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POPULATION PERCEPTION OF CREATING THE BRAND OF THE CITY OF OSIJEK WITH AN EMPHASIS IN THE FIELD OF CULTURE

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Abstract: A city brand should add value to the city and in the process of building one, it is necessary to consider the values and perceptions of internal and external stakeholders, especially the local population. The purpose of the study is to observe the population's perception about the construction of the brand of the City of Osijek with an emphasis on culture. For the purposes of the research, a survey questionnaire was created, and it was conducted among the local population of the City of Osijek. The survey questionnaire consisted of questions related to socio-demographic characteristics of respondents, questions that related to the respondents' assessment of the cultural identity of the city on its heritage and public preferences, and their assessment of the need for branding Osijek. In order to process the research results, a qualitative and quantitative analysis was conducted. The results of the research show that the majority of respondents agree that the cultural identity of the City of Osijek is based on its heritage, while a smaller share of those agree that such an identity is based on public preferences. Therefore, for the successful branding of the City of Osijek, it is extremely important, first, to talk to the local community. Given that the branding of the city is a long-term process, the proposal for further research is to constantly consider the possibility of implementing an appropriate branding strategy of the City of Osijek in the field of culture.

Key words: brand building, cultural identity, population, City of Osijek

JEL Classification: Z1, M37

INTRODUCTION

According to the American Marketing Association (AMA), a brand is defined as a name, term, sign, symbol, design, or combination thereof aimed at identifying the products or services of a manufacturer or group of manufacturers and distinguishing them from the products or services of a competitor (Kotler & Gertner, 2004, str. 46). In the Republic of Croatia, in the beginning the authors used and wrote the English word

brand next to the brand, but today the name brand has become familiar in the Croatian language. The importance of the term brand in modern times is evidenced by the expansion of its scope, so it is no longer used only for products and services but also for geographical locations / areas such as countries, regions or cities. In that case, the purpose of branding is to make a city recognizable.

It should be noted that in the scientific literature, the terms city brand and city marketing are often used as synonyms, although branding is essentially a narrower term and only part of marketing. From a practical point of view, it is somewhat understandable to equate these terms: brand development and brand management certainly involve marketing activities. Especially in the implementation phase, both branding and marketing use communication with the market and promotional campaigns. Ultimately, both city marketing and city branding aim to raise the quality of a city (Vuignier, 2016, p. 7). The notion of the destination brand refers to tourist-oriented cities / regions, which in terms of branding focus only on the preferences of potential tourists, ignoring the values of the local population (Jelinčić, Vukić, & Kostešić, 2017, p. 117). For the purposes of building the city's brand, the values and perceptions of all stakeholders, both internal and external, and especially the local population, are considered. In modern times, city branding is no longer a term reserved for tourist-oriented cities, so the general question instead of "whether to brand a city" has become "how to brand a city" (Hanna & Rowley, 2011, p. 458).

In modern times, branding is extremely important for the differentiation of cities. Modern mayors and city administrations manage cities as companies that offer their products and services, want their cities to be attractive to investors, a popular place for tourists to come, a desirable place to study and for customers around the world to buy products produced in that city (Mihevc, 2015, p. 198). Therefore, it is important to explain in more detail the specifics of branding the city and emphasize the power of the brand, which will be discussed in more detail below. When branding cities, classic marketing models and procedures are applied in a certain area, and the goal is to create and increase its economic value. A parallel can be drawn between branding a city and creating a corporate brand: a strong corporate brand requires thorough work on the image in terms of general theme, label, graphics, logo, recognizable colors and investment in advertising (Mihevc, 2015, p. 198). The same goes for cities, because without thorough work, proactive thinking, cooperation and synergy between stakeholders and representatives of the city administration, the value of the city will not increase.

It is important to point out that the scientific literature suggests that cultural and creative industries can certainly be the basis and opportunity for branding the city, but if representatives of local government and cultural institutions, as decision makers and cultural policy makers, consciously initiate this process. The difficulty is that previous research shows that there is no single solution or recommendation that would be uniquely applicable in this process. Although history, heritage and local resources are always the basis, the specific institutional organization and the integration of the creative sector in a particular society and space are crucial (Chapain, Lange, & Stachowiak, 2013, p. 124).

The goal of branding is to highlight the unique attributes of a city and thus make that city recognizable, different and more attractive than others (Skoko, Brčić, & Gluvačević, 2012, p. 10). Therefore, it should be noted that the concept of branding

is increasingly present in the management of cities. In addition to the fact that cities often try to be interesting to as many tourists as possible, a positive image of the city makes the city a more pleasant place to live for its inhabitants and can attract potential investors, entrepreneurs, media, cultural, sports, educational and other institutions as well as other stakeholders.

CREATING A CITY BRAND

To represent the city with all its qualities and to attract potential visitors so it could be possible to develop a touristic component it is needed to create and promote the recognizable city brand.

Conceptual definition of a brand

A mark or a brand can be formally the same because they represent a mark, a trademark, a recognizable, but in practical use, there are nuances that refer to the context in which these words are stated (Pavlek, 2017, p. 62). According to Jakovljević (2000, p. 26), a brand consists of three key elements, namely a sign, a name and a slogan. A good brand simplifies the purchase decision for the consumer and guarantees a certain level of quality. The brand should be understood as something more than the product and / or service itself. The brand is primarily a name, a symbol of identification, and a series of added values that simply promise the consumer both functional and psychological benefits of a product or service: its usability, price, packaging, taste, smell, color, design, associations and advertising (Kenneth & Maas, 1995, p. 16). Therefore, a brand is a combination of various factors that give a certain product and service an identity and which at the same time makes it different from other products and services. A branded product or service differs from other similar products and services in that it appears more attractive to consumers than other competing products and services.

Branding increases the value of that city in the market through the increased number of visitors and their consumption. A brand is a set of positive associations that a city evokes in the minds of people; the first thing they think of is the very mention of its name (Setayesh & al., 2016, p. 316). However, there is an important difference, and it is contained in the fact that the marketing process is oriented to all activities of creating and realizing exchange that will on the one hand to meet the needs and desires of consumers, and on the other hand to realize profits and other goals.

Ultimately, it can be said that city marketing refers to the application of marketing instruments to geographic locations, such as cities, towns, regions, and communities. These marketing instruments are supported by a user-oriented philosophy for creating, communicating, delivering and exchanging city offerings that have value for the consumers of that city and the city community in general. Unlike overall city marketing, a city brand is a symbolic construct that should add value to that city. A city brand is "only" a sign that identifies a city and evokes psychological and emotional associations that permeate that city with cultural meanings. Consequently, city branding is a process of building a city brand and one of the instruments of city marketing management (Eshuis, Klijn, & Braun, 2014, pp. 153-154).

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Brand history

The beginnings of branding are associated with the first labeled products in ancient China, ancient Greece, and the Roman Empire, which, like Vesuvius, wine bottles found in Pompeii in the 1st century, bore a stamp thus becoming a kind of proto-brand (Dabo, 2012, pp. 17, 173). From the earliest history, products have been labeled in a certain way, which has become especially important at a time when products have started to be sold outside the place of production, referring to fairs outside cities, or in some other regions and countries. In the middle ages, guild associations began to create their own signs that could only be used by their members, and it was precisely such signs that guaranteed a certain level of quality.

Systematic branding is associated with the beginning of the 19th century when the industrial packaging of products began, and it was industrialization that transferred to factory production many goods, which were created in the home industry. At the time, the signs indicated the origin of the product. The main characteristic of such signs was their intelligibility, but also their recognizability, which was extremely important at a time when there was complete illiteracy. When sending their products to the market, factories would mark the products with their trademark and thus create the first brands.

It is possible to talk about the beginning of systematic branding in its full meaning, i.e. in the sense of what branding is considered and known today, only after the Second World War. Industrial military capacities developed during the war to meet military needs shifted to meeting the consumer needs of the "common man", so there was a wave of new products and the need to differentiate such products and highlight the comparative advantages that can attract consumers. At that time, the economic power of the average citizen grew, shopping thus became a trend, and the mass media penetrated into almost all spheres of the public.

Thus, the beginnings of systematic branding date back to the time when the market began to be flooded with mass-produced products between which there were no clearly defined differences, and direct sales no longer met the needs of companies (Dabo, 2012, p. 173). Competitive branding has become an imperative of the industrial era. Along with strengthening the reputation of various factories, he had to strengthen the image of the product, that is, what sets it apart from other products, which makes it different and better than others do. The trend of the need to differentiate from the competition continued in the post-industrial era, in which intensive branding affected not only traditional and other areas, but also tertiary and quaternary activities, of which attention will be focused on branding cities.

Branding of cities

The logic of the necessity of branding products and services is increasingly being transferred to the branding of cities, so that they can be differentiated from each other, especially in the target markets. In fact, the development of city branding has been inspired by the successful application of branding in the field of product and service marketing (Kavaratzis, Warnaby, & Ashworth, 2015, p. 7). City branding is used to achieve social, economic and political goals. Therefore, branding the city should be viewed as a strategic response to economic trends and social needs of the population. In general, the process of branding a city refers to strengthening local identities and

creating useful images in order to achieve economic and social benefits. This means that the use of branding techniques and tools creates preconditions for optimal use of competitive advantages of a city over others, where communication practices infrastructure and networking of urban systems and subsystems form a platform for the implementation of this process (Primorac, 2018, p. 397).

At the heart of a city's branding consideration is always increasing the quality of that city through increasing competitiveness and increasing profits. City branding will achieve positive value when visitors and tourists respond positively to the city and in the way it is promoted in the market. However, for the successful development of the city's brand, it is important to talk to the local community, i.e. the population. Branding experiences success especially when people are given the opportunity to experience it through active participation (Glinska & Florek, 2013, p. 276).

It is especially important to emphasize the time dimension of the city's branding. City branding is a long-term process of building an image that should represent the realistic image and character of the city being branded. Designing an appropriate branding strategy and its thorough implementation requires a lot of time, effort, patience and knowledge. If done properly, the long-term tangible and intangible benefits will outweigh the costs.

Brand building process

The main goal of branding is to create a "story" behind a brand, position it in the minds of consumers and create the desired relationship with them. Therefore, branding is a communication-marketing process in which it defines what an entity (product, service, person or city / region) is, what distinguishes it from others, what its advantages are and what value it represents to the user. It is the process of highlighting, attracting attention, creating emotions, persuading, giving soul to that subject and finally gaining a share in the consciousness of consumers (Skoko, Brčić, & Gluvačević, 2012), (Matejčić, 2007).

The process of creating a brand should be led from the highest place, i.e. from the highest hierarchical level, mostly to ensure unity in goals and implementation. Special skills are needed if efforts are made to secure support, guidance and funding from the highest possible level and to exclude policy from the branding process at the same time (Mihevc, 2015, p. 199). Cultural management is part of public policy, and branding is not beyond that, so it can be said that branding, as part of public policy, while respecting the strategic perspective, should seek to identify and exclude short-term political interests. Politicians often want to achieve rapid effects during their term, all with the aim of political (self) promotion, which is in stark contrast to the long-term branding process and results that are not visible immediately, but in a certain period.

The role of cultural policy in the branding process is important in not only initiating and managing the brand but also in mitigating possible negative consequences. Namely, the scientific literature mentions the possibility of the risk of urban redesign in terms of creating clichéd environments and social divisions, but these are precisely the negatives that cultural policy at the city level can effectively avoid (Prilenska, 2012, p. 15).

Experts and all city residents should be involved in the branding process. It is extremely important to sensitize the domestic public regarding the need for branding,

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as it is impossible to create a brand of a city (or tourist place) if the local population resists in the process. The condition for their contribution and acceptance of such a brand is a firm belief in the economic benefits for each of them and their descendants. A belief in the benefits for the whole community, and at the same time, it is one of the most important, difficult and demanding tasks and procedures heterogeneously with different thoughts, attitudes, and interests (Mihevc, 2015, p. 199).

It is not easy to achieve the essence of effective branding, because each city makes a unique system with complicated subsystems, and therefore it is important that experts outside the city for which branding is done be involved in the entire process of branding the city as Mihevc points out (2015, p. 199). One of the reasons for the participation of experts in this process lies in the fact that it is necessary to avoid subjectivity and achieve the most realistic basis for the branding process.

According to Lončar (2018, p. 13), the process of building a city brand once again emphasizes the importance of strategic planning because it involves preparing and building a brand, as well as building a brand and defining key strategies and implementing a city brand. In the phase of preparation for building a brand, it is necessary to identify the advantages and strengths of the observed city. As Lončar states (2018, p. 10), the goal is to recognize his unique attributes, in order to make them more recognizable, different and more attractive than the others.

Attributes commonly considered as potential components of a city's brand are cultural events (e.g., exhibitions, conferences, concerts) that are attractive to the public and have the potential for employment and / or entrepreneurial business, then unique cultural heritage, availability of natural resources and benefits and the uniqueness of tourist attractions (Pirnar, Igneci, & Tutuncuoglu, 2017, p. 26).

After identifying and selecting attributes, brand building involves creating a shared vision of all key stakeholders, from the local public to experts and representatives of institutions. Building a brand means creating a common vision, common goal and strategy as well as an action plan. The process of creating a city brand results in major changes, which may include changes in the urban plan, conversion of certain business premises, environmental protection, cultural events and more. Once created, the brand needs to be continuously implemented and further developed during implementation, in which the most important place is occupied by marketing communication. Namely, it is necessary to create preconditions for the selected attributes to communicate effectively about a city. In doing so, truthfulness is crucial to the success of branding and must not be compromised with anything. Creating a fake brand is always unsuccessful and short-lived. Additionally, communication must be based on messages that are delivered in a simple, easy-to-remember way, so that they are easily recognizable in the multitude of all other messages to which recipients are constantly exposed. In addition to being simple, Mihevc (2015, p. 200) emphasizes that messages should motivate the recipient to take action.

The purpose of communication is to inform the market about what a city is like, what it offers, what is specific to it. The most common and most impressive message about a city reaches the public through a slogan, which in a few words provides the essence of the brand. Based on the slogan, the recipients of the message create an image and perception of a place without perhaps knowing a lot of data and information about that place (Mihevc, 2015, p. 200). Slogans contain messages based on which the

public creates and shapes their opinion, so they can increase the value and importance of the city's brand.

Proper selection of communication channels is especially important for the success of communication. The Internet is a very powerful channel and its application is certainly one of the main trends in city branding (Pirnar, Igneci, & Tutuncuoglu, 2017, p. 28). The development of the Internet itself, from static, one-way websites to dynamic interactive social networks, has certainly played a significant role in its application in city branding (Vukman & Drpić, 2014, p. 144). The Internet has certainly reached a level where it is changing the methods of communication and thus changing the brand development strategy.

When it comes to other communication channels, public relations should also be mentioned. Public relations are often equated with publicity, but publicity refers to unpaid forms of promotional activities, while public relations are not (Šutalo, 2017, p. 24). Namely, speeches, news, written materials such as brochures, audio-visual materials such as films, materials, and means related to identity are considered the main means of public relations (Šutalo, 2017, p. 54). Public relations require careful planning and management, and in the branding process, they can be extremely important.

EMPIRICAL PART

To visualize the perception the citizens have of what is or what is not the city brand, the research was conducted by the survey questionnaire which will show relevant results of the city brand of Osijek.

RESEARCH METHODS

149 inhabitants of the city of Osijek participated in the research, of which 53 (35.6%) were male and 96 (64.4%) female were aged 18-85. Most participants live in households with a monthly income of 10,000 HRK or more (32.9%), while the smallest number of participants live in households with incomes of up to 2,000 HRK (7.4%). In addition, the largest number of participants have a completed tertiary or quaternary degree of education (53%), while the smallest number of participants have completed a primary degree of education (0.7%). The largest number of participants is employed (68.5%) and is in a marital / extramarital union (55%). 24.2% of participants have temporary housing in Osijek, while the rest of the participants reside permanently in Osijek.

Research instruments and procedure

The survey method was used in the research, and the instrument created for the implementation of the mentioned method was a survey questionnaire, whose basic questions are the same for all categories of respondents. The level of reliability of the questionnaire sample was examined by the coefficient of internal consistency of the so-called Cronbach alpha. Measurement showed that Cronbach's alpha is $\alpha = .785$ as a result, the used questionnaire is assessed as reliable.

The survey questionnaire for the local population was conducted in writing, as an anonymous online questionnaire. The survey questionnaire for the local population consisted of seven (7) questions related to the socio-demographic characteristics of

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the respondents and thirteen (13) questions related to the respondents 'assessment of the city's cultural identity based on its heritage and public preferences, respondents' assessment of the city's branding, for positioning the city in the field of culture and the attitudes of the respondents about city projects in culture.

Questions are formed as closed-ended questions in a structured survey questionnaire. Of the thirteen key questions, six (6) are dichotomous yes / no questions, and seven (7) questions are based on the Likert scale as an interval scale with grades from 1 to 5 offered. Of the seven questions based on the Likert scale, several questions contain sub-questions, so it can be said that ultimately there were twenty-six (26) individual questions based on the Likert scale. The rest of the participants are permanently residing in Osijek.

Research results

In order to examine the perception of the local population about building the brand of the city of Osijek with an emphasis on cultural areas, participants answered a series of questions starting with questions related to the foundation of the city's cultural identity on its heritage and public preferences. According to the data from Table 1, it can be concluded that the local population of the city of Osijek estimates that the cultural identity of the city is based on heritage and public preferences. However, the local population is divided when it comes to basing the cultural identity of the city of Osijek on public preferences.

Table 1. Descriptive indicators of participants' answers to questions about the cultural identity of the city (N = 149)

	Yes (%)	No (%)
Is the cultural identity of the city based on its heritage?	131 (87.9)	18 (12.1)
Is, generally speaking, the cultural identity of a city based on public preferences?	103 (69.1)	46 (30.9)
In the city of Osijek, is the cultural identity of the city based on public preferences?	74 (49.7)	75 (50.3)

Source: author's own calculation

Participants assessed the importance of certain entities for the development of the city's cultural identity, assessing the tourist board (M = 4.11, SD = 1,004) and cultural institutions (M = 4.54, SD = 0.621) as the most responsible entities, while assessing them as the least responsible entities - tourists (M = 2.68, SD = 1.079), which can be seen in Table 2.

Table 2. Description indicators of the perception of the importance of certain subjects for the development of the cultural identity of the city among the inhabitants of Osijek (N=149)

	M	SD
City council	3.99	0.962
Tourist board	4.11	1.004
Institutions in culture (museums, theatres...)	4.54	0.621
State	3.70	1.064

Businesses	3.17	1.042
Local population	3.73	0.949
Tourists	2.68	1.079
European Union	3.12	1.102

Source: author's own calculation

Furthermore, the results show that the local population to a lesser extent believes that the city of Osijek should not develop its cultural identity because it has already been built, while they largely believe that cultural identity develops through diversification and greater investment in marketing of cultural events shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Description indicators of the perception of the importance of certain subjects for the development of the cultural identity of the city among the inhabitants of Osijek (N=149)

	M	SD
The city of Osijek does not need to develop its cultural identity because it has already been built	1.80	0.830
Cultural identity would develop by diversifying (offering more different) cultural content	4.28	0.831
Cultural identity would be developed by greater investments in marketing (promotion) of cultural content	4.40	0.779

Legend: ** – $p < .01$; M – arithmetic means; SD – standard deviation

Source: author's own calculation

When asked about the need to brand the culture of the city, participants answered almost uniformly. Namely, the local population agrees that the branding of the city's culture is necessary, while they do not agree that the City of Osijek has used its heritage and cultural events to brand the city, which can be seen according to the data in Table 4.

Table 4. Descriptive indicators of local population responses to city branding issues (N=149)

	Yes (%)	No (%)
Do you think that branding the culture of the city is necessary?	145 (97.3)	4 (2.7)
Do you think that Osijek has used its heritage and cultural events to brand the city?	24 (16.1)	125 (83.9)

Source: author's own calculation

In addition, the local population expresses moderate satisfaction with the cultural facilities offered in the city of Osijek, while they believe that cultural activities are important for the development of the city and the quality of life in it. This can be concluded from the arithmetic means shown in Table 5. In addition, the results show that the population is moderately familiar with projects in the culture of the city of Osijek.

Table 5. Descriptive indicators of city brand perception in the field of culture of the local population of Osijek (N=149)

	M	SD
How satisfied are you with the offered cultural contents in the city of Osijek?	3.01	0.788
Assess how important cultural activities are for the development of the city	4.54	0.620
Assess how important cultural activities are for the quality of life in it	4.31	0.796
Rate your familiarity with the projects in the culture of Frada Osijek?	3.47	1.695

Source: author's own calculation

Regarding the interest of the local population of Osijek in attending various events, the results indicate that participants show great interest in theater performances, cinema screenings, concerts, music festivals and museum or gallery exhibitions, which can be concluded from the arithmetic means listed in Table 6.

Table 6. Descriptive indicators of the interest of the local population of Osijek in attending various events (N=149)

	M	SD
Theatre play	4.17	0.786
Ballet, dance or opera performance	3.60	1.138
Cinema projection	4.15	0.925
Concert	4.34	0.724
Music festival	4.21	0.903
Public library - book lending	3.75	1.046
Book presentation	3.42	1.104
Creative workshops	3.73	1.107
Folklore performances	3.20	1.279
Museum or gallery exhibition	4.02	0.948

Source: author's own calculation

Speaking of Osijek, the local population evaluated the representatives of the City's brand. Participants in this research largely believe that the city's brand is represented by Osijek Summer of Culture, Pannonian challenge, Landart straw festival, Croatian Singing Society 'Lipa', Osijek Youth Summer, Urban Fest Osijek (UFO), architecture and famous Osijek residents in the history of city culture shown by the arithmetic means in Table 7. On the other hand, the local population as a brand Osijek perceives at least the local film production and 'licitari'.

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Table 7. Descriptive indicators of the perception of the local population of Osijek about the representatives of the brand of the City of Osijek (N=149)

	M	SD
a. theatrical productions		
National Theatre of Croatia	3.85	1.051
Krleža Days	3.42	1.169
Kids theatre	3.88	0.979
'SLUK'	3.36	1.169
Osijek Summer of Culture	4.50	0.741
'Nezavisna scena'	3.05	0.936
b. local film production	2.92	1.171
c. cinema projections	3.23	1.146
d. photography		
'Romulić i Stojčić'	3.52	1.088
Photo club Osijek	3.15	1.025
e. library activity	3.26	1.087
f. activity of Civil society associations		
'Zemlja bez granica'	3.77	1.080
Pannonian challenge	4.65	0.744
Landart festival 'Slama'	4.31	0.885
g. music		
Music school 'Franjo Kuhač'	3.78	0.085
'EPTA'	3.25	1.138
'Lipa'	4.03	1.036
'Brevis'	3.89	1.085
'Akvarel'	3.54	1.124
Osijek music Wednesday	3.88	1.065
Memorial Franjo Krežma	3.52	1.113
Memorial Darko Lukić	3.34	1.178
Concert intermezzo	3.17	1.153
Osijek Summer of Youth	4.29	0.903
Urban Fest Osijek (UFO)	4.06	1.048
h. folklore		
'Pajo Kolarić'	3.58	1.135
'Osijek 1862'	3.47	1.157
'Željezničar'	3.56	1.141
'Batorek'	3.48	0.859
'Šokačko sijelo'	3.16	0.716
'Šokačko prelo'	3.07	0.713
Pannonian folklore festival	3.55	0.672

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i. manifestations and activities of minority cultural societies (Hungarians, Germans, Serbs, Slovaks, Macedonians, Jews…)	3.42	0.754
j. architecture ('Tvrđa', secession)	4.91	0.283
k. local painting, sculpturing and design	3.70	0.723
l. traditional and artistic crafts		
'Licitari'	2.70	0.934
'Zlatovez', 'šlinga' and other handiwork	3.79	0.640
m. museum and gallery exhibitions		
Slavonski biennale	3.68	0.710
'Dani grafike'	3.64	0.680
n. computer programs, computer games and new media (Osijek Software City)	3.60	0.734
o. publishing and advertising	3.15	0.783
p. famous Osijek residents in the history of the city's culture (Franjo Krežma, Franjo Kuhač, Pajo Kolarić, Branko Lustig, J.J.Strossmayer)	4.72	0.494

Source: author's own calculation

CONCLUSION

There are definitions of the term brand in numerous literature, and since different authors define this term differently, it can be said that there is no unambiguous, i.e. unified definition of the term brand. For some it is a name, for others a symbol, design, etc. It follows that the sign, name and slogan are key elements of the brand. In the scientific literature, the term city brand and city marketing are often equated, but the two terms are not synonymous. Namely, branding is a narrower term and is part of marketing. Ultimately, for both terms, the goal is the same, and that is to raise the quality of a particular city. A brand is a combination of different factors / characteristics that give an identity (products, services, cities, etc.). Branding cities contributes to increasing the value of these cities, which is reflected in the increased number of visitors and their consumption. City branding is actually the process of creating a city brand.

The logic of branding cities stems from the need to differentiate between them, especially in targeted markets. City branding seeks to achieve social, economic and political goals, so city branding should be seen as a strategic response to economic trends and social needs of the population. Prerequisites for competitive advantages achieved on the basis of branding the city, include the use of branding techniques and tools. This contributes to the optimal use of such advantages.

The focus of considering branding cities is always to increase the quality of these cities, precisely on the basis of increasing competitiveness, but also increasing profits.

For the successful development of the city's brand, communication with the local community is extremely important, with the population in mind, since they should be actively involved in the development of the local community. It is also useful to note that the process of building a brand is not short-lived, but it is a long-term process, which ultimately should present a realistic picture and character of the city that is the subject of branding. In the process of branding the city, cultural policy also plays an important role, both in initiating and managing the brand, and in mitigating possible

negative consequences. The focus of this research is the perception of the population about building the brand of the City of Osijek with an emphasis on culture. A survey questionnaire was used in the research, and the answers of the respondents were anonymous. More than half of the respondents are females, ranging in age from 18 to 85 years. The majority of respondents live in households with a monthly income of HRK 10,000 or more. The largest number of respondents have a university degree or higher, and also, the largest number of respondents is employed. More than ¾ respondents have a permanent residence in the City of Osijek.

When assessing the importance of certain entities for the development of the cultural identity of the City of Osijek, the respondents single out the tourist community and cultural institutions as the most responsible entities, and consider tourists to be the least responsible. The local population of the City of Osijek to a lesser extent believes that the City of Osijek should not develop its cultural identity, because it has already been built, and they largely agree with the statement that cultural identity develops through diversification and greater investment in marketing cultural events. It is almost equal to those who believe that the branding of the culture of the City of Osijek is necessary, and those who do not agree that the City of Osijek has used its heritage and cultural events to brand the City. The local population is moderately satisfied with the cultural facilities offered in the City, while activities in the field of culture are considered important for the development of the City of Osijek. Furthermore, the respondents largely show interest in theater performances, cinema screenings, concerts, etc., which speaks of their positive intention to attend various cultural events in the City of Osijek. As the main representatives of the brand of the City of Osijek, respondents single out the Osijek Summer of Culture, Pannonian Challenge, Landart Straw Festival, Croatian Singing Society Lipa, Osijek Youth Summer, Urban Fest Osijek (UFO), architecture, and famous Osijek citizens in the history of culture.

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