

THE IMAGE AND BRAND OF THE COUNTRY: CONCEPTS AND RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

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Abstract: The article presents a certain system of disparate studies in the field of country imageology in research. The entire volume of diverse research on this topic is classified. The definitions of the basic concepts (image, image, brand) are given based on the study of basic approaches. The psychological, cultural, marketing, theoretical, and sociological approaches to the study of national imageology, as well as an approach related to interaction with the media, are highlighted. Their own understandings of the studied categories are proposed, based on the analyzed material.

Key words: image, image, brand, country.

Currently, not only in the world, but also in our country, the popularity of research on the country's image is growing, and the fashion for such work has come from the field of personal image studies and political marketing, which have experienced (and are still experiencing) a real boom in the post-Soviet space. However, along with the excitement for the study of the country's image, new methodological and epistemological scientific challenges came, the answers to which, despite the scientific fashion, turned out to be very limited, which could not but negatively affect the structuring of research approaches and, as a result, the effectiveness of using the results achieved.

Foreign researchers were the first to pay attention to the "image" category. American sociologist Kenneth Boulding, in his book "Image: Knowledge in Life and Society," proposed the concept that an image is a certain behavioral stereotype that influences the actions of an individual, group of individuals, or nation. Boulding argued that an image is formed not on the basis of real facts, but on prestige, opinions and illusions that people create about themselves, on a mythological view of the past and an imaginary view of the future. Such an image can influence both the actions of individuals or groups, and the behavior of entire nations [1]. After decades of studying this phenomenon, another researcher will give a more precise definition: "Image is reputation, perception, attitude, message, assessment, recognition, trust, support, communication and attitude" [2]. A significant contribution to the study of the phenomenon of "image" was made by the English political scientist Graham Wallace, who argued that not rational motives, but behavioral attitudes formed over the years are the basis of the model of voter behavior. The German sociologist K. Hilmann defined an image as a set of feelings, ideas, and assessments that are subjectively perceived by individuals or groups and become the basis of their ideas about other people and social institutions.

Russian specialist I. Sinyaeva defined the term in the context of the organization's image: "a positive image is created by the main activity of the company, as well as by purposeful information work aimed at target groups of the public" [4]. Thus, an image, as an

interdisciplinary phenomenon, is a set of stereotypical opinions, subjective perceptions, behavioral attitudes that form over time, and irrational ideas. If we take a political science question, considering the state image, it is "the imaginary image of this state among the citizens of the country and abroad" [5]. Another researcher, D. A. Klimenko, considered the image through the prism of branding, giving an interpretation as follows: "a set of ideas that the owner of the thing would like to introduce into the mass consciousness," but also touched on the political aspect – "this is how the state would like to be perceived in the international space".

And Professor Francis Kotler, Professor of International Marketing, writes that there are concepts of "image of space", that is, we can understand by this term the image of a city, province, region and the same states in full-dimensional integrity, and to the description of what the words "image" are, he attributes the already familiar statements that are given above "the sum of beliefs, ideas and people's impressions of this place".

A domestic researcher who decides to start working in the field of the country's image immediately faces a scientific dilemma, which is related both to the heterogeneity of research approaches in the domestic tradition and to the lack of consensus around the content of the main categories.

While Western studies, which are methodologically different (although with a practical bias typical of Western science), have adopted the use of the general term "image", the Russian tradition has adopted the use of two terms: "image" and "image", but a common understanding of these terms has not been developed, which largely led to the strongest heterogeneity of research. Most Russian studies represent various pieces of the mosaic in the field of national imageology, which has yet to be put together.

Based on the above, it is possible to determine the goals of this article – how to try to bring into some kind of system the scientific ideas and developments existing in the domestic literature in the field of image / image of the country. To achieve the same goals, it is necessary to solve a number of research tasks. First, it is necessary to classify the entire volume of diverse research on this topic. Secondly, to define the basic concepts based on the study of basic approaches. And, finally, thirdly, based on the analyzed material, to offer your own understanding of the categories under study.

Solving the problem of structuring approaches and directions in the field of image / brand research in the Uzbek scientific tradition is seen as a laborious and difficult task, the solution of which is further complicated by the disunity of researchers, a weak degree of cooperation, as well as poor familiarity with the work of colleagues in the research department.

And although the most established research areas in the field of national imageology have been covered in sufficient detail, many PhD and some doctoral dissertations have not been mentioned at all in scientific papers. We have taken upon ourselves the responsibility to bring into some correspondence the entire volume of currently existing dissertations and scientific papers in the hope that this will make it possible to more effectively use the currently available developments in the field of national imageology in Uzbek science.

It should be understood that research on the image/image/brand of a country is mostly interdisciplinary in nature, therefore, the structuring of research areas that we will use is to a certain extent conditional. Depending on the purpose, results, methods, and general tone of the work, we have divided the entire research stream into several main areas.

It should definitely be noted that in works that deal with the topic of separation and correlation of concepts, priority is given to this particular point of view. In any case, this statement is true of the image-image dichotomy. The image is real, and the image is constructed. This research trend is obvious and is becoming more and more popular.

However, not all researchers are so unambiguous in their assessments of the ratio of the concept of "brand", but more on that later. Often, if researchers do not categorize concepts in their work, they are used interchangeably, thereby equating them, or they use concepts in different contexts, obliging the reader to grasp this context for an adequate perception of information, which, naturally, can cause certain problems. If the problem of separation of concepts can have a common solution for all the areas under consideration, then the specific definitions of concepts will naturally vary, depending on the research approach and the methods used.

According to political psychology, a political image (including a country) can be defined as, "on the one hand, a reflection of the real characteristics of the object of perception, i.e. the political power of the personality of the leader, etc., and on the other hand, a projection of the expectations of the subject of perception, i.e. citizens. The image of political power reflects knowledge, ideas, opinions, assessments, expectations, emotions, and demands of the mass consciousness for power."

The definition itself reflects the specific theoretical and psychological aspect of the concept, and implies certain methods used by representatives of political psychology, such as focus groups, interviews, tests, expert assessments, and content analysis.

Meanwhile, the authors differentiate between the concepts of "image" and "brand". "A brand is a different matter. ... A brand (English brand) in Western schools of marketing is characterized as a trademark that the buyer attracts to others due to a unique, mainly figurative, identifier, as well as additional rational or emotional values for themselves. Brands symbolize the realization of a wide variety of expectations from specific products. The main differences between the brand and the image, despite their external proximity, are quite significant."

Among the main ones are:

- brand positivity (the image can be negative too);
- the quality of the brand's object (the image does not directly depend on the quality of the object);
- the brand's integration with visualization (the obligatory presence of a logo, an audiophone, etc.);
- also, the object may have several brands (the image is the same, although it may be multidimensional);
- the brand assumes a price (the image goes beyond the trade).

The influence of S.Anholt, the founder of the method of brand indexing of countries and cities, who, analyzing the factors influencing the attractiveness of countries (culture, tourist attractiveness, politics, economy, social climate, etc.), compiled a rating of the attractiveness of countries, setting the quantitative value of each of the studied countries, thus turning the country into a "commodity", a brand that it can be more or less successfully "implemented" in international political, economic and other markets.

It is noticeable that marketing experts use the term image rather than image to a greater extent, and even separating these concepts, they do not draw a serious line between them. Some experts, speaking about the difference between an image and an image, write that

"an image is a set of ideas about the qualities of an object or product that their owner would like to introduce into the mass consciousness. An image is something that is formed in the mass consciousness as a result of this introduction. The word "ugliness" ("ugliness") is the absence of a face. The fundamental feature of an image is that, reflecting the past and looking to the future, it is always secondary to the real object. It does not so much reflect reality as create virtual objects" [53. P. 18]. Upon closer examination, it turns out that, even separating the concepts, the authors actually mean by image what is called a "simulated image" in the literature on imageology, and by image what is called a "real image".

It can be concluded that a distinctive feature of the work in this area is the identification or lack of a clear and deep separation of the concepts of "image" and "image", even in cases where they try to identify this boundary. Meanwhile, the concept of "image" is more readily used, rather than "not an image" - a tribute to the applied nature of research. Regarding the content of the concept of "brand", representatives of the branding approach in the field of country imageology have no serious disagreements. "Brand (from English. A brand is a well-known brand that identifies and positively represents an object in the external environment, which, by stimulating its benevolent perception, becomes authoritative and popular. Branding, in turn, being the process of creating, implementing and strengthening a brand, forms a long-term preference for such a brand and, accordingly, an object".

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