

METHODOLOGICAL BASIS FOR ESTIMATION THE IMAGE OF A CITY (REGION)

METODOLOŽISKĀ BĀZE PILSĒTAS (REĢIONA) TĒLA NOVĒRTĒŠANAI

Alena Lisichonak

Polotsk State University, lena_pit@tut.by, Polotsk, Belarus

Abstract. *The need to assess the image of the region is based on research results. Approaches of authors to the assessment of the region's image are investigated. A methodology for analyzing the image of the region (city) is proposed. It includes 4 directions of analysis. The first direction is based on the study of the composition of information causes, "produced" by the city. The second direction involves an assessment of the image, based on the positions of regions (cities) in the ratings. The next proposed method is the interview method. It makes possible to study public opinion about the features, competitive advantages of regions (cities). The fourth direction of analysis is based on the use of the ranking method. The results of the evaluation of Novopolotsk's image in selected areas are presented.*

Keywords: *estimation, image, region.*

Introduction

The need to assess the regional image is determined by the fact that it is an element of the intellectual potential of the region. Intellectual potential of the region should be considered as the main factor determining the regional competitiveness (Lisichonak, 2013, p.10). The study was conducted on the basis of data for 2016. Research methods: comparative method, ranking method, SWOT method, interview method and others. The purpose of the research: to offer a methodology for assessing the image of the region (city), based on the use of objective and subjective information about the region (city).

Objectives of the study:

- to justify the need to assess the image of the region (city);
- to study the existing author's approaches to the assessment of the regional image;
- to identify possible directions and methods for assessing the regional image.

1. Theoretical bases of research of region's image

The problem of forming a regional image is becoming more and more urgent nowadays. The effectiveness of the regional economy directly depends on the effectiveness of the formation of a favorable image and its use. Let's turn to the essence of the category. A detailed analysis of the essence of the category "regional image" is given in the article „Assessment of the attractiveness of the territory” (the author E. Charushina) (Charushina, 2014, p. 99).

Table 1 presents the approaches of individual authors.

Table 1 – Approaches of authors to definition of "image of territory" essence

| Author | Essence |
|----------------|--|
| Vazhenina I. | The image of the territory is the beliefs and feelings of people that arise over the natural-climatic, historical, ethnographic, socio-economic, political, moral-psychological and other characteristics of the territory |
| Glebova I. | Image of the region is a set of emotional and rational views of the territory. It develops historically and is conditioned by national, socio-psychological, cultural characteristics |
| Vasishcheva A. | Image of the territory is a complex socio-psychological phenomenon, the necessary condition for the formation of which are such properties of the human psyche as perception and the ability to form representations |
| Kotler F. | Image is the product of the mind that tries to process and select the essential information |
| Gerdt T. | Image is a product of intellectual work that combines both a common database of various sources of information and the perception of people themselves about a given territory |

| | |
|-------------------|--|
| Starinshchikov N. | Image of the city is a psychologically formed image. It aims to create a positive attitude towards the city in order to increase the attractiveness of living in the city, attracting economic resources and increasing the gross urban product. The image is non-material and is formed in the minds of people, acquiring a positive or negative color. |
|-------------------|--|

The evaluation of a regional (urban) image is necessary with a view to its more effective formation and use.

2. Methodical bases of an estimation of region's image

We have identified the following directions and methods for assessing the regional image:

1. The image analysis based on the composition of information causes, "produced" by the city. The use of this method involves the study of publications in the mass media about objects of interest and the identification of the following groups of information reasons: cultural, sports, economic, criminal.

2. Assessment of the existing image of cities based on their positions in national (world) rankings. For this, national and world rankings are studied. The positions of the object (city) are identified.

3. Using the interview method to study public opinion about the features, competitive advantages of the studied objects (cities). In the framework of this method, it is necessary to study the opinion of citizens on a number of issues that can be presented in a special questionnaire.

4. The method of ranking for analysis and highlighting the strengths and weaknesses of cities. When using this method, other cities are added for comparison. When using the ranking method, the highest rank (first) is assigned to the region with the best value of the indicator.

Further, we will consider the possibilities of applying these methodological approaches to Novopolotsk. Novopolotsk is the largest scientific and industrial center of Vitebsk region (Belarus).

3. The results of the practical use of methodological approaches to assessing the regional image

We have studied publications in the mass media about Novopolotsk (table 2).

Table 2 – The number of identified information reasons and their division into groups

| Information reasons | Number | Percent to total |
|---------------------|--------|------------------|
| 1. Cultural | 10 | 25,0 |
| 2. Sports | 16 | 40,0 |
| 3. Economic | 9 | 22,5 |
| 4. Criminal | 5 | 12,5 |
| The result | 40 | 100,0 |

The data of the table indicate that, on the whole, sports information events predominate. This indicates that Novopolotsk can be called a sports city. A significant number of cultural information events reflect the active cultural life of the city. A positive aspect is a small number of criminal information. However, despite the high level of economic development of the city, the number of economic events is small.

We examined the national ratings in which Novopolotsk is mentioned. The results of this line of analysis are presented in table 3.

Table 3 – Positions of Novopolotsk in the ratings of Belarusian cities

| Criterion | Position of Novopolotsk in the rating | Total number of positions in the rating |
|------------------------|---------------------------------------|---|
| Financial wealth | 2 | 10 |
| Level of contamination | 1 | 10 |
| The quality of life | 19 | 134 |
| Population | 13 | 164 |

Novopolotsk is a financially prosperous city. It is also the most polluted city in Belarus. The operation of the largest oil refinery in Novopolotsk determined the city's position in the ratings. Also, thanks to this, Novopolotsk is the 13th most populated city in Belarus. At the same time, the quality of life of citizens is high.

The author used the interview method to study public opinion about the features, competitive advantages of the city. According to the inhabitants, Novopolotsk is a large industrial, scientific and educational center of the republic. But there are negative consequences associated with the development of industry (pollution of the environment). This requires the development of other spheres of activity, first of all, the sphere of services.

When we used the method of ranking, we compared Novopolotsk city with other cities in the Vitebsk region (Polotsk, Orsha, Vitebsk). Novopolotsk took the second overall place in the aggregate of indicators. The city is leading by such indicators as: relative density of the population in able-bodied age in the total population; nominal accrued average monthly wages of workers, the proportion of small and microorganizations in the total number of legal entities; the volume of contract works performed by type of economic activity "Construction" per capita; export of goods in percentage to the regional volume of exports of goods; net profit per 1 organization; investment in fixed capital per capita and industrial production per capita.

Conclusions and suggestions

The methodological approaches used to assess the regional image showed similar results. The author identified the strengths and weaknesses of Novopolotsk.

As *strengths* can be noted:

- low crime rate;
- high level of development of the real sector of the economy and small business;
- significant export potential of the region;
- considerable financial potential of the region;
- active investment activity in the region.

Weaknesses of Novopolotsk:

- low housing provision;
- the highest level of pollutant emissions;
- low level of development of retail trade.

Therefore, to create a favorable image of Novopolotsk, it is necessary:

1. Further development of industrial production provided that the negative impact on the environment is reduced;
2. Development of other spheres of activity, especially services;
3. Further improve the living standards of the city's population.

The results obtained, in our view, should be reflected in the development programs of the city.

Bibliography

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Kopsavilkums

Mūsdienās reģiona tēls kļūst par svarīgāko konkurētspējas resursu, lai veidotu partnerattiecības. Tāpēc ir nepieciešams veikt reģiona tēla novērtēšanu. Pastāv vairākas metodiskās pieejas, lai to varētu veikt. Tomēr, pēc autores domām, labākus rezultātus var iegūt apvienojot metodes.

Autore ir izpētījusi reģiona tēla būtības definīciju. Reģiona tēls var tikt veidots kā emociju un racionalitātes atspoguļojums, kas rodas no reģionālo īpatnību salīdzināšanas, pašu pieredzes un baumām, kuras ietekmē konkrēta tēla veidošanos.

Balstoties uz šo definīciju, tika piedāvātas četras novērtēšanas metodes:

1. Reģiona tēla analīze balstoties uz informāciju par pilsētu. Šī metode sevī iekļauj publikāciju pētīšanu masu saziņas līdzekļos, kā arī tālāk minēto grupu identifikāciju sadaļās: kultūra, sports, ekonomika, kriminālziņas.

2. Pilsētas tēla novērtēšana pēc ieņemtās pozīcijas reitingā. Šī metode balstās uz pilsētas vietu valsts un starptautiskajā reitingā.

3. Aptauju pielietošana, lai pētītu iedzīvotāju viedokli par pilsētu. Ar šīs metodes palīdzību ir iespējams pētīt iedzīvotāju uzskatus par problēmjautājumiem, uz kuriem ir iespējams atbildēt aptaujā.

4. Vērtēšanas metode ļauj noskaidrot pilsētas stiprās un vājās puses. Izmantojot šo metodi salīdzināšanai, ir pievienotas arī citas pilsētas no Vitebskas reģiona.

Balstoties uz šo metožu pielietojumu, autore ir pētījusi Novopolockas pilsētas tēlu. Novopolocka ir liels industrijas, zinātnes, un izglītības centrs Baltkrievijā.

Izpētes rezultātā tika noskaidrotas pilsētas stiprās un vājās puses, kā arī uzskaitīti nākotnes attīstības virzieni. Šīs rekomendācijas var tikt izmantotas, lai veidotu pilsētas attīstības programmas.