

STUDENTS AS THE TARGET GROUP OF THE CITY'S MARKETING ACTIVITIES – THE EXAMPLE OF LUBLIN

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ABSTRACT

Aim: The aim of the study was to determine the specificity of marketing activities of the city, which is an academic center, aimed at students. **Methods:** The study covered the city of Lublin. The literature on the subject was analyzed, and the benefits for the development of cities resulting from the presence of students were indicated. Based on the analysis of the Lublin Development Strategy for 2013–2020 and its implementation, promotional activities in shaping the city's academic character were presented. Using the results of the survey, students' opinions on the promotional activities are presented. **Results:** Students are an important target group for promotional activities in the city of Lublin. The authorities undertake several activities aimed at improving the quality of education, cooperation between universities, improving the quality of life of students, or creating the atmosphere of an academic city. Students perceive the city of Lublin as conducive to studying. **Conclusions:** In order to better use the development potential associated with the presence of students, the Lublin authorities should strengthen information activities aimed at retaining students after graduation.

Keywords: territorial marketing, educational sub-product, students, Lublin

JEL codes: I25, M31, M38

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, territorial marketing has been gaining more and more importance in Poland, a tool that allows for the effective management of territorial units. Thanks to its application, the authorities of territorial units shape appropriate relations with the environment and can deal with emerging challenges related to socio-economic development. Territorial marketing aims to satisfy the identified needs and

desires of residents and “guests” using all available resources [Szromnik 2007]. The significant resources of a territorial unit include the presence of universities in a given area, which are often an important component of a mega-product. The academic nature of the place means that cities or regions, apart from the classic target groups (i.e., residents, investors, or tourists), also distinguish students [Stanowicka-Traczyk 2008, Domański 2011] and direct their product offer to them. The intensification of activities of cities aimed

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at attracting students, observed in recent years, results from the fact that city authorities notice unfavorable changes in the population (e.g., the problem of decreasing population, including the number of students) [Gębarowski 2012, Adamczuk 2015, Rokita-Poskart 2016]. On the other hand, city authorities notice many benefits for the functioning and development of the city, which come from attracting a large number of students to the city. Research on the impact of students on cities intensified in the 1990s and mainly concerns the transformation of urban structures related to the presence of students [Jakóbczyk-Gryszkiewicz, et al. 2014, Bajerski 2015] and the specificity of students as users of the city and their relations with other residents [Sage, et al. 2012, Smith, Hubbard, 2014, Kotus et al. 2015]. “Studentification” [Jakóbczyk-Gryszkiewicz et al. 2014, Rewers 2015] is treated as a strategic challenge in the management of academic cities [Bajerski 2015], which should offer students not only the opportunity to study, but also to meet other needs [Gębarowski 2012]. These needs may be similar to those of other city residents [Murzyn-Kupisz and Szymtkowska 2015] (e.g., purchasing food) or they may differ significantly – the need for a flexible form of employment, the choice of location of residence, the dominance of using public transport, spending time in bars, pubs, and clubs [Kotus et al. 2015]. Based on the literature analysis, it can be concluded that the consequences for the city resulting from the presence of students are a complex issue and concern many dimensions [Bajerski 2015]. The research problem this study focuses on is the issue of designing marketing activities aimed at students, which seems to be under-represented in research conducted so far [Gębarowski 2012, Rokita-Poskart 2016]. Moreover, the topic discussed is also significant from a practical point of view because academic cities often do not consider in their development strategies the need to take action to encourage students to take up education in the city [Rokita-Poskart 2015].

Universities’ presence, specificity, and reputation allow cities or regions to shape an educational sub-product (academic – after [Domański 2011]; educational and cultural – [Gębarowski 2012]). Its

role in the city’s functioning and development may vary and depends on the degree of complexity of the mega-product – which is the entire territorial unit, and results directly from the importance and level of development of other sub-products. The tools that the city can use to influence the market are subordinated to the educational sub-product and its features; they determine the final effect of the entire marketing process [Dyczkowska 2010]. It is critical to market the location, which is defined as all actions associated with a territorial unit’s communication with the environment. These actions include providing information about the location, persuading others of its allure, and promoting the purchase or consumption of territorial sub-products. The promotional goal is to maintain the current number of students and attract new ones – as current recipients of local universities, trade and other services, and future residents. The target group is extensive, encompassing future, current, and former students, spanning across local, regional, national, and even international levels [Domański 2011]. Depending on the development goals adopted by the city resulting from the presence of students, cities may adopt a specific development strategy [Rokita-Poskart 2015], where they emphasize the features of cities that are also attractive from the point of view of young people. The principles of sustainable development, including innovative concepts like the smart city paradigm integrating information and communication technologies, play a crucial role. This approach extends across various domains, including education, as highlighted by Żukowska and Chmiel [2022]. Other noteworthy sustainable development concepts include ecological and participatory cities, as explored by Masik et al. [2021]. Implementing these approaches has the potential to enhance the quality of life for residents, a goal that aligns with the desires of students and graduates, as emphasized in the findings by Kotus et al. [2015].

Various entities are involved in activities to attract potential students to study in a specific place. In addition to the activities of the city authorities, an important role is played by marketing conducted by universities (i.e., academic marketing [Krzyżanowska 2004]), the directions and methods of which are the basis for creat-

ing an attractive and sustainable competitive advantage for the city [Domański 2011, Gębarowski 2012, 2013]. Universities are often entities on the market that generate the largest influx of people from outside; therefore, it is crucial for territorial marketing to which recipients universities direct their offer – what fields and forms of study they offer, and the spatial range of marketing activities undertaken. The form of education results in an inflow of people strongly concentrated in time and characterized by a specific life cycle (e.g., 5-year, 3-year, or 2-year). The attractiveness of studies, combined with the attractiveness of living in a given city, may result in the extension of this cycle and a permanent influx of people to the city when students decide to stay after graduation [Domański 2011].

In order to attract potential students with the educational offer, the authorities of academic cities, similarly to universities, use various promotional activities [Rokita-Poskart 2016], use communication channels (i.e., television, radio, daily press, magazines, monographs, direct media, external media, the internet, cinema, and fair events). Each of these forms of media is assigned a specific group of recipients. Among young people, the most popular medium, and at the same time the most effective communication channel, is the Internet. Universities wanting to attract students focus primarily on creating websites where they promote their offer and running accounts on social networking sites. An effective way to reach the city of students is also organizing events (i.e., educational fairs).

City marketing activities aimed at students can be carried out as part of internal and external marketing [Domański 2011], depending on the goals to achieve. Internal marketing refers to a situation in which the university's offer is targeted at local recipients. To maximize demand, complementary activities should be activities on defined external markets. In this case, it is particularly important to integrate activities carried out by universities and city authorities because the choice of a place to study is determined by both factors related to the university's brand (e.g., unique fields of study) and the image of the city – i.e., its attractiveness as a place of residence or long academic traditions. The image of universities co-creates the image of the city in which

they are located [Sobocińska 2011]. The city is considered an attractive place to live during studies, where the most important factors are related to the conditions and quality of life [Chraćol-Barczyk 2016], cultural life, entertainment, transport accessibility, or the possibility of finding an additional job (also after graduation).

The subject of research in this article is the city of Lublin, which is the largest academic center in the eastern part of Poland. There are currently nine universities in Lublin: 5 public universities – Maria Curie-Skłodowska University, The John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin, The Lublin University of Technology, The University of Life Sciences, and The Medical University; and four non-public universities – The Lublin Academy of WSEI (former University of Economics and Innovation), The Academy of Applied Sciences (former University of Social and Life Sciences), The University of Entrepreneurship, and The Administration and University of Social Sciences. These academic centers are based in Lublin and gather 87.8% of all students from the Lubelskie region [GUS 2022]. The number of students in Lublin has been growing steadily since the 1940s, reaching 86,900 in the academic year 2004/2005 and remained at a similar level in subsequent years [Jakubowski 2018]. However, starting from the academic year 2010/2011, the number of students began to drop sharply. In 2015/2016, 67,300 students studied in Lublin, which accounted for 4.8% of the total number of students in Poland [Jakubowski 2018]. In recent years, despite a nationwide decrease in the number of students in Poland, the student population in Lublin has remained relatively stable. As of 2019, the city hosted 65,000 students, constituting 5% of the national student body. When considering student enrollment, Lublin secured the seventh position among academic centers in Poland [Nowak and Wieteska 2019]. Between 2011–2020, over 220,000 people from all over Poland came to Lublin to study in the city [Analiza... 2023]. In total, about 60,000 people study in Lublin (data for the academic year 2021/2022), of which 13.8% are international students; their number is increasing year by year [Potencjał... 2023]. In the years 2011–2020, students from 114 countries studied in Lublin, with the largest number of students coming

from Ukraine (4,209), China (797), and Belarus (497) [Analiza... 2021]. The significance of higher education and the academic community in the life of the city becomes evident when examining the ratio of the number of students to the population. In the academic year 2004/2005, this ratio stood at 250 students per 1000 residents. However, by the academic year 2015/2016, this ratio had slightly decreased to 204 students per 1000 residents. This metric serves as an illustrative measure of the integral role that higher education plays in the fabric of the city over the years [Jakubowski 2018]. In 2019, the indicator was equal to 188 people per 1,000 inhabitants; it is worth mentioning that in terms of its value, Lublin was ranked fifth in the country, giving way only to the centers (i.e., Podkowa Leśna, Poznań, Rzeszów, and Katowice) [Nowak and Wieteska 2019]. Every fourth inhabitant of Lublin is a student, and universities are the largest employers [Nowak and Wieteska 2019]. The academic nature of the city of Lublin is related to the operation of many universities with a rich offer and is of significant importance in the city's development. As a result, the city of Lublin was chosen to present the problem of designing marketing activities targeted at students by the city acting as an academic center.

METHOD

The aim of the work was to determine the specificity of marketing activities of the city being an academic center aimed at students, including: (1) identifying the main possible benefits for the development of cities resulting from the presence of students in the city; (2) presenting promotional activities in the field of building academic character on the example of the city of Lublin; (3) presentation of students' opinions on the academic character of the city of Lublin and the promotional activities undertaken. The following hypotheses were accepted for verification: H_1 : The authorities of the city of Lublin focus on promotional activities aimed mainly at potential students and cooperate with universities; H_2 : In the opinion of students, the city of Lublin has the characteristics of an academic city; H_3 : The knowledge of promotional activities among students is low.

To achieve the goals, the literature on the subject was analyzed, and the data of the Lublin Development Strategy for 2013–2020 and its implementation were used [Lublin... 2013, Materials... 2019]. To obtain students' opinions on the academic character of the city, a survey was conducted in 2019 among students of Lublin's universities. The electronic version of the questionnaire was made available on the Facebook social network in closed groups associating students from Lublin universities. The questionnaire was completed by 156 students representing seven universities; the largest number of people were from Maria Curie-Skłodowska University (38%), from the University of Life Sciences (28%), from the John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin (23%), and from the Lublin University of Technology (7%). The survey exhibited a predominant representation of women, constituting 84% of the respondents. Additionally, a significant portion of the participants were students in their first or second year of studies (39%), with an equal percentage from the fourth and fifth years (39%). Geographically, a majority of respondents hailed from the Lubelskie region (62%), followed by the Mazowieckie region (12%). The analysis of the survey results delved into students' perspectives on Lublin as an academic city and evaluated the effectiveness of marketing initiatives undertaken by the city targeting this specific demographic.

The limitations of the study should be mentioned, including the non-representative sample that does not include international students. Moreover, the study did not cover the time of the Covid-2019 pandemic, which could have significantly changed the city of Lublin's marketing activities towards students.

ACADEMIC CHARACTER OF THE CITY IN THE CONTEXT OF DEVELOPMENT

The benefits resulting from the presence of universities and students can be both short-term and long-term. These include issues such as:

- changing the population structure of the city to a favorable one [Herbst 2009, Rokita-Poskart 2017] and increasing the level of human capital in the city [Brańka 2013, Nowak and Wieteska 2019];

- gentrification of the place (district) [Romanowski 2014], multifaceted changes in the city's economy, and its restructuring [Zasina et al. 2021];
- shaping the real estate market (flats for sale and rent) [Murzyn-Kupisz and Szmytkowska 2015] and development of trade and services (gastro-nomic, cultural, transport) [Kotus et al. 2015, Rewers 2015; Burlita and Błoński 2016];
- stimulating the city's economic growth through student consumption [Materials... 2019] and increasing local demand [Berg and Russo 2003, Domański 2011, Brańka 2016];
- increasing local labor resources thanks to qualified staff on the labor market [Burlita and Błoński 2016, Brańka 2016];
- development of entrepreneurship and attracting investors [Brańka 2016];
- generating regional development by academic centers where universities are a key link in the process of creating knowledge [Marszałek 2010];
- creating [by universities] an expert base for pro-development initiatives of city authorities and business [Burlita and Błoński 2016] and developing the potential of the city to organize events (i.e., congresses, conferences, seminars) that attract the so-called "group business tourists" [Borodako 2013];
- stimulating cultural life by universities [Rewers 2015; Burlita and Błoński 2016];
- offering jobs by universities [Burlita and Błoński 2016] and institutions related to student service;
- deciding on the competitive advantage of a city compared to other cities [Domański 2011], acquiring attributes of the city's image [Lisiecki 2006, Burlita and Błoński 2016] related to the university and the entire academic community (learning region, university-knowledge producer) [Szmit 2011], and connection with innovation and creativity ("science and youth") [Burlita and Błoński 2016];
- impact on other territorial sub-products, apart from education, and on the investments undertaken to adjust the city to the expectations of students;
- generating intangible values through the academic climate; cities are vibrant and diverse [Van den Berg and Russo 2003].

The location of universities is an important asset and distinguishing feature for cities, which positively impacts the city's development. Cities can achieve certain benefits resulting from the presence of students, among which the university's positive impact on the city's general image and building the advantage of the academic center over other cities should be mentioned.

THE CITY'S ACADEMIC CHARACTER IN THE LUBLIN DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY FOR 2013–2020

For many years, Lublin has been taking advantage of the fact that many universities are located in the city in its pro-development activities, which can be reflected in the provisions of strategic documents [Rokita-Poskart 2015]. In the Lublin Development Strategy for 2013–2020 [Lublin... 2013], in force until the end of 2021, the city's academic character was recognized as one of the four areas of Lublin's development. Within this area, the city undertook activities focusing on four development goals: (1) internationalization of the university; (2) symbiosis with the environment; (3) *genius loci* of the university city; (4) attracting and retaining talents in Lublin. In the strategy, the academic character of the city was treated as a Lublin product, thanks to which the city is known on a regional and national scale.

The first objective, 'Internationalization of the university', concerned increasing the attractiveness of studying in Lublin among foreign candidates, which included encouraging them to study in Lublin, meeting their needs through multilingual access to information, improving service, integration activities, or creating an atmosphere of openness to other cultures. The international rank of a university is also the participation in international research and cooperation networks, cooperation with prestigious universities around the world, co-organization or participation in international conferences, promoting the achievements of Lublin scientists abroad and the presence of foreign scientists at Lublin universities (e.g., giving lectures). The key to achieving the university's international rank is the universities' activities, with which the city cooperates and supports in each of the presented areas. One of the most important

activities undertaken as part of the implementation of the first objective (1) 'Internationalization of universities' was the 'Study in Lublin' project, implemented in 2011 by the City Hall in cooperation with universities in Lublin, which aimed to encourage foreigners to study in the city. An integral part of the project was the portal [Lublin is... 2023], where potential students could obtain the necessary information about studying in Lublin (e.g., learn about the educational offer, scholarship programs, and procedures before coming to Poland or other formalities related to the organization of your stay). One of the website's tabs contained practical information on everyday life in the city (such as public transport in Lublin, prices of dormitories and rooms in private apartments, or average prices of basic food products). The portal was available in four languages: English, Russian, Ukrainian, and Polish. It also included pages on social networking sites (Facebook and V Kontakte). As part of the project, representatives of the City Hall in Lublin appeared at annual educational fairs – e.g., in Ukraine (Kyiv), Kazakhstan (Almaty), Georgia (Tbilisi), Turkey (Istanbul), Czech Republic (Prague), and Belarus (Minsk). In addition to fairs, meetings with young people in Poland and abroad were organized several times a year in schools, Polish homes and consulates, or in rented rooms where the educational offer of Lublin universities was presented [Report... 2017].

The second objective (2) of the strategy, 'Symbiosis with the environment', is understood as building cooperation by universities on three levels (i.e., universities-business, universities-city, and universities-universities). The city's role in university-business cooperation includes stimulating the entrepreneurship of students and graduates, supporting the creation of infrastructural facilities for the development and transfer of innovation from universities to businesses, collaborating with the Science and Technology Park and other partners to establish innovation incubators, and supporting the adaptation of educational courses to meet the needs of employers. Activities on the university-city level include developing municipal scholarship programs for students, competitions for diploma theses, and creating communication tools (e.g., Internet portals) to help find internship offers or job placement. In turn, cooperation at the uni-

versity-university level can be implemented by involving universities in urban projects requiring the cooperation of various fields of science and supporting the processes of collaboration and consolidation of Lublin universities. An example of the implementation of this goal (2) was the project 'Lubelska Wyżyna IT' [Projekt... 2023], initiated by the Lublin City Hall, aimed at highlighting the potential and creating favorable conditions for the development of the IT industry in Lublin. The activities within the project were grounded in the close collaboration of three key groups: local government authorities, the scientific community, and enterprises/business environment institutions. The overarching aim was to enhance the competitiveness of each of these entities through synergistic cooperation. Lubelska Wyżyna IT consists primarily of activities addressed to the inhabitants of Lublin and the entire Lubelskie region, consisting of promoting the local IT market among residents and students, and encouraging high school students to study computer science. As part of the project, a special platform was created, with a list of Lublin companies from the IT industry along with their short characteristics. The 'Lublin IT events' tab presented the most important events in the IT industry. An important element of the project for potential students is the 'Check IT' event, organized for the seventh time in 2022. As part of the conference, primarily designed for high school students and IT teachers, participants have the option to select from a range of lectures, workshops, and activities in the game zone. Attendees can explore the offerings of IT studies in Lublin, gain insights into various applications of IT and technological innovations, and even have the opportunity to create their own applications and games. The speakers include entrepreneurs, IT industry specialists, programmers, personnel from IT departments in Lublin universities, and students from IT faculties themselves, as outlined in the program [Check IT 2023].

The third objective (3), the '*Genius loci* of the university city', differed from the preceding goals in that it did not center around the development of an enticing educational package. Instead, its focus was on shaping a cultural and social environment, encouraging student involvement in leisure-time activities [Burlita and Błoński 2016]. The initiatives included programs that provided information

about events and activities available at the university and in the city. There was a focus on promoting the concept of educational student volunteering for local communities, collaborating in the organization of student events with distinct social and educational components. Additionally, efforts were directed towards establishing scientific and educational cafes and clubs, magazines, portals, and supporting investments that fostered creative and innovative thinking within creative groups. The city's initiatives were predominantly concentrated on two key areas: the development of internship and volunteering opportunities and the provision of a cultural and educational program tailored for students in the city. Students had the chance to undertake internships and engage in volunteering at various municipal institutions, including the City Hall, the Municipal Labor Office in Lublin, the Municipal Family Support Center in Lublin, the Municipal Water and Sewage Company Ltd, the Municipal Transport Authority in Lublin, and cultural institutions affiliated with the municipality. The city's efforts to provide opportunities for students' personal development encompass the support of projects initiated by the academic community in the realm of cultural and leisure development. These projects offer a chance for holistic development beyond the university setting. Notably, the city prioritizes support for university-led initiatives, extending assistance to its own projects in a secondary capacity.

The fourth objective, 'Attracting and retaining talents in Lublin' (4), focused on activities aimed at retaining [in the city] the most talented and ambitious people starting and completing studies. The initial focus was on activities targeting students with the objective of acquainting them with the history, culture, and surroundings of the city. The goal was to help them become familiar with their "small homeland" and actively engage students in initiatives benefiting their local community. The second area was to support all activities and successes of high school students (e.g., through scholarships and other prizes for students who will study in Lublin) or supporting the cooperation of schools with scouts, tourist clubs, etc. Contacts between Lublin universities and schools were also developed (e.g., as part of university open days), directing the activities of current students for future students, and developing and improving student educational events in

terms of students' needs. The fourth area is to keep talented university graduates in the city and, thus, support them when starting on the labor market (e.g., development of internship programs in municipal institutions, support for research on the relationship between education and future careers of students, and organization of meetings with employers at universities). A significant initiative involved recognizing the achievements of highly talented students by presenting awards, such as the Mayor of the City Award. This recognition was extended to those excelling in subject and thematic competitions, olympiads, professional tournaments, as well as nationwide artistic or literary competitions. Students and doctoral students living in Lublin who conduct scientific or artistic activities that may contribute to the development of the city and the region or make a significant contribution to the development of science could apply for a scholarship from the city's president. Since 2010, an annual competition has been established to recognize the best diploma theses across various categories, specifically focusing on the subject of Lublin's economic development. Cash prizes are awarded to the winners, and the authors of the winning theses have the opportunity to apply for internships at the Lublin City Hall. The announcement of results and prize distribution occurs annually at the Lublin Entrepreneurship Gala.

Lublin is persisting in the ongoing initiatives, as outlined in the Strategy for the Development of the City of Lublin until 2030, where creative, academic, and entrepreneurial aspects have been identified as one of the five key development areas. The city is constantly implementing various image campaigns aimed at students [Kampanie... 2023], the presentation of which goes beyond the scope of this study. It is worth noting that promotional activities were also carried out during the COVID-19 pandemic (e.g., the Lublin Academic Program from 2021), when the consequences of students' absence from universities were clearly visible in the city. In Lublin City Hall, within the structure of one of the departments, there is a department for supporting academics. In 2021 and 2022, the City Hall, in cooperation with public universities in Lublin, implemented the project 'Analysis of the influx of students to Lublin' [Analiza napływu... 2021], which

shows and confirms the great importance of the target group of students for the development of the city.

THE ACADEMIC CHARACTER OF THE CITY OF LUBLIN IN THE OPINION OF STUDENTS

Students decide to study in Lublin for many reasons. For the majority of respondents (62% of answers), the main motivation was the proximity to the place of residence [Kotus et al. 2015], the educational offer of the university (51%), the location of the city (30%), the “climate of the city” (18%), and the cultural and entertainment events indicated by 8% of the respondents. Students outside Lublin most often considered studying in Warsaw, Wrocław, and Kraków. Interestingly, 30% of the respondents did not consider any other city to study than Lublin. The surveyed students were satisfied that they were studying in Lublin, which was indicated by 85% of the respondents. A high level of education, interesting fields of study, an interesting city (atmosphere, monuments, cheap living), and a short distance from the family home were indicated as justifications for the answers. On the other hand, people who were not satisfied with studying in Lublin cited the low level of education, difficulties in finding a job or lack of prospects after graduation as reasons, which shows that apart from the quality of teaching, economic issues are important to them [Gębarowski 2012]. Nearly all respondents perceived the city of Lublin as favorable for studying, with 40% providing a definite “yes” and 56% leaning towards “rather yes”. This positive sentiment is primarily attributed to the multitude of universities, the diverse range of courses offered, and the abundance of cultural and entertainment events tailored for students. The advantages of the city were also discounts for students in premises and institutions, a good location of the university in the city (near the city center), and good public transport connections – which confirms the conclusions of other researchers [Sage et al. 2012, Kotus et al. 2015]. Moreover, attractive prices for renting apartments [Jakubczyk-Gryszkiewicz et al. 2014] and lower maintenance costs than in other cities were indicated. There were also responses that Lublin has long been perceived as an academic city, so many activities are

dedicated to students, allowing us to verify the hypothesis H_2 positively. Conversely, the minority of respondents (4%) who did not view Lublin as a city conducive to studying expressed concerns. Their reasons included the rising costs of rented apartments, which they felt did not align with the living standard. Additionally, they cited challenges in finding part-time jobs for students and perceived Lublin as a city similar to others, lacking distinctive support systems for students. When analyzing the results of the obtained research, it should be taken into account that students' expectations and preferences change over time and depend on the year of study [Holton and Riley 2014].

The surveyed students had various knowledge of promotional activities undertaken by the city of Lublin. It turned out that 54% of respondents had not encountered any forms of promotion, which confirms our assumptions (H_3) and reveals a low knowledge of promotional activities. This problem was also noticed by other researchers [Kotus et al. 2015] in the case of Poznań and the Tri-city, where the image of the city presented in advertisements was an insignificant criterion determining the choice of the city as a place of study. The majority of students gained information about studying in Lublin through articles in the press. Additionally, students were knowledgeable about initiatives such as the ‘Study in Lublin’ project, the competition for theses on Lublin, and activities related to ‘Lublin walks with a soul’, or the ‘Lublin IT Upland project’ (Fig. 1).

Marketing activities aimed at students reached the respondents through various means of communication used by the city (Fig. 2). Most often, the surveyed students saw these activities on the internet (answers “very often” and often accounted for 53% of responses). Another important source was the urban space (44%). The results confirm the dominance of searching for information on the internet [Kotus et al. 2015] – especially by young people, which is accompanied by a reorientation of cities' promotional activities from traditional media towards the internet [Rokita-Poskart 2016]. The respondents had relatively little or no information from television, radio, or press.

In response to the question of what Lublin lacks, in order to provide a “studying atmosphere”, students

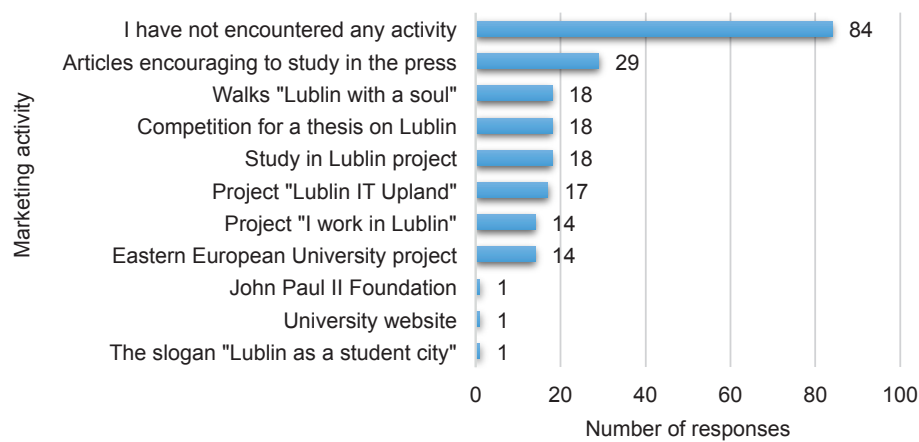


Fig 1. Knowledge of marketing activities of the city of Lublin in the opinion of students

Source: own elaboration.

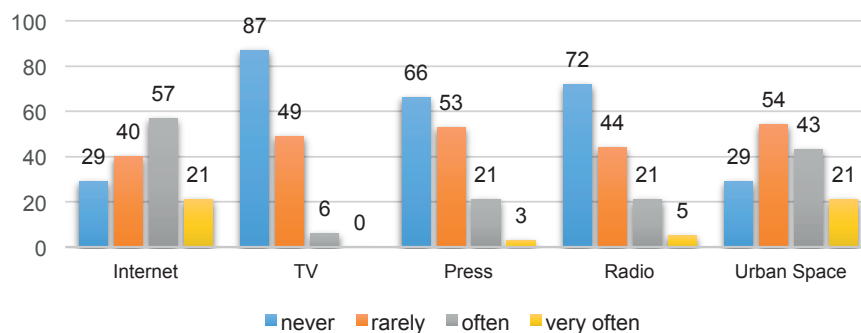


Fig 2. The surveyed students' knowledge of the marketing channels used by the city of Lublin to encourage them to study in the city (number of responses)

Note: complete responses were included ($n = 147$)

Source: own elaboration.

most often pointed to a lack of opportunities to work during or after studies (16% of responses), an insufficient number of cultural and entertainment events (16%), a lack of car parks near the university (14%), and a small number of paid offers/practices consistent with the direction of education (9%). There were also answers that the "study climate" alone is not enough and that Lublin universities do not have the appropriate reputation and do not occupy high positions in rankings.

Every third respondent planned to stay in Lublin after graduation, mainly because they like the city. They

have already found a good job in their profession here and feel an emotional connection with the city. This observation may lend support to the notion that the increase in the student population serves as an indicator of potential gentrification for cities [Romanowski 2014, Kotus et al. 2015]. The respondents also replied that they would stay in Lublin because of their family/friends; some of them had already lived here before starting their studies and did not intend to move away from Lublin. On the other hand, people who "probably not" (28%) or "definitely not" (21%) planned to stay in

Lublin after graduation cited the following reasons for their decision: a lack of opportunities to work in their profession, difficulties in finding a job (also due to the high number of students and graduates), low earnings, high flat prices, the high cost of living, a willingness to return to one's hometown, the choice of Lublin only because of the field of study and no connection with this city of the future, high unemployment, the poor economic situation of the city and the Lublin Voivodeship, or little opportunity for personal development. Every fifth respondent was undecided whether to stay in Lublin after graduation, which depends on whether they manage to find a job in the city and how their private life will develop. Therefore, in the context of using the potential resulting from the presence of students, the city needs to undertake marketing activities aimed at both students and graduates [Rokita-Poskari 2015]. The results confirm that it is important for students to have a job, earnings [Gębarowski 2012], and the presence of a family [Brańka 2013].

CONCLUSIONS

The presence of students in the city allows for many different benefits directly related to the implementation of socio-economic development goals. Developing the academic potential, including attracting future students to the city, may bring benefits not only to local universities, but also to the entire city community – both in the short and long term. The city authorities should cooperate with the university authorities in shaping the educational sub-product and building the image of the academic city.

Students constitute 20% of Lublin's inhabitants and are an important target group for Lublin's promotional activities. The authorities acknowledge that the future of Lublin is significantly tied to the effective harnessing of the intellectual potential of its young population. This recognition is evident in the provisions of strategic documents, where the city's academic character stands out as one of the fundamental areas of development. The authorities undertake a number of activities aimed at improving the quality of education, improving cooperation between universities, improving the quality of life

of students, or creating the atmosphere of an academic city (i.e., the *genius loci* of a university city) – which confirms hypothesis H1. Lublin consistently focuses its promotional efforts on attracting foreign students, leading to a yearly increase in the percentage of international students. The predominant countries of origin for these students are Ukraine and Belarus, a trend influenced by the geographical proximity of these nations. Therefore, foreign students' assessment of the city's marketing activities may be the subject of future research. In addition, future research should be focused on identifying the academic nature specified in the Development Strategy of the City of Lublin for 2022–2030 and revealing the place of the target group (i.e., students) and their specific needs in the overall concept of city development. The research revealed that most of the surveyed students are satisfied with the choice of Lublin as a city to study and perceive it as a city conducive to studying. This trend is associated with the educational offerings provided by Lublin's universities and the perceived "climate of the city". Respondents, as anticipated, characterize the city as distinctly academic, featuring a wealth of cultural and entertainment events, along with venues specifically catering to students. Taking into account the identified low knowledge of promotional activities, Lublin's authorities should strengthen information and image-building activities. Issues related to work and living conditions after graduation are crucial for students, and this particularly applies to activities aimed at retaining students after completing their education. It is crucial to enhance connections with universities, entrepreneurs, and other collaborators whilst also striving to improve the overall economic landscape of Lublin. This concerted effort aims to offer young individuals embarking on their professional journeys the optimal conditions for personal and career development.

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STUDENCI JAKO ADRESACI DZIAŁAŃ MARKETINGOWYCH MIASTA–PRZYKŁAD LUBLINA

STRESZCZENIE

Cel: Celem pracy było określenie specyfiki działań marketingowych miasta będącego ośrodkiem akademickim, skierowanych wobec studentów. **Metody:** Badaniem objęto miasto Lublin. Dokonano analizy literatury przedmiotu i wskazano korzyści dla rozwoju miast jakie płyną z obecności studentów. Na podstawie analizy Strategii rozwoju Lublina na lata 2013–2020 i jej realizacji przedstawiono działania promocyjne w zakresie budowania akademickości miasta. Wykorzystując wyniki badania ankietowego przedstawiono opinię studentów na temat podejmowanych działań promocyjnych. **Wyniki:** Studenci stanowią ważną grupą docelową działań promocyjnych miasta Lublin. Władze podejmują szereg działań, które mają na celu poprawę jakości kształcenia, współpracę między uczelniami, podniesienie jakości życia studentów czy też stworzenie klimatu miasta akademickiego. Studenci postrzegają miasto Lublin jako sprzyjające studiowaniu. **Wnioski:** Aby lepiej wykorzystać potencjał rozwojowy związany z obecnością studentów władze Lublina powinny wzmocnić działania informacyjne celem zatrzymywania studentów po ukończeniu edukacji.

Słowa kluczowe: marketing terytorialny, subprodukt edukacyjny, studenci, Lublin