THE FORMED IMAGE OF ŠIAULIAI CITY: THE ASPIRATION OF THE CITY MUNICIPALITY AND ITS REFLECTION IN THE LOCAL MEDIA

Santa Kuliavcevaitė
Šiauliai State College
Lithuania

Gintarė Kulbeckienė
Šiauliai State College
Lithuania

Nijolė Litevkienė
Šiauliai State College
Lithuania

Annotation
The essence of the research topics is that Šiauliai does not have the city-specific image: the aspiration is to form the vision of the city of the Sun, linking it with the idea of a safe, open, and vibrant city. Therefore, it was sought to find out what image of the city was formed by Šiauliai city municipality and what image of the city was revealed in the local media. It turned out that the directions of the image of Šiauliai city formed by Šiauliai city municipality and the weekly "Etaplius" coincided. It was found that the weekly "Etaplius" formed a positive image of Šiauliai city in the press; therefore, it can be assumed that the local media itself seeks to contribute to the formation of the city's favourable image in the public space.
Key words: *city, image, formation, municipality, local media.*

Introduction
Relevance of the topic. The development of the city's image in the modern society is significant in many aspects. The image is particularly important for the city's development, as this way new and profitable investments are attracted, local residents' needs are met, and the tourists' flow is increasing, which leads to the development of the successful city (Richards, 2015). As H. Hassan et al. (2018) point out, one of the best channels for image formation and building is the media. The media representatives describe and present the city's disadvantages and advantages to the public: they analyse political activities, publish the achievements of the city's athletes, present cultural news, and inform what is relevant to the residents (Hanson, 2016, p. 92-93). Articles are presented in newspapers, online and social websites, this way reaching audiences of different ages and needs; therefore, the media representatives make a major influence in shaping public opinion about the overall image of the city. J. A. F. Fernandez et al. (2015) state that the image can be influenced by many factors: the opinion of authoritative individuals and representatives of the public, media announcements in the public space as well as attractive and famous places to visit.

A properly represented city can become one of the factors that make the city famous; therefore, emphasis must be placed on the importance of the media in the image-building process. Media representatives present relevant events related to the city in the newspapers by publicizing information in the city and beyond its boundaries. It can be observed that the image is also created by itself due to naturally occurring situations as well as on the basis of correct or incorrect information. The ever-changing environment forces the authorities of the city and other responsible persons to plan activities more carefully, to purposefully project such activities that improve various areas of life, and at the same time, to maintain the image of the city. It is purposeful for the city's authorities to analyse activity processes and to take into account residents' needs when making necessary decisions, because the media as the representative of the society points local residents in a positive or negative direction (Hassan, 2018).

Research problem. The strategic development plan of Šiauliai city municipality for 2015-2024, focuses on the topics of the city's image, noting that Šiauliai does not have a common image of the city. This plan emphasizes the aspiration to maintain the image of the city of the Sun, linking it with the idea of a safe, vibrant and open city. Based on the above-mentioned context, the following problem question is raised: What image of Šiauliai city is formed by Šiauliai city municipality and what image of the city is revealed in the media?

The research object: the formed image of Šiauliai city.

The research aim: to analyse the image of Šiauliai city formed by the city municipality and local media.

Research objectives:

1. To define the conception of the city's image.
2. To distinguish the elements forming the city's image in the media.
3. To investigate what image of Šiauliai city is formed by Šiauliai city municipality and local media.

Research methods and tools:

1. Analysis of scientific literature;
2. Content analysis of documents;
3. Media monitoring;
4. Comparative content analysis.

Literature Review

Factors shaping the image of the city. In the scientific literature, A. Acedo (2018), C. Kizil and A. Atalan (2015), D. Gunina et al. (2018), J. A. F. Fernandez et al. (2015) distinguish different definitions of the city's image as well as present different factors affecting its formation. There are many different elements that significantly shape the image and perception of the city. These elements described by E. Zača (2016) include the city's geographical location, crime threat and safety assurance, high or low living standards, economic relations with foreign countries, the city's position in the country and the world, its history, famous films and series filmed in that city, attractive recreation areas, whether active or passive tourism is developed, and the appearance of the city itself.

The image of the city is also created by positive or negative feedback in face-to-face communication, sharing experiences on social networks, publication of various articles about the city's events, in TV programmes or documentaries – all these elements together create public perception of the city's image (Zača, 2016). All elements shaping the image of the city can be divided into 8 notional groups.

The first group – the group of natural features includes the main elements of nature, creating the initial image of the city. These are climate, landscape, and fauna. Climate indicates low or high local temperature, drought or heavy rain; the landscape, a mountainous or wooded area, beaches or deserts in the defined area; and fauna, animal species prevalent in that area. These attributes shape the city's image in the person's subconsciousness and evoke positive or negative emotions.

The content of the second group elements forming the city's image reflects the importance and impact of infrastructure. It is noted that the totality of interrelated structural elements, enabling or supporting the whole structure and its functioning, is particularly significant for the formation of the positive image. This element consists of airports and ports, road development, quality of the public transport, the level of health protection, communication services and the physical condition of buildings. This whole emphasizes the purposeful structure of elements, seeking to identify the quality of results.

The third group, which is defined as tourism, distinguishes the most important areas influencing the flow of tourists: famous hotels and restaurants, popular bars, popular tourist destinations, well-functioning information services reaching the target audience and active organisation of trips and excursions.

The fourth group accentuates the importance of leisure. This ensures happier residents and good practices are passed on to others. Hobbies and self-expression, places for leisure, parks, nature reserves, recreation and sports areas create an active society and determine the process of forming the city's positive image.

The fifth group is distinguished as elements uniting residents and indicating their way of life – the element of shaping the image of history, culture and art. The constituents describing the essence of this formation are related to the human mentality and perception of the world. These are museums, famous monuments, festivals, concerts, dominant crafts and folklore, as well as religion, traditional food and culture.

The sixth group contributing to the development of the city's image consists of political and economic factors. Political trends, economic factors and safety are attributes demonstrating the city's face and promoting confidence in residents' consciousness.

The seventh group includes the social environment in which the most intense human interactions take place. This element consists of topics sensitive to the public like poverty, discrimination, and quality of life and shapes customers' image about the city. The city's hospitality to residents, the language barrier, cleanliness, residents, air pollution and noise level are also attributed to this element.

Well-balanced constituents of the eighth group attract tourists, improve the city's image, and create the identity of a cultural and educated society. These are luxurious, famous, exotic places, the prevailing fashion, places for family rest or spaces intended for relaxation as well as the beauty of the city. All of this creates and shapes the city's image.

In summary, it can be stated that the city's image is shaped by the following factors: natural peculiarities, infrastructure, tourism, leisure, history, culture and art, political and economic factors, social environment, and the city's atmosphere. The initial, temporary image of the city is formed in the minds of individuals by natural features (climate, landscape and fauna) as well as infrastructure elements (airports and ports, road development, quality of public transport, the level of health protection, communication services, and the physical condition of buildings). It is noted that the defining deeper perception of the city and its identity is created by the elements of history, culture and art (museums, famous monuments, festivals, concerts, dominating crafts, and folklore as well as religion, traditional food, and culture), political and economic factors (political trends, economic factors, and safety), and social environment (poverty, discrimination, quality of life, the city's hospitality to population, language barrier, cleanliness, residents, air pollution, and noise level).

The analysed components of the mentioned concept emphasize the importance of the city's external and internal activities, which highlight the peculiarities of nature, history and culture, political and economic trends, and social environment. Hence, the above-mentioned aspects of image building reflect the conception of image formation.

Types of images of the city, formed by the media. The media that has a significant influence on shaping the person's attitude can either positively or negatively affect the members of the society and local residents in decision-making. As P. Berrone, J. E. Ricart (2015) emphasise, it can be noted that when the media focuses on negative events such as crime, violence and social problems, it harms the image of the city, while highlighting positive news such as sporting events and cultural events, it has a positive effect on the image of the city. Thus, the view constructed by the media can influence people's thinking and change the attitude related to the city; this way the media takes active part in the stereotype formation process. Hence, it is concluded that the media analysis is an appropriate way to evaluate the image of the city.

A strong image can be a strong and distinctive competitive brand for a modern and developing city. Y. H. Chuang (2015) points out that it is particularly difficult to create an attractive and universally acceptable set of values, which would reach its potential users. The author emphasizes that striving to make the city as a product visible requires the development of an extremely strong and good system. It is stressed that cities need to create particularly strong brand names that would attract target audiences and survive for a long time. It is concluded that cities are like large corporations resembling each other, which try to use various tools and different ways to make a city visible.

The image of the city is made up of an interrelated network of elements, indicating what we know about that place and what feelings it evokes. The analysed scientific literature emphasizes that the media plays a key role in the process of shaping the city's image. This means that the representation of the city in the media is the factor determining the city's image. Three main types of the city's image are distinguished: positive (favourable); negative (unfavourable) and neutral.

The positive image of the city is the most important factor promoting the favourable public attitude, this way evoking only positive emotions and strengthening the city's reputation. The favourable image of the city is not accidental, it is consistently created until the desired result is achieved; besides, it needs to be constantly managed and controlled. C. Villar and F. Rey (2016) point out that the city's positive image presented to members of the society must correspond to everything that actually exists. The author also emphasizes that cities compete with each other; therefore, every city has to present exceptional activities, places of interest or recreation areas, which would become the centres of attraction for the target audience and promote to visit them as often as possible. P. Foroudi et al. (2016) emphasize that the presented image of the city must have an easily recognizable form in the customers' minds, but it is equally important that it should be able to adapt to an ever-changing environment. The positive image of the city is what people see and perceive as positive and beautiful structures in the city: they are attracted by the city's architecture, tree-lined alleys, tidy and clean environment, and rich historical heritage. Positive visual change such as renovation of old historic buildings, established strong corporations, maintained parks, streets, and an abundance of enterprises on the streets spread the message about a safe and well-run city.

The neutral image is beneficial for every city because this type is open, does not cause any emotions or resistance and therefore allows to avoid a natural rejection reaction. J. A. F. Fernández et al. (2015) describing the neutral image, point out that members of the

public must be provided with a wide flow of information: politics, social and cultural phenomena, important historical facts – all of this is aimed at highlighting the city's individuality. It is also pointed out that the information disseminated about the formed city's image must be presented without fictitious facts, as this can lead to doubts and the feeling of mistrust. It is better to provide less information, but it should be purposive and corresponding to reality. This author is also supported by Y. Wang and P. Zhang (2015) who emphasize that those features of the city that are clear and easily understood by the addressee must be highlighted. A simple and clear view of the city, created in the minds of customers, ensures trust.

The negative image is formed when the city's constructed image does not meet expectations and does not correspond to reality. No one purposefully forms the negative image, but it emerges when the needs of members of the society are not met and when they are disappointed. The favourable image can easily turn into unfavourable if the city is not able to adapt, be flexible, and does not distinguish itself by originality.

In summary, it can be stated that the media forms a positive, negative and/or neutral image of the city. Each city strives to create a positive image, highlighting the attractive features of the city, as such city is identified as economically stable, innovative and caring about the well-being of the city's residents. However, the construction of the favourable image is not always successful: if the negative image is formed in people's consciousness, the city becomes unpopular, does not attract investments and a low standard of living prevails in it. The neutral image is universal, does not cause a rejection reaction and therefore is the aspiration of every city. It can be stated that positive, negative and neutral image types can be intertwined: overlap each other and form various combinations. For the mentioned reasons, the aspiration to construct and maintain the positive image of the city, which ensures benefit in various areas, shows up.

Methodology

A quantitative (content analysis of documents and content analysis of the media) method was applied to conduct the study, aiming to investigate what image of Šiauliai city is formed in the strategic development plan (2015-2024) of Šiauliai city municipality, what image of the city is constructed by the local media and whether the image of Šiauliai city presented in the media corresponds to the city's real image.

Conducting the research, initially, it was planned to perform the analysis of only half-year content of the weekly "Etaplius" of the public institution "Šiauliai plius", but after going deep into the topic, it was decided to analyse the strategic development plan (2015-2024) of Šiauliai city municipality: to analyse the city's image created in this document and to compare these formed images.

The quantitative research was conducted in February-April of 2019. The results of the quantitative research were processed and analysed in February-April of 2019.

The content analysis of the strategic development plan (2015-2024) of Šiauliai city municipality was performed by applying the content analysis of documents, distinguishing positive and existing negative features of the city's image that is sought to be created.

The content analysis of the weekly "Etaplius" was first performed after distinguishing the investigated period – from June 1 of 2018 until January 1 of 2019. After defining the period, articles related to various news of Šiauliai city were selected. These included articles on politics, sports achievements, city problems, socio-cultural activities, and etc.

According to L. B. Berg (2011, p. 4-5), by combining methods reflecting the problem under investigation from different perspectives, researchers can form a much more realistic and deeper picture of the reality under investigation. Analysing what image of Šiauliai city is formed, the following objectives were set:
1) to analyse what image of Šiauliai city is created in the strategic development plan (2015-2024) of Šiauliai city municipality;
2) to investigate what image of Šiauliai city is revealed in the local media.

According to B. Berg (2011, p. 27-28), the content analysis of documents is a systematic procedure for reviewing and assessing printed or electronic documents. This method requires that the data should be investigated and interpreted, seeking to highlight the meaning of the material, gain understanding, and develop empirical knowledge. The document analysis is characterized by the parameters of search, selection, assessment, and synthesis of the elements of information material (Bowen, 2009, p. 27-28). According to A. Atalan, C. Kizil (2015, p. 3-5), M. M. Manuel, et al. (2016), when applying the method of the content analysis of documents, the most important aspects are authenticity, reliability, and representativeness of the analysed material. According to this researcher, the analysis of the documentary material reveals the content of the data and reflects the significance of investigated processes with regard to the raised problem question. The method was applied to find out what image of

Šiauliai city was formed by Šiauliai city municipality, what image of the city was revealed in the media, and whether these images coincided.

The content analysis of the media revealed an array of publications that are divided by frequency, thematic groups and the type of publications. It is namely the results of the content analysis that enable to judge about the prevailing media releases constructing the image of the city. First, grouping of articles by frequency reflects in which periods the highest and lowest number of publications was published. Based on these data, the stages in which the media showed the greatest and the least interest in Šiauliai city are distinguished.

This study employs grouping by thematic groups, which E. Zača (2016) indicates in the theoretical part: based on the distinguished elements of the image, the content analysis of the media, aimed at measuring the image of Šiauliai city, was performed.

The assessment of the content of publications according to the type of publications was determined using L. Ulevičius' (2006) method: three main emotional positions of the content of reports were distinguished – positive, negative, and neutral. Assessment was performed applying 7 criteria serving as a basis for establishing types of articles. Explaining the process of assessing the content of articles, L. Küng (2008) accentuates that positive aspects promote the use and development of the latest technologies, the stability of the country's economy and the formation of the country's image. The said author also points out that negative assessments divide the society, drive out usual standards, and the information provided is not always correct.

The method of monitoring of the media (content analysis) was applied in order to compare the aspiration of the image formed by Šiauliai city municipality and the image of Šiauliai city, constructed by the weekly "Etaplius", finding out whether the directions of the constructed image of Šiauliai city coincided.

Results
Content analysis of the strategic development plan of Šiauliai city municipality for 2015-2024. In order to investigate the image of Šiauliai city, the selected strategic development plan of Šiauliai city municipality for 2015-2024 was analysed. First, strong areas of Šiauliai city were identified in this document. The main priorities were found out, the information was systematized and analysed (see Table 1).

Table 1

Strong areas of Šiauliai city, which form the positive image of the city

No.	Strong areas	Statements
1.	OPEN CITY	"<..> there are educational institutions that are innovative, open to change, and employ highly qualified teachers and education services providers in Šiauliai"
		"There is an infrastructure of various sports bases <..> coaches' qualifications enable to train highly skilled athletes representing Šiauliai and Lithuania"," Šiauliai city distinguishes itself by integration of sports for the disabled into the community of Šiauliai city".
		"Šiauliai city is dominated by creative potential with abundant diversity of cultural events <..> and one can feel concentration and initiative to act for a common goal – to strengthen cultural life in Šiauliai".
2.	VIBRANT CITY	"Attractive investment environment prevails in Šiauliai city <..> and old export-oriented industrial traditions"
		"<..> is conveniently located <..> for tourist flows"
		"It is also characterized by an abundance of different profile museums in which visitors can see expositions and prepared educational programs"
3.	SAFE CITY	"<..> Šiauliai city distinguishes itself by unique nature, green areas"
		"This city is geographically convenient and can be reached by various means of transport"
		"Municipal public services enterprises ensure optimal ratio of service quality and price"
		"The established and systematically developed municipal waste management system prevails"

Source: compiled by the authors of the study on the basis of the strategic development plan of Šiauliai city for 2015-2024 (2016).

Based on the data in Table 1, the strong areas of Šiauliai city with separate descriptions forming the positive image are presented. Analysing the first direction, to which the image of the open city is attributed, the creative potential in various fields is emphasised. It is underlined that social protection is developed, distinguishing high-quality services for various groups of clients – the network of social services is well developed. It is considered an advantage that there are different types of enterprises providing various social services, located in different parts of the

city. In addition, higher educational institutions educate social field specialists with various specializations.

The strategic development plan of Šiauliai city municipality for 2015-2024 also includes distinguished weak areas forming the negative image (see Table 2).

Table 2

Weak areas of Šiauliai city, which form the negative image of the city

No.	Weak areas	Statements
1.	OPEN CITY	"There is no cultural identity, no common image of the city"
		"Lack of continuity and targeted management in strategic management, the public sector is not open to community"
		"Insufficient promotion and coordination of volunteering"
2.	VIBRANT CITY	"Absence of targeted cooperation to promote business"
		"Shortage of qualified workforce"
		"Insufficient features of a metropolitan city"
3.	SAFE CITY	"Unsafety in the city"
		"Irrational development of residential areas, poor quality of public spaces and territories"
		"Insufficient development of public transport by non-motorized vehicles"

Source: compiled by the authors of the study on the basis of the strategic development plan of Šiauliai city for 2015-2024 (2016).

After identifying strengths, the strategic development plan of Šiauliai city municipality for 2015-2024 also provides for the areas for improvement and the main problems in every of the priorities of Šiauliai city. A particularly important problem is distinguished with regard to the first analysed priority to be improved – Šiauliai city does not have cultural identity, there is no common formed image of the city, there is a lack of common agreement of all institutions on priority development directions.

The city's strategic management lacks directionality; it is noted that the public sector is not open to community. It is observed that there is a lack of cooperation and competition prevails; besides, promotion and coordination of volunteering are insufficient, there is no volunteer centre where persons could volunteer, certificates would be issued and social environment would be improved.

Distinguishing other weak areas in the priority of the vibrant city of Šiauliai, it is pointed out that there is still a lack of unified cooperation in promoting business, mutual agreement and search for alternatives between business associations and the municipality; besides, there is no responsible institution that would care about direct foreign and material investments. Weaknesses of Šiauliai as a vibrant city also include factors influencing business creation and development, emigration, lack of skilled workforce, and low wages. Most importantly, the document emphasizes the lack of targeted strategy for the city.

The third direction is the weak areas of the city's safe image. The strategic development plan of Šiauliai city municipality for 2015-2024 points out that the city lacks safety, especially at the crossings requiring more lighting. This document indicates that the quality of public spaces and territories in Šiauliai city is poor: non-adapted spaces and unused natural resources, non-developed park infrastructure, deteriorating condition of forests and irrational development of residential areas, which results in inappropriately developed engineering infrastructures, appearance of polluted areas, and management of residential areas is carried out individually. Besides, weak areas include insufficient development of types of public transport in the city for bicycles, pedestrians, and electric cars – the city lacks coherent street network and essential internal connections.

Summarizing the weak areas of Šiauliai city, which form the city's negative image, it has been found that entrepreneurship in Šiauliai city is still low and there is a lack of investment attraction, emphasis is placed on the lack of safety in the city, irrational development of residential areas, poor quality of public spaces and territories, and absence of a sustainable mobility plan. It is also accentuated that there is a growing shortage of skilled workforce, which may result in the increase of the number of recipients of social services and unemployment benefits; therefore, it is very important to maintain continuity and targeted management while the public sector is becoming increasingly open to community, in promoting volunteering, and creating the city's common image and cultural identity.

After analysing strengths and weaknesses of the strategic development plan of Šiauliai city municipality for 2015-2024, the document distinguishes the pursued directions to be implemented by 2024 (see Table 3), which constitute the formed vision of the Šiauliai city.

Table 3

The vision of Šiauliai city strategic development plan until 2024

No.	Pursued directions	Proving statements
1.	OPEN CITY	"An optimal network of the city's enterprises, open to change and innovation"
		"United concentration of the society to strengthen creative, cultural, sports and healthy life while developing the society's spirituality and values"
		"A friendly city where everyone enjoys equal rights and duties"
2.	VIBRANT CITY	"Innovative engineering industry and logistics services, which create high added value, attract local and foreign investments"
		"A professionally prepared and competent person who creates competitive products is educated"
3.	SAFE CITY	"Balanced territorial development, maintaining the common cultural identity and image of the city"
		"Safe and convenient urban infrastructure for residents and businesses"
		"Urban environment attractive for rest and leisure, exploiting natural conditions"

Source: compiled by the authors of the study on the basis of the strategic development plan of Šiauliai city for 2015-2024 (2016).

Based on the data presented in Table 3, it was found that the vision of Šiauliai city strategic development plan consisted of three main priorities that were analysed earlier: the open, vibrant, and safe city. All these three components form the aspiration of the image of Šiauliai city unitl 2024, maintaining continuity.

The analysed document accentuates that it is attempted to create Šiauliai that is recognizable by the image of the city of the Sun and has active, creative and responsible community, competitive business environment, and nature-friendly and high-quality living environment.

The emphasis is placed on the improvement of priorities in Šiauliai city until 2024, seeking that economic benefit does not overshadow the social, environmental and cultural environment and that the modern and economic city grows following the main principles of sustainable development, in which full-fledged members of the community would live. In addition, the strategic development plan includes the details of the vision:

1) Open: an optimal network of the city's enterprises, which is open to change and innovation; the united concentration of the society to strengthen creative, cultural, sporting and healthy life while developing spirituality and values of the society; a friendly city where everyone enjoys equal rights and duties;

2) Vigorous: innovative engineering industry and logistics services, which create high added value, attract local and foreign investment; a professionally prepared and competent person developing competitive products is educated;

3) Safe: balanced territorial development, maintaining common cultural identity and image of the city; safe and convenient urban infrastructure for residents and businesses; urban environment attractive for rest and leisure, exploiting natural conditions of nature.

After performing the content analysis of documents, three priorities are analysed: the open, vigorous, and safe city. The plan identifies strong and weak areas of Šiauliai city and the vision of the strategic plan. Thus, the performed analysis of the strategic development plan of Šiauliai city municipality for 2015-2024 has revealed the following:

1) Summary of the first priority – the open city: Šiauliai is dominated by the creative potential with a wide variety of cultural events; concentration and proactiveness in strengthening cultural life, but there is no cultural identity and the common image of the city; the aspiration is to retain the image of the city of the Sun; however, so far, this is only a vision; the city operates the infrastructure of various sports bases where by using the promotion system and employing coaches' qualifications, highly skilled athletes representing Šiauliai and Lithuania are trained; besides, Šiauliai city distinguishes itself by integration of sports for the disabled into the Šiauliai city community; there are educational institutions in Šiauliai, which are innovative, open to change, and employ highly qualified teachers and education services providers; however, it is indicated in the plan that it is necessary to improve the teaching environment and infrastructure of educational institutions, strengthen the potential of Šiauliai as a university city, and activate

cultural life; strengthen partnership and community of all mentioned areas: the interaction of the city's community at various levels, putting more emphasis on promotion of volunteering.

2) Summary of the second priority – the vibrant city: attractive investment environment prevails in Šiauliai and old export-oriented industrial traditions are fostered; there is a lack of consensus on developing targeted cooperation to promote business and investments; convenient geographical location for tourist flows and the abundance of museums of different profiles, where exhibitions and educational programs are waiting for visitors; the lack of qualified workforce; undeveloped tourism strategy that would be oriented to cognitive and active tourism; and absence of implemented innovative performance management standards.

3) Summary of the third priority – safe city: Šiauliai distinguishes itself by unique nature, green areas; the city lacks safety; is located in a geographically convenient place and is accessible by various means of transport; irrational development of residential areas, inappropriate development of engineering infrastructure, improper control of emerging polluting areas and individually managed residential areas; prevailing established and systematically developed municipal waste management system and close inter-institutional cooperation; insufficiently good ambient air quality due to the concentration of particulate matter in the ambient air; underdeveloped network of public transport modes.

In summary, it can be stated that Šiauliai city municipality is purposefully seeking the priorities set out in the strategic development plan 2015-2024. The above-mentioned strategic document distinguishes the following strengths of Šiauliai city: operating innovative and open to change educational institutions, developed infrastructure of various sports bases, prevalence of creative potential and attractive investment environment, the city distinguishes itself by unique nature, is in a geographically convenient location, which create the positive image of Šiauliai city. Weak areas are: the lack of cultural identity, the lack of continuity and purposeful management in the strategic management, insufficient promotion and coordination of volunteering, absence of targeted cooperation in promoting business, lack of qualified workforce, insufficient features of a metropolitan city, poor quality of public spaces and territories; these areas create the negative image of the city. It has been analysed that the aspiration of Šiauliai city municipality in the future is the city open to change and innovations, united in terms of concentration of the public in various fields, the city that has innovative engineering industry and logistics services creating high added value, attracting local and foreign investments, where professionally prepared and competent person is educated, the city with balanced territorial development retaining common cultural identity and image of the city and with safe and convenient urban infrastructure for residents and business. The idea of the open, vibrant, and safe city until 2024 is related to the aspiration to maintain continuity and to form the positive image of Šiauliai city. It turned out that prevailing elements in this strategic document forming the positive image; therefore, Šiauliai city municipality seeks to construct a diverse innovative and transparent image of the city.

The analysis of the image of Šiauliai city, formed in the weekly "Etaplius". After conducting the research, the dynamic analysis of mentions performed by weekly "Etaplius" of the media group public institution "Šiauliai plius" is presented, distinguishing the essential changes according to individual elements. In order to analyse the publications of the weekly "Etaplius" about the city of Šiauliai, the articles were analysed by frequency: the month with the highest and the lowest number of reports was singled out. The chosen analysed period is from July 1, 2018 to January 1, 2019.

Most publications are from July 1, 2018 until January 1, 2019; most of them were published in July, August and September; least, in October, November and December. Based on the presented results, it is noted that in July of 2018, the media group provided increasingly more news related to Šiauliai city – the number of publications grew until September. It is concluded that during this period, there were most events related to city's life, change and activities relevant to the members of the public. However, although the increase in the number of articles published in November is observed, in December, the least number of articles related to the city of Šiauliai was published. Hence, it can be assumed that there was a lack of activeness in the city; therefore, interest of the media decreased.

To investigate the image of Šiauliai city in the media, 149 articles of the weekly "Etaplius" of the public institution "Šiauliai plius" were analysed. According to the scholar E. Zača (2016), the elements that significantly shape the image and the perception of the city were distinguished: natural features; infrastructure; tourism; leisure; history, culture and art; political and economic factors; social environment; and urban atmosphere. The mentioned elements were employed to measure the image of Šiauliai city. Analysing the content of articles according to E. Zača (2016), 6 of the 8 factors were applied. These were infrastructure; tourism; leisure; history, culture and art; political and economic factors; and social environment. These elements significantly form the image and perception of Šiauliai city.

Articles were grouped by types using the method of L. Ulevičius (2006, p. 246-247): according to three main distinguished emotional positions of the content of reports – positive, negative, and neutral. The types of assessing the content of the article and the criteria for identifying the content determined three main emotional positions of the content – positive, negative, and neutral. Every assessment was carried out according to 7 criteria on the basis of which the types of articles were identified and content assessments were provided. This method allows to assess the report clearly and objectively, understanding the essence and why it is so evaluated.

The weekly "Etaplius" contains a total of 149 articles analysing the image of Šiauliai city during the selected period from June 1, 2018 until January 1, 2019 (see Table 4).

Table 4

The number of publications on the image of Šiauliai city and assessment by thematic groups

Topics	Positive assessment	Negative assessment	Neutral assessment	In total:
Infrastructure	15	9	2	26
Tourism	13	-	-	13
Leisure	5	-	-	5
History, culture, art	43	-	-	43
Political and economic factors	9	9	1	19
Social environment	25	14	4	43
In total:	**110**	**32**	**7**	**149**

Source: compiled by the authors of the research.

Most attention is paid to two thematic groups. The first is history, culture, and art. Of 43 articles, all are classified as positive. This shows that the cultural identity of Šiauliai city is growing, Šiauliai residents take active part in the city's public life and form good reputation of Šiauliai city. Most of publications on social environment (25 articles out of 43 publications about Šiauliai city) were evaluated positively, while the remaining 14 were identified as negatively assessed publications. It can be stated that the quality of life in Šiauliai is improved and the needs of the community members are taken into account, seeking to meet them, but the articles with the negative connotation point to the shortcomings of Šiauliai city, indicating the need to improve areas encompassing the social environment. There are also quite many articles related to the topics of infrastructure – 26 publications were distinguished. More than half are positively rated articles (15), while a smaller share (9) consists of negatively assessed articles and only a few (2) are neutral. There is a trend that the majority of the analysed articles during the specified period (110 publications) are assessed as positive, a smaller share (32 articles) are classified as negatively assessed; and 7, as neutral.

During the selected period under analysis; i.e., from June 1, 2018 until January 1, 2019, the analysed weekly of the public institution "Šiauliai Plus" contains 26 articles attributed to the topics of infrastructure. After analysing published articles, it was found that most of them contained information reflecting the positive assessment – 15 positive assessments were identified. The articles contain positive descriptions related to renewing infrastructure, traffic changes, and repaired city streets, the reader is informed about a better quality life. Nine articles using critical descriptions are seen as negative. In addition, this is evidenced by the negative headlines of the articles, such as "Kaštonų alėja – dar viena varnelė valdininkų sąrašuose" (*Kaštonų Avenue – One More Tick in the Lists of Officials*), "Duobėtą arteriją „užlopė" (*Pitted Artery Was "Patched"*). Such headlines make the reader negatively biased or even hostile. Conducting the study, 2 neutral articles were identified, which do not contain either exceptionally positive or negative information, only facts are presented in the reports. Thus, after analysing the articles related to the city of Šiauliai and attributed to the topics of infrastructure, the majority of articles are positive, but it is observed that quite a few articles are assessed negatively and only several are neutral.

The analysed articles on tourism related to Šiauliai city distributed favourably: out of 13 assessed reports all were positive. All articles provide particularly positive information, residents of Šiauliai and other cities are invited to participate in various activities, and new places to visit are announced. The headlines arouse the reader's interest and bias positively. For example, "Šiauliuose grįžta tarptautinės žirgų konkūrų varžybos" (*International Show Jumping Competition Returns to Šiauliai*), "VeloFano ištvermės varžybos – po savaitės" (*VeloFano Endurance Competition – in a Week*), "Paveikslo „Lietuvos aušra dieninio ir naktinio vaizdo demonstracijos vyks Šiaulių arenoje" (*Day and Night Video Demonstrations of the Picture*

"*Lithuanian Dawn" will Take Place in Šiauliai Arena*). The analysed articles on tourism distributed unambiguously: all articles are assessed positively, which forms a positive image of Šiauliai city.

During the specified period, there were 5 articles attributed to the topic of leisure, and all reports were assessed positively. The articles were evaluated this way because positive photos were presented, which pleasantly bias readers, the text contains a lot of positive information that does not create the sense of bias: "A new playground for board games was opened in Šiauliai birch park on Tuesday evening", "Giedrius Vainauskas, a senior specialist of Informatics and Communications Division of Šiauliai County Police Headquaters, amazes his colleagues by various items from beads, and Vaidas Kazlauskas, the head of the Criminal Investigation Service, creates various models from used bullets and tubes". After analysing the articles on the topic of leisure, only positively evaluated reports were indicated and no negative or neutral ones were found. It is concluded that self-expression, different pastime activities are favourably assessed in Šiauliai, but the number of publications is small compared with other topics, showing the lack of activeness, proactiveness and activity of members of the society; therefore, this area needs to be improved.

The highest number of articles written from June 1, 2018 until January 1, 2019 cover the topics of history, culture and art. In total, there are as many as 43 articles all of which contain positive information about the cultural life of Šiauliai city, high sports achievements of the city residents, and the works of art created by local people. Reports such as "Metų mokytoja: Dar neišsižadėkime kreidos" (*The Teacher of the Year: Let's not Renounce Chalk Yet*), "Regbio džentelmenas iš Šiaulių" (*The Gentleman of Rugby from Šiauliai*), "Egidijui Valčiukui debiutas Europos čempionate suspindo bronza" (*Egidijus Valčiukas' Debut Shines Bronze in the European Championship*) make us proud of Šiauliai residents who create and shape the cultural identity, make the city's name known, and construct the positive image of Šiauliai.

After analysing the articles in the weekly "Etaplius", which are attributed to the topics of politics and economy, the majority of reports are positive: 9 out of 18 articles contain positive information. There is a trend that positive assessments cover slightly more than half of the investigated articles. The reports provide information on funding, thank-you letters distributed by the mayor. Negatively assessed articles also cover a large share – a total of 8. This can be identified straight away according to headlines such as: "Didžiųjų miesto šventės mugės biudžeto nepapildė" (*The Fairs of the Great City Festivals have not Replenished the Budget*), "Užkrėsta kiauliena kvepia politika" (*Infected Pork Has an Odour of Politics*), "Tarybos nario akibrokštas – primityvu ir kvaila" (*Council Member's Slap in the Face – Primitive and Stupid*). Such articles are full of negative descriptions that cause public distrust and divide it. There is also one article that is assessed neutrally. It contains facts and does not evoke any positive or negative feelings in the reader. Based on presented results, it is concluded that articles about Šiauliai city on the topic of politics and economy tend to be more positive and are quite favourably assessed by the public, but negative articles enable to assume that trust is falling.

The number of the articles analysed in the weekly "Etaplius" on the topic of social environment within the indicated period little differed from the number of articles on history, culture and art – 43 articles were investigated. Basically, these were positive articles – 25 articles were attributed to this group. Fourteen were negative; 4, neutral. Positively rated articles contained positive headlines: "Nuo liepos – kraiteliai Šiaulių naujagimiams" (*From July – Trousseaus for Šiauliai Newborns*), "Saulės Raimedos Bučinskytės svajonei – finansinė „Rotary" parama" (*Saulė Raimeda Bučinskytė Receives Rotary Financial Support to Fulfil her Dream*), "Inovatyvios paslaugos skatins gyventojų socialinę integraciją" (*Innovative Services will Promote Residents' Social Integration*). The negative assessment of articles, many of which belong to the analysed topic, is proved by the use of negative headlines and critical descriptions used in the report; for example, "*For some time now, young families have not received the promised trousseaus for newborns*", "Nėra vietų išgirdo tris kartus" (*Heard "No Vacancies" for Three Times*)", "Gaisro nebuvo – ugniagesius šokdino melagis" (*There Was no Fire – the Firefighters were Cheated by a Liar*), "*A 72-year-old resident of Šiauliai district lost the savings kept in a bank account*". Neutral articles provide information on vaccinations, water quality, and tips how to behave in different situations.

In summary, it can be stated that after analysing 149 articles about the city of Šiauliai, attributed to the indicated topics during the specified period, positive assessment of articles dominates (110), significantly less publications are assessed negatively (32), and several are neutral (7). It is noticeable that articles attributed to the topics of history, culture and art, social environment and infrastructure are mostly assessed positively, but articles about politics and economy as well as the same topics of social environment and infrastructure are evaluated negatively. It has been identified that the publications attributed to the thematic groups of history, culture and art, social environment, and infrastructure are reflected in the strategic

development priorities set in strategic development plan of Šiauliai city municipality for 2015-2024. Three main directions emphasised by Šiauliai city municipality – the open, vibrant, and safe city – are also envisaged in the articles published in the weekly "Etaplius".

Conclusions

1. The city's image is the totality of the individual's knowledge, obtained experience and feelings about a particular area. The image of the city is formed on the basis of the following elements: natural features, infrastructure, tourism, leisure areas, history, culture and art, political and economic factors, social environment, and urban atmosphere. The image of the city is based on the following components: brand, visual image, reputation, perception, and identity.

2. The media forms a positive, negative and/or neutral image of the city. Three steps of the media, which influence public behaviour, are distinguished: drawing attention, communication of information, and attitude. The impact of the media report, related to public decision-making, is based on informational, perceptual, interactive and attention-diverting levels.

3. It has been found that the weekly "Etaplius" forms a positive image of Šiauliai city in the media. It has turned out that the articles related to building the positive image of the city include thematic groups of history, culture, art, and infrastructure; while the negative image of Šiauliai city is presented in the articles on social environment, politics as well as infrastructure. The strategic development priorities of Šiauliai city municipality – the open, vibrant, and safe city – are reflected in the articles published by the local media. The directions of the image constructed by the weekly newspaper "Etaplius" and Šiauliai city municipality coincide – the positive image of the city is formed.

References

1. Acedo, A., Painho, M., Casteleyn, S., and Roche, S. (2018). *Place and City: Toward Urban Intelligence.* https://www.mdpi.com/2220-9964/7/9/346/htm (access date: 08.03.2019).

2. Atalan, A., and Kizil, C. (2015). Image and Reputation of Yalova City: A Study on Yalova University Students. *Emerging Markets Journal, 5* (2), 72–73. EBSCOhost: Business Source Complete (access date: 10.01.2019).

3. Berg, L. B. (2011). *Qualitative Research Methods for the Social Sciences. Allyn and Bacon. A Pearson Education Company*. https://mthoyibi.files.wordpress.com/2011/05/qualitative-research-methods-for-the socialsciences__bruce-l-berg-2001.pdf (access date: 08.12.2019).

4. Berrone, P., and Ricart, J. E. (2015). *IESE Cities in Motion Index 2015. Center for Globalization and Strategy.* https://www.academia.edu/11403591/IESE_Cities_in_Motion_Index_2015 (access date: 08.23.2019).

5. Chuang, Y. H. (2015). Exploring the Influence of Community Attachment on City Brand Attitudes: A Consideration of Tourism Impact. *Tourismos: an international multidisciplinary journal of tourism, 9* (1), 39–41. EBSCOhost: Business Source Complete (access date: 16.12.2019).

6. Fernandez, J. A. F., Duarte, P. A. O., and Mogollon, J. M. H. (2015). Assessing the differentiated contribution of city resources to city brand. *Tourism & Management Studies, 11* (1), 4–9. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/273886233_Assessing_the_differentiated_contribution_of_city_resources_to_city_brand_image (access date: 08.12.2019).

7. Foroudi, P., Gupta, S., Kitchen, P., Foroudi, M. M., and Nguyen, B. (2016). A framework of place branding, place image, and place reputation. *An International Journal, 19* (2), 12–20. EBSCOhost: Business Source Complete (access date: 04.12.2019).

8. Gunina, D., Novak, M., Kincl, T., and Komarkova, L. (2018). Mass media communication and companies market position: the case of the Czech mortgage market. *Acta Oeconomica Pragensia, 26* (2), 10–15. EBSCOhost: Business Source Complete (access date: 08.12.2019).

9. Hanson, R. E. (2016) *Mass Communication – Living in a Media World.* SAGE Publications, Inc; Sixth edition.

10. Hassan, H., Ghani, M. I. M., and Ahmad, G. (2018). Evaluation of Islamic City Image in Kota Bharu Islamic City: A Pilot Study and an Early Finding. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences, 8* (6), 36–39. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/327814553_Evaluation_of_Islamic_City_Image_in_Kota_Bharu_Islamic_City_A_Pilot_Study_and_an_Early_Finding (access date: 08.03.2019).

11.   Jakab, P. (2016). City and Company Reputation from the Tourism Point of View. *Management of Organizations: Systematic Research, 76*, 65–66. EBSCOhost: Business Source Complete (access date: 12.11.2019).

12.   Küng, L.(2008). *Strategic Management in the Media: Theory to Practice.* London: Sage Publications Ltd.

13.   Manuel, M. M., Mercedes, M. N. G., ir Jensy, T. D. (2016). Identity and **image** of **city** important for marketing a tourism product urban areas. *Retos Turísticos, 15* (2), 7–10. EBSCOhost: Business Source Complete (access date: 27.01.2019).

14.   Richards, G. (2015). Developing the Eventful City: Time, space and urban identity. *Planning for Event Cities*. Ajman, United Arab Emirates: Muncipality and Planning Department of Ajman.

15.   Ulevičius, L. (2006*). Kaip tapti žinomam. Etiški ryšiai su visuomene*. Kaunas: „Smaltijos" leidykla.

16.   Villar, C., and Rey, F. (2016). The scope and limits of city branding in the management of the image of the city. *Utopia y Praxis Latinoamericana, 21* (73), 3–9. EBSCOhost: Business Source Complete (access date: 15.12.2019).

17.   Wang, Y., ir Zhang, P. (2015). Research on the Design Strategy Integrated of Street Furniture from the Perspective of City Image. *International Conference on Arts, Design and Contemporary Education, 5* (2), 337–338. EBSCOhost: Business Source Complete (access date: 19.12.2019).

18.   Zača, E. (2016). Social media as platform for stimulating urban changes. *Academic Search Complete, Coactivity / Santalka, 24* (2), 85–90. EBSCOhost: Business Source Complete (access date: 08.12.2019).

19.   Zenker, S., Braun, E., ir Petersen, S. (2017). Branding the destination versus the place: The effects of brand complexity and identification for residents and visitors. *Tourism Management,   58*,   15–27.   https://cbswire.dk/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/Zenker-et-al_2017_Branding-the-destination-versus-the-place.pdf (access date: 17.12.2019).