically needs 5-10 million annual tourists, while on a global scale (comparable to cities like Paris), this number rises to 20-30 million visitors per year (Nadiia et al., 2021). Simply labeling a city as a "brand city" and advertising it is insufficient; widespread recognition both nationally and globally is necessary. The survey results offer insights into the development of Astana's brand image and tourism quality. Astana's tourism characteristics are evaluated on a 5-point scale to identify its unique advantages compared to other cities.

There are significant differences between the levels of perception of 114 people surveyed in the North Kazakhstan economic region living outside Astana about the tourist characteristics of the city. At affordable prices "hotels and restaurants", "the diversity of the holiday property", "relax and comfortable environment for people", "festivals cultural events", "personal safety and security", "water sports facilities and water sports wind", "a variety of activities in the open air", "easy access to the city, local tours and travel", "Environmental Quality Cleaning unused fields", the "historical monuments, museums", "is ready to help the people of the city" has been quite strong factor loadings of the scale. It was found that the phrase "Astana city makes enough effort to become a brand city" had the strongest factor load with an average value of 4.1319. However, the expression in the form of "the main tourist centre of the city", "climate conditions weather, sea, river characteristics" was determined as the weakest factor load with a value of 2.9123. The survey of residents from the North Kazakhstan region indicated the highest factor loadings for Astana's affordable hotels/restaurants, entertainment variety, relaxing environment, festivals, safety, water sports, outdoor activities, accessibility, environmental cleanliness, museums, and helpful local people. The lowest factor loadings were for Astana as a main tourist centre and its climate/geographical features.

There are significant differences between the perception levels of 165 people surveyed in the South Kazakhstan economic region living outside Astana regarding the tourist characteristics. "Ready to help the people of the city", "language help information the Tourist Information Office", "natural features-mountains, forests, sea water", "historical artefacts in museums, local food culture", "water sports facilities, wind and water sport", "rules of the car, public transport, taxi", "the diversity of the holiday property", "qualitative housing facilities", "night life", "relax and comfortable environment for people", "cleanliness and suitability to health standards" has been quite strong factor loadings of the scale. It was found that the phrase "Astana city makes enough effort to become a brand city" had the strongest factor load with an average value of 4.0364. In contrast, the expression "the main tourist centre of the city", "climate conditions weather, sea, river characteristics", "what are the differences and characteristics of Astana with other cities" was determined as the weakest factor load with a value of 2.2442. Other criteria for tourism properties also showed changes above average. Results from the South Kazakhstan region survey showed the strongest factor loadings for

helpful locals, language assistance, natural features, museums/food culture, water sports, transport rules, entertainment variety, lodging quality, nightlife, relaxing environment, and cleanliness. The weakest factors were main tourist centre status, climate, and differences from other cities.

According to the average results of the analysis of the quality of some characteristics of Astana tourist attractions of 107 residents in the West Kazakhstan economic region, there are significant differences between the levels of perception about Astana tourist characteristics. "Natural features - mountains, forests, sea water"; "historical artefacts in museums, local food culture"; "the Tourist Information Office information language help"; "festivals cultural events"; "shopping centres" opportunities, "the diversity of the holiday property"; "is ready to help the people of the city"; "water sports facilities, wind and water sport"; "night life"; "taxi car public transport rules" has been quite strong factor loadings of the scale. It was found that the expression "Astana city makes enough effort to become a brand city" had the strongest factor load with an average value of 4.1215. However, the expression in the form of "the main tourist centre of the city"; "climate conditions weather, sea, river characteristics" was determined as the weakest factor load with a value of 2.4151. Other criteria for tourism properties also showed higher than average changes. The West Kazakhstan region results indicated strong factors were natural features, museums, tourist information, festivals, shopping centers, entertainment variety, helpful locals, water sports, nightlife, and transport rules. Weakest factors were main tourist center and climate.

There are significant differences between the levels of perception of 61 people of the East Kazakhstan economic region surveyed living outside Astana about the tourist characteristics of Astana. "Relax and comfortable environment for people"; "festivals cultural events"; "personal safety and security"; "water sports and water sports facilities"; "a variety of activities in the open air"; "efficiency of travel to the city"; "local tours and travel"; "cleaning up the environmental legacy unused fields"; the "historical monuments, museums"; "is ready to help the people of the city" has been quite strong factor loadings of the scale. It was found that the phrase "Astana city makes enough effort to become a brand city" had the strongest factor load with an average value of 4.1509. However, the expression in the form of "the main tourist centre of the city"; "climate conditions weather, sea, river characteristics" was determined as the weakest factor load with a value of 2.4151. This finding shows that the corresponding scale presents integrity and is loaded into variables as expected. The East Kazakhstan survey results highlight the strongest perceptions of Astana as a relaxing, festival city with helpful locals and good accessibility. The weakest perceptions were of it as a main tourist centre and its climate. These findings reveal the key factors that should be considered for improving Astana's brand image with residents of this region.

There are significant differences between the perception levels of 53 people of the Central Kazakhstan economic region surveyed living outside Astana about Astana tourism characteristics. "Relax and comfortable environment for people"; "festivals cultural events"; "personal safety and security"; "water sports and water sports facilities"; "a variety of activities in the open air"; "efficiency of travel to the city"; "local tours and travel"; "cleaning up the environmental legacy unused fields"; the "historical monuments, museums"; "is ready to help the people of the city" has been quite strong factor loadings of the scale. It was found that the phrase "Astana city makes enough effort to become a brand city" has the strongest factor load with an average value of 4.1509. However, the expression in the form of "the main tou-

rist centre of the city", "climate conditions weather, sea, river characteristics" was determined as the weakest factor load with a value of 2.4151. This finding shows that the relevant scale represents integrity and is loaded onto the variables as expected.

The characteristics of Astana, which can be compared to other cities, were scaled using the 5 scale without comparing with others. In this way, it was revealed by the results of the study what advantages the city of Astana had: 1.0-1.24 – strongly disagree; 1.25-2.24 – disagree, 2.25-3.24 – agree/disagree, 3.25-4.24 – agree, 4.25-5.0 – absolutely agree. According to this, the most important advantages, natural resources, historical richness, ease of transportation to the city, geopolitical placement, training and accommodation, local food culture, local tours and travel new modern, the city Environmental Quality Cleaning, it is seen that were the best of facilities. Urban settlements and layout, green spaces in the city, national parks, places of rest, places of night entertainment, comfortable environment for rest and people, infrastructure communication, quality of Transportation are rated at the highest level (Table 1).

**Table 1.** Advantages of Astana city  
*Tabla 1. Ventajas de la ciudad de Astana*

	<b>Average</b>	<b>Standard deviation</b>
Natural beauty	3.7962	4.24
Historical features	4.1509	4.24
Geopolitical settlement	4.1509	4.24
Local food culture	3.8679	4.24
Holiday recreational facilities	4.0702	4.24
Geographical location	4.1132	4.24
Be flat as land	4.0189	4.24
Tourist centre	4.3774	4.24
Environmental quality cleaning	3.9825	4.24

Source: own elaboration. Fuente: elaboración propia.

According to the results of living surveys, the weakest issues in the city of Astana are its climate is harsh and desert settlement, the land is flat (Table 2).

**Table 2.** Disadvantages of the city of Astana  
*Tabla 2. Desventajas de la ciudad de Astana*

	<b>Average</b>	<b>Standard deviation</b>
Settlement in desert and semi-desert region	2.0912	2.24
Having a harsh climate	2.1386	2.24

Source: own elaboration. Fuente: elaboración propia.

Analysis studies and research reveal that Astana has unique and distinctive image elements. "Are Astana image elements sufficient for City branding?" This question is among the most important considerations that should have an answer decisively. Looking at the elements in

which the image of Astana will be determined: as can be seen from the survey conducted with residents outside the city, it concludes that "the historical, economic, political and cultural centre of the country, the modern city". Astana possesses significant potential across political, trade, industry, history, culture, economy, and tourism sectors, making it a prime candidate for city branding. To successfully brand the city, it must highlight distinctive attributes for external visitors and investors. This involves strategic investments in high-potential areas, effective promotion, and meticulous monitoring of outcomes. Astana's advantages, such as its status as the new capital, modernity, historical heritage, strategic location, transportation links, tourism development, ancient Akmola-Karaotkel region monuments, and its scenic Esil River location, all contribute to crafting the city's appealing image through its unique attractions.

Historical evidence underscores Astana's strategic importance along the caravan route, with archaeological findings revealing a harmonized building culture in the Great Steppe. Located on the Silk Road, Astana holds strategic significance (Trusova et al., 2021). As the new capital of Kazakhstan, it sits in the sacred center of the vast Kazakh land, fostering a rich history and serving as a cultural, scientific, political, and economic hub. Astana's role in the country's economic growth, regional policy, demographic development, urbanization, and agglomeration potential makes it a key player in shaping the region's political and economic landscape.

## Astana model proposals

All major cities in the world have a distinctive image shaped by their physical characteristics and socio-economic development. Having a recognizable brand is essential for any country or city. In this context, the elements that contribute to the recognizability and familiarity of a city are called elements of its image. In fact, the people of Kazakhstan realize this importance. In 1998, Astana was promoted and received the "City of Peace" medal in the UNESCO declaration, which emphasized its recognition on the world stage. At the 2014 World Cup in Brazil, Astana received the highest distinction among the twelve youngest cities globally. In 1998, Astana International joined the Union of Free Economic Zones, the International Organization of symposia and congresses, and became the focus of a competition by renowned Japanese architect Kurokawa for the "Life Principle" project aimed at attracting foreign tourists. Astana's significant industrial growth, world-class facilities, and unique city image contribute to its development. Positioning, a crucial aspect of branding, involves how a product or entity is perceived by potential customers. In the case of Astana, positioning the city is vital for successful branding, as it influences how prospective visitors perceive it and determines its place in the branding process.

Today, the population of Astana is about one million. The transformation of Astana into an international financial centre began to make it a potential financial centre of the Central Asian region. Astana, one of the most intellectual, modern cities in the world, is increasing Eurasia's capacity to be a cultural, scientific centre every day. Astana, which also won the UNESCO title of "World City" in 1999, has been the capital of the Republic of Kazakhstan since 2000, but has been a member of the International Assembly of Capitals and Major Cities. Branding of the city is considered within the framework of elements such as human and management quality, cultural heritage, investment opportunities, tourism opportunities and foreign trade capacity (Sadykova, 2017). When analysing responses from participants to the data, seven factors influence the formation of the image (Table 3).



**Table 3.** Image of the city of Astana  
*Tabla 3. Imagen de la ciudad de Astana*

<b>Natural resources</b>	Esil River, Tengiz – Korgalzhyn Orchestra, Tengiz and Korgalzhyn Lakes, the climate is very continental, long in winter, cold, summer moderately hot, black and dark brown soils, Korgalzhyn Reserve, 331 kinds of high-rise plants in the Reserve, wheat, Linden, etcetera. It'll catch up. The nature is rich in wildlife. There are 37 species of mammals. There are 294 birds, three reptiles, two amphibians and more than ten species of fish, and the pink flamingo in the lake, the most beautiful birds of nature.
<b>General infrastructure</b>	National Medical Holding Company, Shipaly Medical Centre, Astana Medical Centre, Astana Healthy Shipager centre, medical and Social Health Centre, Family Health Centre, Urban emergency medical Niet Station, National Research Centre, maternal and Child Health, Astana International Airport, Astana – Arkalyk on – Turgai – Irgiz-Shalkar, Astana-Temirtau, Astana-Almaty highways, GPS tracking, the RK, KZ Omnicomm Alliance, TOO PRIME SOFTWARE TECHNOLOGIES TOO DYNAMIC communication services.
<b>Tourism infrastructure</b>	Modern Park, presidential Cultural Centre Aqua Park, Astana-Bayterek monument, Tulpar club and Kulager club, Khan Shatir, Palace of peace and agreement, Pyramid, Akorda, Independence Palace, Astana History Museum, and EXPO-2107.
<b>Entertainment places</b>	Historical and ethnographic complex map of the RK Atameken and smoke oceanarium, cafe, restaurant, cinema, gym, tennis centre and shop – circus, cinemas, sports centres and new entertainment centres for the RK. The RK Central Concert Hall, Oceanarium entertainment centre, Atameken ethno-monument complex.
<b>Culture, history, and art</b>	Altyn Zhurek (Golden Heart) Monument, Astana History Museum, Museum of the First President of the Republic Kazakhstan, Hazrat Sultan Mosque-the largest mosque in Central Asia, the first constitution of the Kazakh state, the summer residence of Az Tauke Khan, who brought "Zhety Zhargy" to six Alash and held the rule of three hundred, the centre of six Alash.
<b>Social environment</b>	Russian and Kazakh language, quality of life, hospitality and friendship of the local people.

Note: The names of places are written with their own names without translation. Source: own elaboration.  
Nota: los nombres de lugares se presentan tal como fueron nombrados originalmente, sin traducir. Fuente: elaboración propia.

The survey results showed the top 5 most powerful abstract images of Astana (Table 4):

**Table 4.** Abstract image elements of the city  
*Tabla 4. Elementos de la imagen abstracta de la ciudad*

	<b>Average</b>	<b>Standard deviation</b>
Clean	3.5702	3.25-4.24
It is safer	3.7105	3.25-4.24
Modern	3.8509	3.25-4.24
Developed	3.8895	3.25-4.24
Touristic	3.7719	3.25-4.24

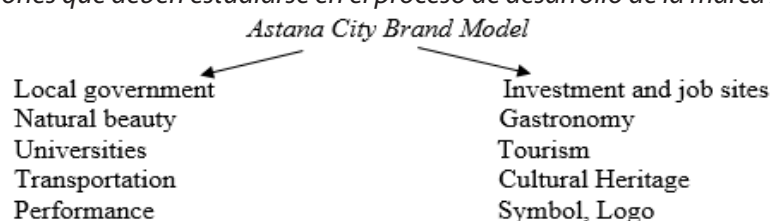
Source: own elaboration. Fuente: elaboración propia.

Of the five abstract images for the city of Astana, the most powerful is the perception of the city as a "Modern" and "Developed". Then there is the fact that the city has its "safe" and "clean" images. One of the factors of Astana "special image" is the formation of a new capital of the Republic of Kazakhstan (RK) in the territory of Saryarka, in the sacred centre of the vast Kazakh land, the creation of a new cultural and scientific, political and economic broad environment, a magnificent and powerful centre that strengthens and the "Modern capital".

The Astana's city brand consists of many elements and variables. Attention has been paid to the fact that the model created for the city of Astana contains the most mentioned components in the literature. The issues that need to be studied in the Astana branding process are outlined in Figure 1 within the framework of the model created by classifying.

**Figure 1.** Issues that need to be studied in the Astana branding process

*Figura 1. Cuestiones que deben estudiarse en el proceso de desarrollo de la marca Astana*



Source: own elaboration. Fuente: elaboración propia.

All the values that the city has contribute to the branding process through tourism. Business and commercial, economic and political activities can also be included in the tourism element for the city of Astana. Other activities in the city will also attract visitors to the city in the process of building the brand city. Cultural historical heritage is a component that makes a significant contribution to tourism, and therefore to the city, especially in areas where the historical factors is not disturbed. In Astana, natural beauty, represented by the scenic Esil River, requires a focus on preservation and promotion as a central element of the city's branding efforts. The city's strategic position as the capital within the Republic of Kazakhstan fosters economic opportunities and mobility, making it conducive for both investment and job creation, bolstering the branding process. Astana's diverse array of state and international universities significantly impacts education, reaching a broader audience and positively contributing to the city's branding initiatives.

The local government, operating under the municipality and governorship of Astana, holds a crucial role in facilitating city communication and decision-making on both national and international levels, furthering the city's branding objectives. Transportation in Astana is efficient and convenient, serving both residents and visitors. It has a positive impact and ensures easy mobility within the city. "Bayterek" serves as a prominent symbol for Astana, embodying the city's identity. Logos like the Astana "Bayterek" and the EXPO-2017 logo aim to resonate with the city's values. Promotion plays a vital role in city branding, impacting all aspects of development. When executed effectively, it can drive progress across various areas by promoting Astana's core values. The most significant advantages of Astana were identified as its natural resources, general infrastructure, tourism infrastructure, entertainment places, cultural history and art, and social environment. The weakest issues were its harsh, desert climate and flat landscape.

## Astana city identity creation studies

In fact, there is a distinct distinction between decoupling and branding. The Logo is an element that visually represents the business. A brand is the name of a business or product and includes everything concrete and abstract. There are some elements that play a role in the formation of logos and whose design should be considered. Brand, distinction, symbols should be simple, short, easy to say and easy to read. It is also extremely important to support brand names with effective graphics and logos. There are predictions about the elements that need to be found in tools such as symbols, separations and slogans that will be most used in creating Astana city brand and promoting it. The Logo and slogan are considered a sign of promise. The fact that a brand's awareness is formed and different depends to some extent on the function of the logo.

It belongs to the division formation, which is of great importance in the creation of the city brand. A distinction is defined as "graphic design used as a permanent symbol for a company, organization, or brand." Marketers Kotler and Gertner (2002) describe the image as "a public perception of the company or its products" that can be represented on the Logo: the flag of the country, the name of the country, symbolic images of objects of the nature of that country. Figure 2 shows examples of tourist attractions.

**Figure 2.** Tourist attraction

*Figura 2. Atractivo turístico*



Source: own elaboration. Fuente: elaboración propia.

Recently, important steps have been taken to create logos and slogans in cities in the Republic of Kazakhstan, such as cities around the world. Description of the logo, the brand concept of a tourist product: from open palms (one blue, the other bright gold), the prototype of the Bayterek rises. At the top of Bayterek is a Golden Ball—the prototype of the Earth and

the sun, the rays of the sun come from the earth (Akkaya, 1999). Below is the inscription under the palm: Eurasian Kazakhstan. The Republic of Kazakhstan is a geographically Central Eurasian country, crossed by European and Asian borders. In its geopolitical position the Republic of Kazakhstan has the values of a "commutator" in the field of religion, economy and politics. Motto: The Republic of Kazakhstan—country of hospitality. Description of the logo, the brand concept of a tourist product: The National sweater container with a flood placed in outstretched hands (Figure 3).

**Figure 3.** The Republic of Kazakhstan logo  
*Figura 3. Logotipo de la República de Kazajstán*



Source: own elaboration. Fuente: elaboración propia.

The meaning of the word "Bayterek" was made with the pressure of the president's right hand as a symbol of new steps in the life of the Kazakh people, and in the sense of artistic composition "Ayali alakan" (compassionate hand) was made at an altitude of 97 meters, because it was the symbol of 1997, that is, the new capital of the Republic. At the centre of the monument is a wooden sphere signed by representatives of 17 religions of the world, symbolizing the unity of all religions. According to legends, the location and composition of the "Bayterek" refers to the cosmogonic ideas of the ancient nomads in the river Earth, where the Earth flows at its confluence. On its banks, The Tree of life has placed a Bayter that holds the ground with its roots and moves into the sky (Kerimkulov et al., 2015).

A slogan created for the purpose of branding of Astana, logos may not always give results. For this reason, effective, efficient, systematic and long-term promotional activities should be carried out in order to ensure success in the work of creating a city identity (Abylgazova et al., 2023). The Logo and slogan make sense not only for branding, but also for embracing the process of change and transformation in the city. For this reason, the logo of the city should be installed not only in promotional activities, but also in the symbols of the institution by the institutions located in the city.

Astana has always been different from other cities throughout its history since its foundation. Both the modern and open-minded human structure and the logistics position have made it different. Surrounding areas—Bayterek, Hanşatir, Atameken etnomuzei, etcetera—the diversity of tourism products and the ease of transportation to these regions have been added to this difference. The Astana brand should take on a motivating task for both Astana residents and the businessmen and tourists. It should reflect the city of Astana in the most accurate way and be made in such a way as to give a whole new energy and motivation, increasing tourism and trade. Many logos and slogans have been made in this context (Sadykova, 2019).

## Discussion

Kiliç (2021) was engaged in researching this issue. The author analysed the content of "brand city". Thus, the researcher noted that a brand meant a specific person, object or place. Thus, its meaning lies in the formation of certain feelings, which are gradually integrated into the emotional attachment and recognition of the object. As for the direct branding of the city, this process is characterized by the formation of special conditions in which tourists or native residents will be able to create an associative series. Therefore, in the author's opinion, this allows fixing the most characteristic features of a particular city in the memory of the people, which describe its character, atmosphere, history and other features. In this case, it should be emphasized that the concept of brand is characterized by such features as relevance, repeatability, associativeness, which allows tourists being regarded as consumers. According to the researcher, this process plays an important role in the regional development of the economy, as it contributes to the spread and development of the city's popularity. The given position is absolutely relevant, as soon as the brand has an impact on assets. In this case, a branded city may encourage tourists from different countries of the world to visit it. As a result, there is a significant improvement in the state of the state economy, which in turn is reflected in the quality of life of civilians and entrepreneurs.

Bonakdar and Audirac (2020) focused on city branding and highlighted the importance of information dissemination as the first step in this process. They suggested targeting both local residents and foreigners by creating attractive brochures or online platforms that showcase unique cultural, artistic, and culinary aspects of the city. These materials should be strategically placed in locations such as airports, hotels, hostels, and public transport to gradually build the city's brand. This approach can be applied in Astana to promote its renowned attractions. It is crucial to involve local government authorities in supporting these efforts to inform the population and develop Astana as a tourist destination. In other hand, Cudny (2019) analysis focused on city branding by transforming it into a financial center and promoting the creation of technology parks. The researcher argued that this approach could enhance both the domestic and international image of the country. It would lead to improved investment conditions in the region through the development of robust information and digital infrastructure, attracting both local and foreign companies. These recommendations seem appropriate and could be effectively applied to the development of Astana. Initiating government actions to establish benefits and remove certain restrictions on techno parks in Astana is advisable. A systematic approach is essential to prevent potential abuses of power while ensuring favorable conditions for the development of IT parks and special economic zones.

It is also worth paying attention to the work of Madiyarova et al. (2018), in which probable changes in the infrastructure during the branding of the city are analysed. The authors believe that a brand city should be famous not only for historically formed objects, but also for modernized ones as this will double the popularity of the city. Therefore, the researchers are a supporter of constant renewal and development of the city so that it always has interesting elements. The given position is considered relevant and modern, as it makes tourists constantly interested in new objects. As for Astana, it is possible to build a world-famous location for sports competitions here; cultural activities; scientific developments. Trusheva et al. (2022) suggest the potential for creating specialized tourist routes as a means of branding the city and highlighting multiple interesting attractions simultaneously. Organizing tourist

tours is an efficient and cost-effective way to promote the city, as tourists can explore numerous attractions in a short time. This approach could be utilized to brand Astana, making it easier for individuals to explore the city and Kazakhstan, either through individual or group tours, catering to travelers' interests and promoting specific places and attractions.

Damezhan and Yücel's (2021) research, in which the authors analysed Astana in the context of a tourist center, deserves special attention. This city has not only great historical assets, but is also characterized by elements of modernity. The researchers claim that Astana should develop in different vectors. Accordingly, both in historical and sports, cultural, scientific, natural areas. This position is also relevant, because it would be possible to economically develop this region in the most qualitative way. In addition, the growth of tourist activity will have a positive effect on the volume of revenues to the state budget, for example due to taxes. The conducted discussion shows a wide range of ways on the basis of which the branding of the city can be carried out. Therefore, it can be argued that Astana can be effectively developed in the tourism sphere, thanks to the recommendations described above.

## Conclusion

"Brand city" has become one of the most popular thoughts of recent years. Brand cities will raise both social and economic standards of city dwellers. Cities are products subject to marketing. The satisfaction of customers who benefit from the product is essential. Special, natural and historical features of cities, physical structures, infrastructures are a product that can be the subject of city marketing. In terms of brand management, these factors that determine Astana Scientific Image point to factors that need to be considered for a stronger and positive destination brand image. The factors contributing to the scientific image of Astana include its geopolitical stability, geographic location, tourism development, preservation of ancient Akmola region monuments, natural characteristics, local products, urban environment quality, tourist attractions, entertainment options, tourism infrastructure, and environmental consciousness. These elements collectively define the overall tourist experience.

Astana's branding and promotion can be enhanced with strategic recommendations based on surveys and comparative analysis. This includes creating a unique city logo, slogan, website, and effective advertising campaigns to showcase its strengths. Emphasizing natural, cultural, entertainment, and historical attractions can improve the city's brand image, along with implementing tourist routes and events. It's important to note that simply inviting famous individuals may not be sufficient to create a positive city image. Regular data-driven analyses can track changes in the city's image and reasons for such changes. Building a city brand is a long-term and costly process, requiring the city administration to gain support from its residents. The goal is to position Astana as a competitive brand city worldwide. Achieving this requires specific projects, structural reforms, and long-term city planning within the budget constraints.

In the future, city residents should be trained on brand awareness. Positioning Astana on its living history and rich cultural heritage and domestic and international promotional activities and conferences should be held that will affect the target audience. To show that it is

different from other cities, legends unique to Astana, intriguing, connected with its history, should be created and communicated. International cultural, art and sports, advertising organizations should be hosted to attract visitors by creating awareness and strengthen the image of the city. Each year, visitors' information must be collected and analysed to develop a marketing strategy. If the city really has a brand value, a step is taken, and it makes sense with the continuity of that brand quality.

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