

THE DEVELOPMENT OF A TOURIST BRAND IN KAZAKHSTAN

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this article is to discuss the development of a tourist brand in Kazakhstan, taking into account the theoretical materials and relying on applied research. There is a necessity to form a tourist brand in Kazakhstan, which is currently connected with low level of recognition.

On the basis of empirical research, an approximate model of the tourist brand in Kazakhstan was developed. The analysis revealed an ambiguous attitude from the sides of foreign tourists and residents. Priority indicators for the development of a tourist brand in Kazakhstan were identified; in particular the most important tourist destinations, the symbol and slogan of the country's iconic events and preferred cuisine, attractive historical monuments, and natural resources. The analysis showed that the tourist brand in Kazakhstan, with its identification and attributes, should be aimed at associating with the nature and cultural traditions of Kazakhstan. The research also identified priority types of tourism at each stage of the life cycle of the tourist product of Kazakhstan.

Keywords: Brand, Tourism, Value, Attributes, Image.

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PROBLEM DEFINITION

Current research of the theoretical aspects of the formation of the brand of tourism in Kazakhstan showed increased value of goods and services, by positioning itself apart from the competition, thus creating a positive psychological association and forming an emotional connection with the consumer (Sexton, 2011). The idea of branding tourist holiday destinations takes into account a number of important questions related to obtaining and strengthening reputation, which is very useful for differentiation holiday destinations (Aaker, 2008).

Currently, there is a trend of huge impact in the tourism industry on the global economy. However, Kazakhstan having considerable potential, in the form of tourist-recreational resources has not formed the tourist image of the country. The development and formation of a positive image in the international tourist market is one of the main tasks in the touristic sphere in Kazakhstan. On the eve of globally significant events for Kazakhstan, such as EXPO-2017, it is

important not only to form a positive image of the country, but also to establish itself as an attractive country in terms of tourism.

The positive image of the country is an important tool to attract investment for the development of touristic infrastructure and solution of issues on employment. It is also a tool to promote tourist products of Kazakhstan into the world market. The attractiveness of the region depends on many factors, among which we can highlight:

- the growing interest in alternative culture of Asian countries from Western Europe and the United States;
- the values of the country, in particular the classification of tourism to one of the priority industries in Kazakhstan;
- business activity and investment attractiveness of the country;
- the rich heritage of culture, interesting traditions of Kazakh people.
- a variety of tourist-recreational resources for holiday (Shaikenova & Mamutova, 2009).

In order to attract potential investors in tourism development, it is necessary to show the capacity of the country and create the concept of the tourism brand (Kotler, 1998). Low level of recognition of the country in the international market underlines the usefulness of not only the country, but also the tourist brand.

ANALYSIS OF RECENT RESEARCH AND PUBLICATIONS

Scientific justification and scientific research reviewed was connected with the development of the tourist brand, showing that significant contributions were made by a plethora of scholars. Research done by Ovechko and Serikov showed that when creating a brand it is important to use an integrated approach, marketing tools and to pay special attention to the tangible and intangible assets (Ovechko et al., 2013). At the present stage are actualized issues forming e-branding, which can not only affect the international tourist route, but also to form the image of the region (Kavoura, et al., 2013).

In branding it is recommend to use the strategic approach aimed at creating a positive image of tourist country (Avraham et al., 2013). Cultural heritage is an important part of branding and must be taken into account when developing tourist products (Mitsche,Vogt, Knox, Cooper, Lombardi, Ciaffi, 2013).

As a result of research conducted by authors in the fieald of marketing and branding, the brand consists of three main components : identifiers, attributes and associations (Sexton, 2011). Identifiers are signs which is recognized by the brand. To identify the signs of tourist brand research was aimed at determining the image of the country by local and foreign tourists. Studies have shown that the view of the local residents of Kazakhstan do not coincide with the views of foreign tourists. The result is a gap in the identification of different target audiences, between the local residents and what the authorities think about Kazakhstan and the foreign visitors (Table 1).

Table 1. The attitude of authorities and residents of Kazakhstan and foreign visitors to Kazakhstan.

The official version	Foreign customers
"The new State"; the modern capital; has won the EXPO-2017; the Eurasian Center; a country with a great potential for tourism.	View of the Western media: raw material economy; state between Russia and China; autocracy; the new capital in the steppe; the rich are buying villas around the world; human rights violations; environmental issues; corruption; exotics

Studies conducted among foreign tourists visiting Kazakhstan revealed that their views on Kazakhstan are as follows:

- attractive open spaces, beautiful landscapes;
- friendly people;
- legacy (the GULAG, polygons, the drying of the Aral Sea);
- oil and other raw materials with their pros and cons;
- prestigious projects (Astana);
- many-sided country, contradictions (wealth and poverty, town and village);
- security, no fundamentalism;
- the contaminated regions;
- corruption, autocracy (Schreiber, 2013).

This research shows that potential customers either do not know the country, or are aware of it as a soviet country that has oil, steppe, emptiness, and environmental problems. In general, on the basis of the study, it was found that about 90 percent of Western foreigners are scarce or non-existent. Kazakhstan is for them unexplored country. For those people who have some understanding of Kazakhstan through the media or personal visits, the image of the country is very controversial. Prevailing opinion is due to several reasons, particularly many contradictions within Kazakhstan, such as the difference between the conditions and opportunities in the big cities and villages; and contradictions between how the country positions itself and what it really is.

The second component of the brand is the attributes that are the characteristics of tourist products and their benefits and values. One of the most significant tourist-recreational attributes of Kazakhstan is the steppe. The vision of different tourists against the steppe resources miscellaneous and foreign tourists understanding can be formulated as follows:

- space with a lot of potential for urban technocrat;
- void where there is nothing for the urban tourist;
- the source of life for rural residents;
- the freedom and open spaces.

In designing the brand of Kazakhstan, it can position itself in different ways. Currently, consumers do not understand why they have to visit Kazakhstan and what the key benefit is during their visit. Thus, it is advisable to focus on the values that a potential customer has when visiting the country. This is particularly **important when building the brand's emotional benefits, as they are harder to copy competitors'** (Kotler, 1998). The analysis of tourist-recreational attributes of the country identified the main specific images for the Kazakhstan tourist brand including: steppe, horses, yurts (brand - Mongolia); Shanyrak (brand - Kyrgyzstan); Silk Road (brand - Uzbekistan); Baikonur; Astana; and the clear blue sky/eagles. The main advantage of the proposed specific images is well rendered and cause positive emotions. The third component of the brand is association, which is the link between identifiers and attributes. When creating a tourist brand these are the capitalization of attractive images and associations with Kazakhstan:

- Bounderless, vast Kazakhstan.
- Hospitable Kazakhstan.
- Unknown Kazakhstan.
- Amazing Kazakhstan.
- Country of the revelations.

For Interactive images that associate with Kazakhstan:

- Kazakhstan is not what you think.
- Kazakhstan and the soul rests.
- Be a nomad.
- Perfect location to relax.

The main advantage of interactive images is that the perception of the country depends on the target person; every man makes "my

Kazakhstan". The main disadvantage is that images are poorly rendered. The brand can and should vary, depending on the degree of development of the country, the popularity of the country, and the tourist product (Tybout Calder, & Kotler, 2011).

FORMULATION OF OBJECTIVES FOR ARTICLE

For the research two methods were used: desk research using secondary data and field research by interviewing tourists. During the desk research were used official statistics of the Republic of Kazakhstan [www.stat.kz], as well as data to foreign media about Kazakhstan.

The purpose of desk research was to determine how much corresponds to the opinion of the foreign press and media about the culture and traditions of the peculiarities of development of Kazakhstan in comparison with data of Kazakhstan sources. Identify and may not correspond dissonance between what they represent Kazakhstan abroad and what to see domestic media representatives and experts.

The main aim of the field research is based on the survey of foreign and domestic tourists to determine the possible attractive model of tourism brand in Kazakhstan.

The research used the following sources of information:

- data from official sources;
- data from the field of research:
- the tourists survey,
- the survey of tourism experts of Kazakhstan.

The main objective of this research was to develop theoretical and practical recommendations on forming model of the tourist brand of Kazakhstan on the basis of the current state of the development of its subjects and methodology of marketing. Studies have been conducted among foreign tourists to determine the attractiveness of Almaty and Kazakhstan as a whole, their capacity and preferences. This research used the following sources of information: data from official sources; data from the field of research; survey of tourists; and survey of experts in tourism of Kazakhstan. Ninety-six tourists completed a structured questionnaire including 55 women and 41 men, random sampling, conducted a survey of experts in free form, 8 experts were surveyed.

Objectives of this research were:

- identifying the real situation on the market of

tourism on the attractiveness of the natural sightseeings of the country;

- define the preferences for cultural and historic monuments;
- identification of the attractiveness of the brand directions;
- study the importance of the significant events hold in Kazakhstan;
- identification of the most significant historical and political figures;
- study of attractive dishes of Kazakh cuisine;
- determination of the priority characters, traditions and values (Kotler, 1998).

PRESENTATION OF KEY RESEARCH FINDINGS

To survey tourists a structured questionnaire was used; 96 people were surveyed, including 55 women and 41 men as a random sampling. The experts' survey was conducted in free form, and eight experts were surveyed. There are 96 interviewed tourists - 65 domestic tourists, who live in Kazakhstan and 31 foreign tourists who came to Kazakhstan from Germany, Poland, Czech Republic, Italy, Spain, France and Russia. Polls carried out for domestic tourists directly to tourist companies and during the round table in Almaty Management University, which was called "tourist brands in Kazakhstan." For foreign

tourists surveys were conducted during the tours, which organized the Kazakhstan Tourist Association. Objectives of this research were:

- to reveal the real situation on the tourism market on its attractiveness by nature sight-seeings of the country;
- to define preferences for cultural and historic monuments;
- to identify the attractiveness of branded directions;
- to study the importance of significant events hold in Kazakhstan;
- to identify of the most significant historical and political figures;
- to study attractive dishes of the Kazakh cuisine;
- to determine the priority characters, traditions, and values (Kotler, 1998)

On the basis of the received data on the result of a study it is concluded that for domestic tourists in Kazakhstan the most appealing natural resources are natural reserves and parks, 77% of respondents said the second, and most important is the Tien-Shan mountains, 45% of respondents considered them, and the third (38.5%) of the Charyn Canyon (Diagram 1). All other natural resources also attract tourists, but they are less important.

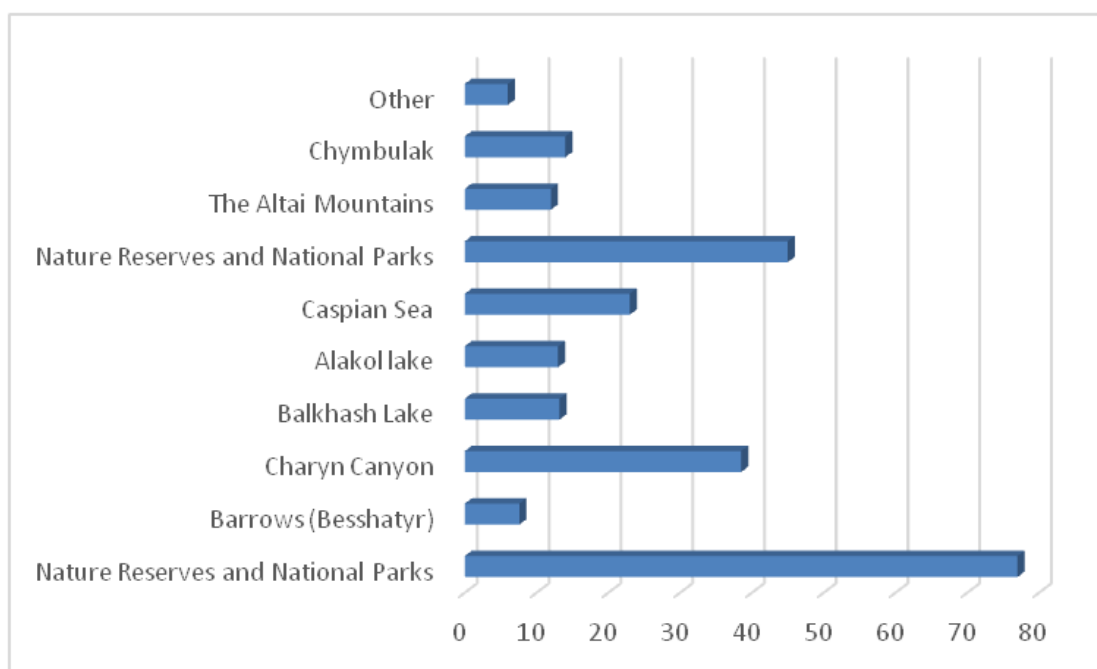


Diagram 1. Rating the attractiveness of the natural attractions of Kazakhstan

Tourism as an activity can successfully survive in the presence of two directions: natural

attractions and cultural and historical monuments. Thus, the prerequisites for growth

in demand for tourism and maintain it to the highest level, are resources such as monuments of history, culture and archaeology. Diagram 2

presents the results of the survey on the importance of historical and cultural attractions for tourists in Kazakhstan.

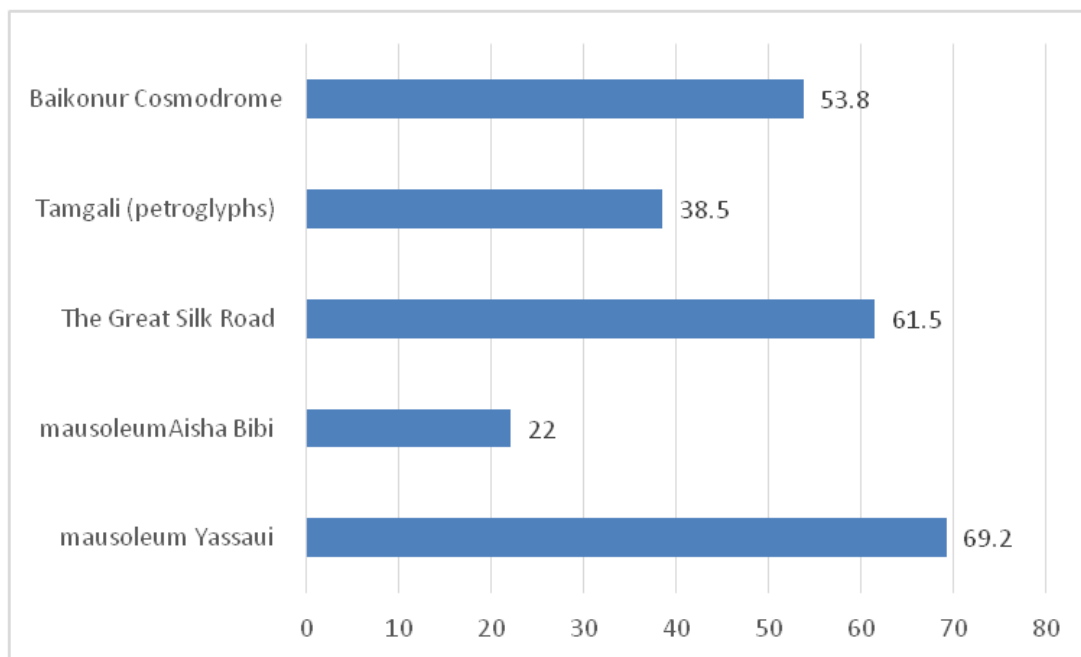


Diagram 2. Rating of preferences of consumers of historical and cultural attractions

The most attractive tourist sites in the country is the mausoleum of Yassavi (69.2%) and more than half of the respondents, 61.5% noted attractiveness of the segment of the Great Silk Road, 53.8% of the Baikonur Cosmodrome, to 38.5% of tourists are interested in Tamgaly and 22% said the mausoleum Aisha-Bibi.

One of the tasks in developing the tourist brand of Kazakhstan is to form attractive tourist products and create brand direction. An important aspect when choosing travel is a geographic focus. Motive for choosing the

geographical areas can be uncertain and it depends greatly on the distance and the availability of place touristic destination. Geographic direction may attract: location (natural or artificial factors, cultural items, etc.), event (Festival, sports games), opportunities for certain activities (such as sports), and as well as the condition of the material basis, transport infrastructure, etc.

Branded direction evaluation results are presented in Diagram 3.

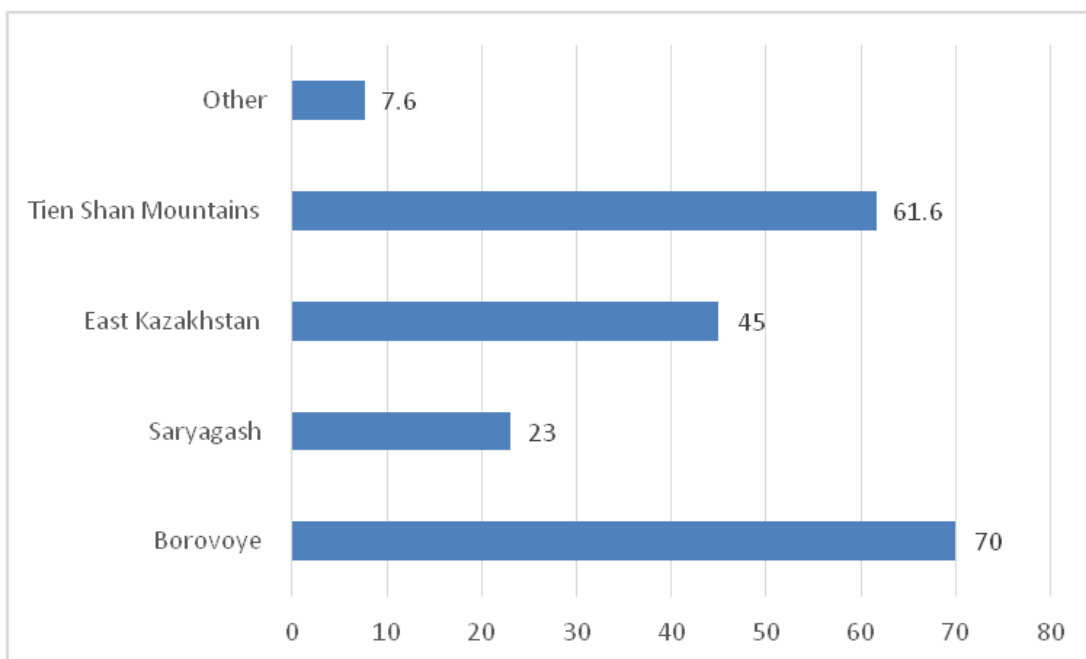


Diagram 3. Rating attractive brand tourist destinations in Kazakhstan

Consumers of Kazakhstan highlighted two major branded destinations: the Tien Shan and Borovoe, also it remains attractive to tourists East Kazakhstan with the Altai Mountains and lakes and only 23% of respondents noted Sary-agash.

During the formation of the country and the state brand remain relevant which events and international activities are carried out in the country. The survey results on this issue are presented in Diagram 4.

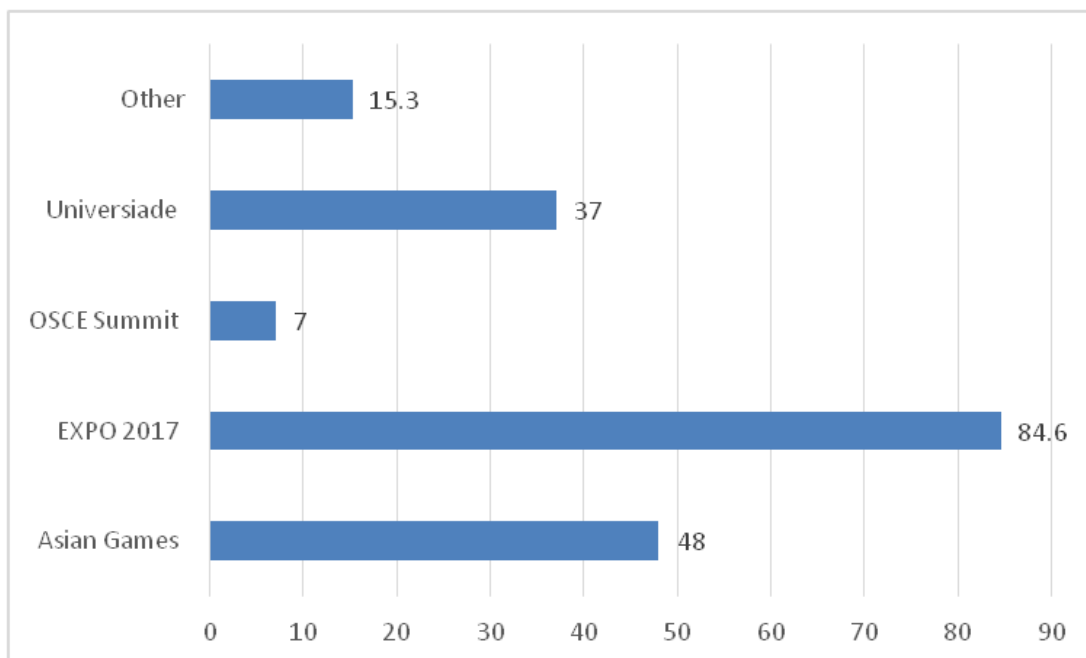


Diagram 4. The significance of significant events in Kazakhstan

As we can see from Diagram 4, the main significant event is organization of the exhibition "Expo 2017", as noted by 84.7% of the respondents, 48% of respondents highlighted Asian Games, 37% noted Universiade and only 7% noted the OSCE Summit.

Specific factor influencing the formation of the tourism brand is the national cuisine. The influence of this factor is evident in that national cuisine is important for food experts and extroverts.

As a result of the survey, it was found that the

highest preference is given to such dishes as beshbarmak, kumiss and kazi. However, we can select those dishes that are less important, but

consumers noted: shubat, kurt, kuardak, shelpek (Diagram 5).

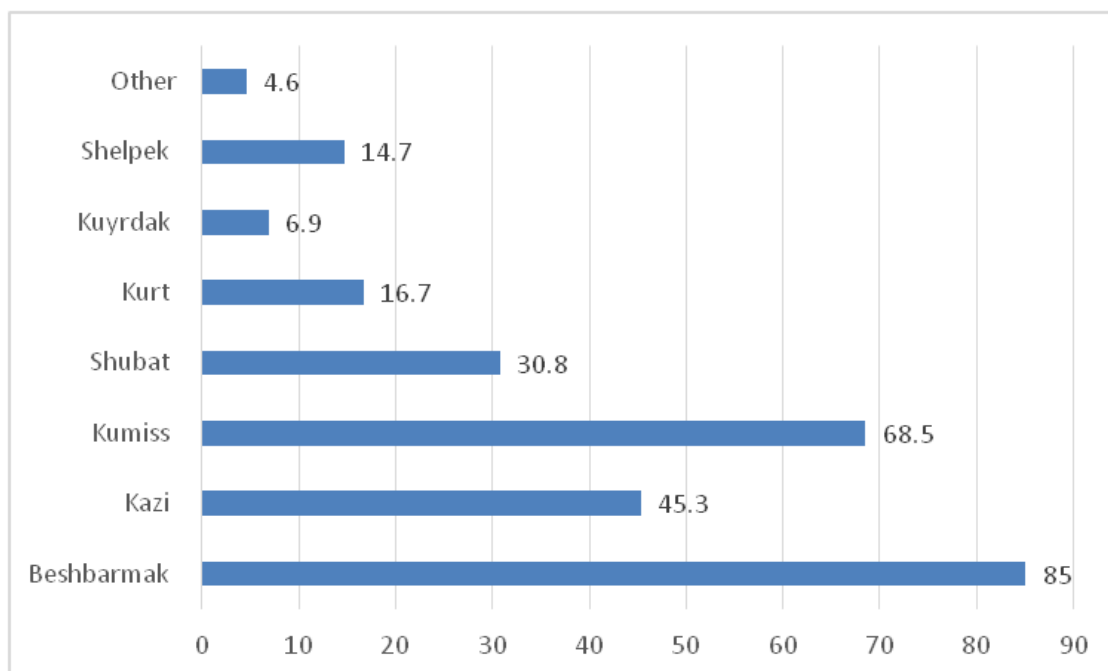


Diagram 5. Rating preference of tourists on dishes of Kazakh national cuisine

There are still a number of factors that influence the development of the tourist brand. One of these is the formation of the slogan and the logo. The survey found that consumers think that slogan must be associated with the following aspects:

- snow leopards or animals;
- steppes;
- mountains;
- nomadic civilization;
- shanirak;
- sky and stars;
- national characteristics;
- horses;
- Baikonur.

As you can see from the attributes Kazakhstan is associated with a diverse variety of areas and subjects, so to choose something definite is difficult and for this it is necessary to do deep and comprehensive studies, both foreign and domestic tourists. The city symbolizing Kazakhstan, as stated by the majority of the survey respondents is Astana (77%) and Almaty (69%). None of the tourist brand will perform its functions without an interesting and attractive

slogan. Based on the conducted research among foreign tourists there were noted recommended expression for slogan "Kazakhstan is not what you think about it." This slogan is now suitable and "perfect". It excites the curiosity, the desire to discover the country, but made no promises. It can even serve as "apology" or "excuse" when people come here with too high positive expectations. However, the main disadvantage of a slogan is that it does not reflect the positioning of Kazakhstan.

The respondent from Kazakhstan was asked an open-ended question on developing a slogan and has received a number of responses in the form of the slogan: "Have a rest with soul in Kazakhstan" and "Kazakhstan is open soul, high skies", "Kazakhstan is the country of steppes and warm hospitality», «There, where are your roots." As seen from the proposals of the slogans, we can conclude that the emphasis is on Kazakh hospitality and the beauty of the country.

Foreign tourists are attracted by the alternative and new culture. Therefore, a survey was conducted, which determined what traditions and values are important in the formation of brand (Diagram 6).

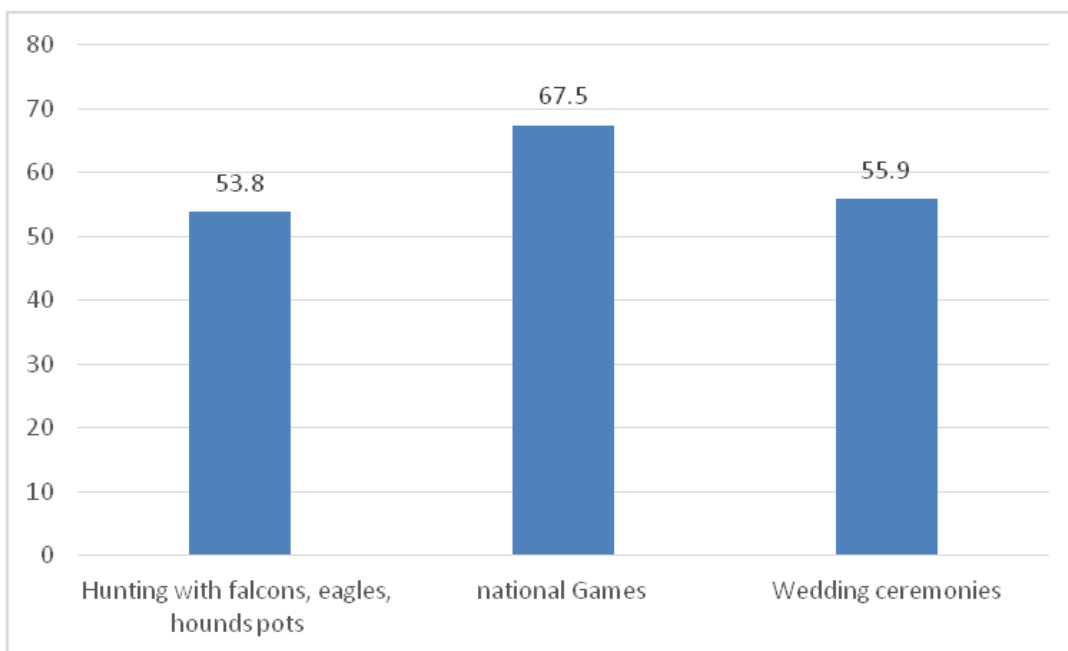


Diagram 6. Rating of the attractiveness of traditions and values in Kazakhstan

It can be seen that much the most interesting for respondents were national games, with a small margin marked the wedding traditions and hunting with Falcons.

that to the symbols of country we can include snow leopard, Baiterek, golden man. The most significant symbol of Kazakhstan is the "Golden man".

The survey results are presented in Diagram 7.

Based on the results of the study were found out

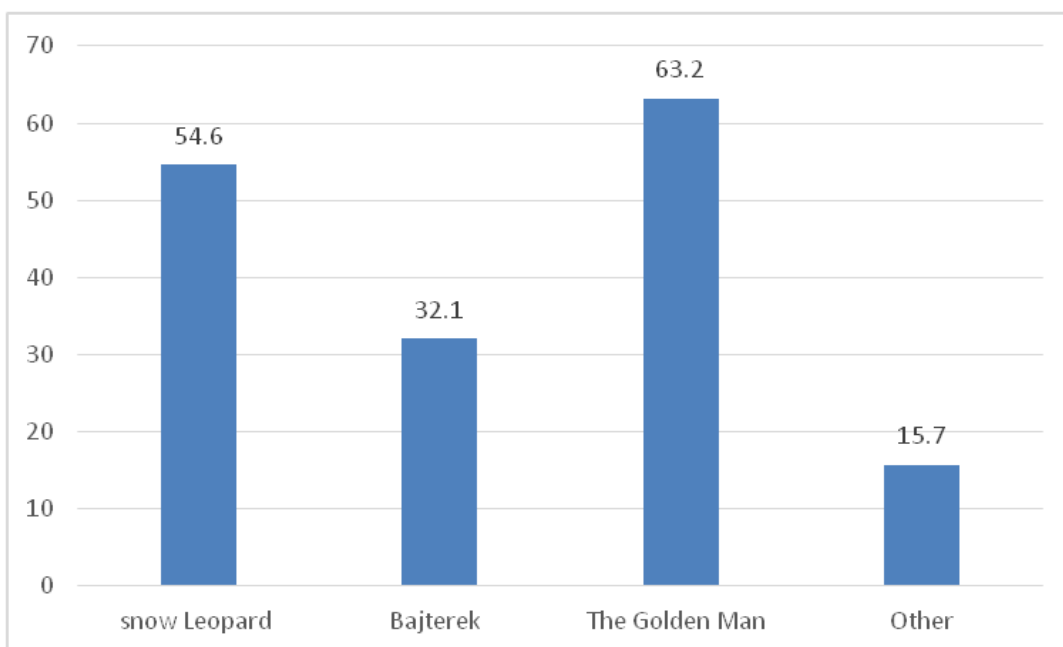


Diagram 7. Consumer preferences by choosing the symbol of Kazakhstan

Thus, the research found that consumers of tourism services prefer natural resources such as mountains and the beauty of nature, in particular

Borovoye, from the historical monuments greatest attraction is the Silk Road and the mausoleum of Yassavi, the most significant event

for Kazakhstan is «Expo-2017 », from the national cuisine tourists highlight such dishes as beshbarmak, koumiss and kazi, during the formation of the slogan symbols of our country should be considered.

However, as the analysis shows, the main features of Kazakhstan are: hospitality, culture, natural wealth, beauty, and originality, traditional values which to be used in the development of the brand (11).

On the basis of the analysis, it was found that the main motives for travel to Kazakhstan is culture, nature and business travel.

The primary target audience for tourism of Kazakhstan includes the following categories of

tourism:

- couples as family and not family ;
- groups of friends or students;
- Businessmen from Russia, China, Korea.

The process of formation of a tourism brand is associated with the positioning of Kazakhstan as a tourist region. In view of the situation Kazakhstan can be represented on the tourist market in the form of a comprehensive product with several destinations. With the aim of identifying specific areas of development of tourism in Kazakhstan identified the distinctive features of tourist destinations and target customer profile (Figure 8).

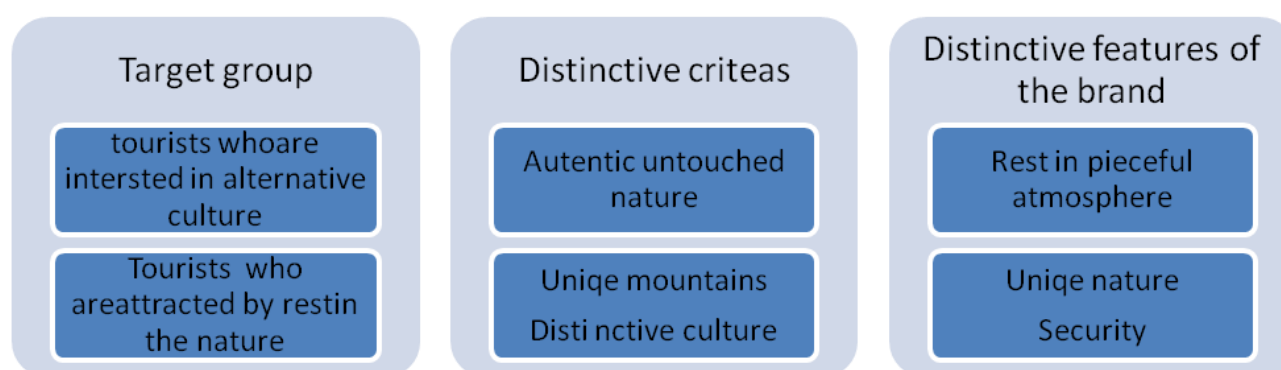


Figure 8. The basis for the formation of the tourist brand of Kazakhstan

The study identified factors that constrain the further development of tourism in Kazakhstan and its promotion in the international market:

- lack of investment needed for the development of tourist regions;
- the high cost of services, inflexible price policy in the sphere of tourism;
- legal and administrative barriers (particularly in getting visa);
- low level of development of tourist products and infrastructure;
- not informed about the country abroad;
- high level of competition in the international segment (Development Bank of Kazakhstan, 2012).

For Kazakhstan, taking into account current positioning the following tours can be actual:

- cultural and educational tours;
- activities connected with the traditions and customs of the Kazakh people.
- ski tourism;

- ecological tourism (Shaikenova et al., 2009).

An effective method of building brands to attract tourists is also a technology of "events", when a tourist arrives in a new country to visit and participate in any significant event, after which he comes back here as an ordinary tourist, trying to learn more about the country itself. Such events can become for Kazakhstan EXPO 2017 and Universiade 2017, also provided an opportunity to further information and draw attention to Kazakhstan.

Further development of the tourism sector should be based on the balance between attractiveness for potential investors and consumers (tourists). From the diagrams (Figure 9) you can see that the tourist market of Kazakhstan will be developed consistently and at each of the four phases of the life cycle of a tourist product will be new kinds of tourism. The scheme is based on a survey of experts.

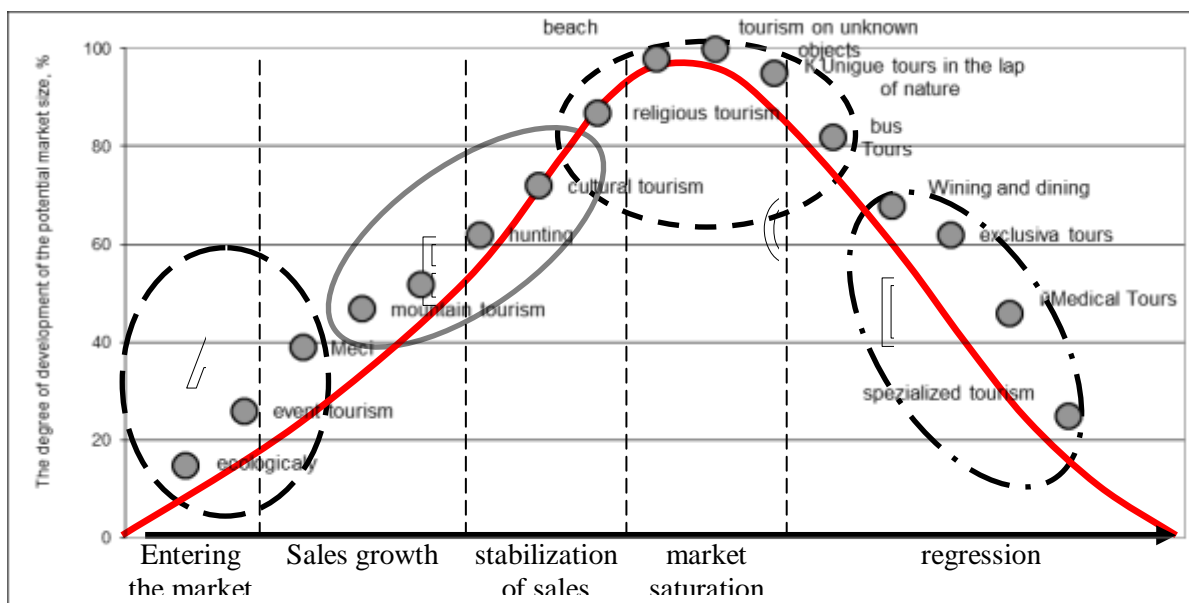


Figure 9. The projected life cycle of tourist product of Kazakhstan

The projected life cycle of tourist product development has shown that the implementation phase will develop environmental and event tours, business travel, because for these kinds of tourism in Kazakhstan there are conditions and capabilities. At the stage of growth requires the development of skiing and cultural tourism, as they must be created qualitative framework. At the stage of maturity will develop pilgrimage tours to famous sites and bus tours, during the recession there will be extreme, exclusive and resort tours.

Gradual development of tourism can be successful only if it will be based on the existing system, a comprehensive, in-depth strategy, based on the consistent development of new attractive tours.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The whole concept of the tourist brand of Kazakhstan should be positioned on the competitive advantages of the country, the benefits that will receive tourist and attributes that exist in Kazakhstan. Table 4 shows the option of positioning of the tourist brand in Kazakhstan taking into account conducted analysis.

The cumulative effect of the combined attributes of the country helps to strengthen the competitive position of the brand as a whole.

Promotion of the tourist brand is an important,

multifaceted and long-term event. It requires, in addition to the brand that influences on the visual aspect of perception, to use sound dimension to the picture, which is in the imagination of potential tourists, be the most complete (Yankevych, 2004). To support the tourist brand of Kazakhstan it is important to back up advertising and promotion tools.

Over time, when Kazakh tourist brand will be well promoted, there can be less attention paid to the advertising and display only the brand itself, which by itself will cause the association and less in need of advertising. Highly publicized slogan or brand image are in the public domain that is making a huge contribution to the formation of positive public opinion about the country, a resort or tourist object in it. Tourist brands of a country changes an attitude of international consumers, bringing to the forefront of their tourist potential, makes possible the identification of the tours in the market.

Promotion of the tourist brand is the next step after the development, logo, slogan and branding. Promotion is the complex process. Selection of tools of promotion should be based on their result. Undoubtedly, a differentiated approach to tools of promotion is important, but the question remains, how to introduce the tourist positioning of Kazakhstan on the international market, how to attract tourists and provide just such conditions that they expect. According to data of

Euro monitor International (euromonitor.com), a new global trend is considered active travelers in social networks that necessitate the use of tools

for online promotion. The development of E-branding is the subject of further study.

Table 4. Positioning of the tourist brand of Kazakhstan

Indicators	Description
Slogan	Kazakhstan is a country of steppes and warm hospitality
Symbol of the country	Snow Leopard
Mission	We encourage tourists to the contemplation of the exceptional beauty of the landscape, the unity with the spirit of the national integrity and introduction with the rich culture and history of the ancestors.
The objective of the development of the brand (product/company, organization)	The main objective: to maintain and protect the integrity of the unique nature An additional purpose: to share the traditions, culture and way of life of the Kazakh people
Tasks of the brand development (product/company, organization)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of unique nature tours • Full immersion into the Kazakh life • Dive into the wild nature and its beauty • Provide direct human contact with flora and fauna
Positioning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Located within a clean, untouched nature, • Contact with the national and cultural traditions with national games and rituals
Originality	The tourist brand offering an integrated approach in the wild outdoors with the opportunity to come into contact with the attributes of national culture of the Kazakh people
The attributes of the country	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National hunting with Falcons • National Games • The Steppe • Untouched landscapes

The development of tourism in Kazakhstan is only possible, if the tourist brand is formed. Developed brand will increase the recognition of Kazakhstan in the market and define the values that consumers expect from a visit to the country. Based on the research, it was found that tourist brand of Kazakhstan can be built for such benefits as the unspoiled nature and cultural traditions and customs. As a result of the proposed positioning in Kazakhstan, there are two main target audiences: tourists who are interested in alternative culture and tourists who prefer a vacation in the nature. Results of the

survey showed that consumers are interested in such tourist-and-recreational resources as natural reserves and national parks, a monument to the mausoleum of Yassavi, the brand direction - Borovoye and mountain, symbol of the country could become a Gold man or a Snow Leopard.

The projected life cycle of tourism product development has shown that the implementation phase will develop environmental and event tours, in growth phase, ski, cultural tours and maturity phase, pilgrimage tours to famous sites and bus tours, during the recession, extreme, exclusive and spa tours. In general, it should be

noted that Kazakhstan needs a systemic integrated approach when forming the tourist brand; initially it is important to determine the positioning of the elements reflected in the positioning and subsequently to develop an effective program of promotion.

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