

TRANSFORMATION OF POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE IMAGE CHARACTERISTICS OF A POLITICIAN FORMED BY MEDIA

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Abstract

The article presents the problem study in the context of society development dynamic processes and the political system: the role of a positive media image of a political leader is substantiated; positive image features of a public image are presented that become key ones in public opinion development. From the perspective of an integrated approach, the case study has been developed to study the media image of a politician, including the focus group method; free association method with interpretation of the language of symbols, etc. They presented the results of an experiment conducted with the participation of students and undergraduates of the Higher School of Journalism and Mass Communications of KFU, the comparative assessments of the audience perception of the media image of the First President of the Republic of Tatarstan M.Sh. Shaimiev. The study demonstrates the impact of positive and negative narrative media content on media images of politicians. They proved the effect of a single short-duration media material on the transformation of image characteristics. The results of the study can be useful for political scholars and media psychologists in order to diagnose the transformation processes of the political image in the collective consciousness.

Keywords. Media image, image, political leader, media influence, media image dynamics.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. PROBLEM RELEVANCE

The political events of recent years show a high degree of public opinion controllability using media platforms. The information society appeals increasingly to the creation of media images, which are the key to the development and adaptation of an individual, making political decisions. However, the problem of studying the iridium characteristics of a politician's media image is still poorly understood. There are the models in studies that combine image, media image and collective consciousness image, but their interaction is not represented enough. There is confusion in their description. The media diameter of a politician's image is often limited by quantitative methods

(content analysis, questioning, etc.), which gives only a superficial and one-sided view of the phenomenon. Media studies have no unambiguous criteria to assess the intensity of media influence, its "tunnel" focus on the transformation of the structural elements of an image. The rapid development of the information society, the transformation of human life space into a digital environment, the change of thinking in connection with iconic and medial turns - all this actualizes the understanding of media influence on the image formed in the public consciousness. Media, representing the interests of certain political or economic forces, distort the picture of the world, modeling the "second reality" with the accents that are shifted from socially significant problems to artificially modeled ones. Media influence distorts the understanding of the political system purpose in a post-industrial society as the rational management of a social organism (D. Bell). In Russia, this process is exacerbated by the low development of professional ethics and the institution of reputation. Information negatively affects global political processes. The dynamics of public relation development and the transition from traditional forms of media to new ones, the accelerated growth of the technological positioning of media images - all this actualizes the need to search for scientific methods of studying transformation processes in the course of media exposure.

1.2. STUDY GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

They performed the study of the transformation features of the image characteristics of a politician image in the context of a variable vector of media influence on the example of the first president of the Republic of Tatarstan M.Sh. Shaimiev. Tasks: the study of materials on modeling the image in the mind, the development of methods for measuring the features of image characteristics transformation; the study of ideal image characteristics of a politician, the image of a regional politician and the image of M.Sh. Shaimiev in the collective consciousness; the measurement of image transformation characteristics in the collective consciousness before and after the media influence with positive and negative modulation.

1.3. PROBLEM DEVELOPMENT STATE

1. The study of the media image of a politician is often carried out in isolation from two other phenomena - his image and the image in the collective consciousness. The personal qualities of an individual are considered, first of all, as an ontological element of the image, and not as a construct transferred to the "second reality" of the media.

2. There are the models that combine image, media image and the image in the collective consciousness within domestic and foreign studies, but their interaction is not represented enough, moreover, there is confusion in their description.

3. The methodology for the image study is in its infancy taking into account the media influence. In practice, the examination of a politician image is limited to quantitative methods (content analysis, questionnaires, etc.), which gives only a superficial and one-sided view of the phenomenon. Modern media studies lack clearly defined "working" criteria to assess the intensity of media influence and its "tunneling" focus on image structural element transformation.

4. Most studies miss the importance of clear empirical boundary determination for the image characteristics of the image being studied. There is the problem of highlighting the necessary context in which empirical material will be investigated.

1.4. THEORETICAL AND PRACTICAL CONTRIBUTION OF THE ARTICLE

They provided a complex technique for diagnosing the transformation of image characteristics, which includes individual image modeling, a focus group method and an associative method. In diagnostics they proposed to use the estimated parameters for the analysis of image characteristics and associative image transformation, taking into account positive and negative modulation: high degree, medium degree, low or zero degree. The context of empirical material is outlined by the professional and civil image characteristics of the media image of a regional political leader.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. ANALYSIS OF RUSSIAN SCIENTIFIC LITERATURE

The understanding of the image phenomenon in modern media philosophy is represented in the works by V.V. Savchuk [1]. In particular, the author proposes to consider the image as a factor of human environment type changing. The works by T.N. Galinskaya [2], M.N. Cherkasova [3], E.N. Bogdan [4], I.A. Balaluev are devoted to the study of media image phenomenon [5]. Examining the category in a narrow and broad sense, researchers focus on the media nature of the phenomenon, calling it a product of the media industry. Modern scientists consider the media image as a special image of reality presented to the mass audience by the media industry.

O.V. Korzhneva [6] gives a broad interpretation of the media image, including the image in it as an integral element. In her opinion, the media image has the resulting property, it includes the personality characteristics of the politician, the views and expectations of the audience on his account. The same line is shared by the team of authors who published the work edited by O.B. Shestopal [7]. An attempt to draw a line between the concepts of political “image”, “media image” and “image” is made by V.A. Urakova [8]. V.Yu. Mamaev and V.V. Matsko [9] consider the image as an object of scientific analysis and a category of marketing. Image characteristics are the elements of socio-economic relation system that forms the image of an object.

Yu.V. Andreeva [10] considers the psychological characteristics of an individual image, in particular, the relationship of professional and personal qualities. O.A. Brown and M.G. Arkuzin [11] explore the approaches to the definition and structurally-substantive characterization of the concept of “civic identity of a person”, which includes psychological, pedagogical and social aspects.

Understanding the media image of a politician is disclosed in the scientific works by V. A. Maryanchik [12], N.F. Ponomareva [13]. Yu.V. Andreeva and A.V. Lipatov [14] explore the image of the leader of the republican elite and the image of Tatarstan on the pages of the federal press. They revealed the relationship between the image of the elite leader, the image of the region presented by him, and the social well-being of the population. R.R. Gazizov [15] conducts the functional analysis that demonstrates the interest of publications to individual subjects of politics - mainly to its elite representatives. The dominance of authority transfer method is associated with a high

level of the information resource use by the leaders of the region, most of all by M.Sh. Shaimiev.

2.2. ANALYSIS OF FOREIGN STUDIES

St. Hoffmann [16] studies the concept and properties of media and comes to the conclusion about its "middle nature" (media, on the one hand, indicates the middle of the object, and the central point of space or something that underlies (substance) two or more objects on the other). A representative of the German school of media philosophy, B.Becker [17] claims that media reduces the gap between the viewer's experience and the event, and thus the image transfer in the communicator's consciousness occurs with the condition that the characteristics of the politician and the audience expectations and values become closer.

J. Bryant & S. Tompson criticize the gradual-linear model in their book "Fundamentals of Media Impact" [18], in which the media influence is presented as a strong-limited-moderate-strong action. Media makes cognitive, behavioral, direct, indirect, short-term, long-term, intermittent, or cumulative impact. The study of the priming effect as the change in the quantitative (speed, accuracy) or qualitative (presence / absence) response of an individual during the second exposure of an object in connection with unconscious associations is of interest. The theory of social learning by A. Bandura [19], which reveals behavior through the interaction of cognitive, behavioral factors and environmental characteristics, seems to be important in the study of media influence. Based on this theory, the impact of media is determined by individual characteristics, its behavior and surrounding events.

Media discourse in the framing of the media image of new technologies was presented by E. Hughes & J. Kitzinger & G. Murdock [20]. They included the methodology of a conversation with public figures in the research who are actively involved in new treatment method promotion, the promotion of work in three focus groups formed from representatives of the target audience.

T. Gackowski [21] explores the political image in the context of political communication. The scholar writes that in the current era of post-politics, visions, hopes, dreams, desires, just images (perfect image, masking flaws, emphasizing beneficial features) are important, not facts, figures, statements, and election programs.

3. MATERIALS AND METHODS

3.1. THEORETICAL AND EMPIRICAL METHODS

To test the hypothesis, a complex of various methods was used that complement each other:

- theoretical - analysis of works by media philosophers, media sociologists, media psychologists on the research problem; the analysis of methodological literature; theoretical justification of an integrated approach to the study of media influence on the image in public consciousness;

- empirical - the qualitative focus group method that allows the study of system characteristics at an in-depth level; free association method with interpretation of symbol language; modeling an ideal structure of an image in the individual consciousness; the analysis of experimental work results.

3.2. RESEARCH BASE

The study was conducted among first-year students of the Higher School of Journalism and Media Communications of Kazan (Volga Region) Federal University. The experiment involved eight people formed into a focus group on the principle of the unity of gender-age characteristics, ethnic and social affiliations; the willingness to participate in the discussion fully. As the subject of research, they proposed the image of M.Sh. Shaimiev (the first president of the Republic of Tatarstan from 1991 to 2010).

3.3. RESEARCH STAGES

The study was carried out in three stages:

At the first stage, they developed the methodology for individual image modeling, the scenario for a focus group conduct, a free association methodology was tested, the search and selection of media materials was carried out in two directions: negative and positive modulation of M.Sh. Shaimiev's image, a focus group was formed, a preliminary immersion in the problems of imaginative sphere understanding was carried out.

At the second stage, as the part of the focus group, the experiment participants were asked to simulate the ideal structure of a regional politician image, to highlight the essential image characteristics; to give a metaphorical representation of M.Sh. Shaimiev's image through free associations.

During the third stage, the participants were divided into two groups: the first group was invited to get acquainted with the media material that positively modulates M.Sh. Shaimiev's image, the second - with the media material with negative modulation of the image. After a single and short-term impact of the stimulus material on the participants' consciousness, they examined the change in the image characteristics of the image and its semiotics.

3.4. EVALUATION CRITERIA

Evaluation criteria defined the author's concept of an image as a construct of consciousness and subconsciousness, based on the intentional allocation of meanings, signs, symbols from an intersubjective field. Two groups of characteristics were taken as the elements of the political leader image constructs: professional and civic identity characteristics.

We applied a comprehensive approach to the assessment, which includes a comparative analysis of image characteristic change before and after the media influence, taking into account positive / negative modulation: a high level of change - a significant change, the emergence of new semantic forms, the image changed the semantic content to diametrically opposite from the original; medium level of change - elements partially changed the level of their description; low or zero level of change - characteristics have changed insignificantly or remained the same;

3.5. EXPERIMENT COURSE AND DESCRIPTION

The study was carried out using a comprehensive technique, including focus group methods, an image modeling method in an individual consciousness, and a free

association method. The experiment was attended by 8 students of the Kazan (Volga) Federal University.

4. RESULTS

The purpose of the stage is to examine the change in the image characteristics and its semiotics before and after a single and short-term impact of the stimulus media material on the participants' consciousness. Before the demonstration of the stimulus media material, two groups of image characteristics of M.Sh. Shaimiev's image were identified (Table 1).

Table 1. Positive and negative modulation of M.Sh. Shaimiev's image characteristics in the paradigm of an ideal regional politician model

Feature Group	Characteristics	Positive modulation	Negative modulation
Professional	Intellectual	Wise, acts on inner instinct	
	Literate	Knows the nuances of political governance	Lack of proficiency in Russian
	Communicative, diplomatic	Eastern diplomacy	Political Weather Vane
Civic identity	Honest, incorruptible	Honest	Corrupt
	Sharing the values of the people	Strong tradition	
	Patriotic	Peace-loving in an effort to maintain peace in the region	
	Tolerant	Tolerant attitude to all nations, religions	Defends the interests of the titular nation in the matter of language

At the stage of the control experiment, the participants of the focus group were divided into two groups. Group A was invited to familiarize themselves with the media material with a positive modulation of M.Sh. Shaimiev's image; during the viewing, discussion or explanation from the moderator of the focus group was excluded. Group B studied the media material with negative modulation of M.Sh. Shaimiev's media image.

The participants in group A showed a high degree of change in the characteristics of civic consciousness "sharing the values of the people" and "patriotic" (Table 2). The video made a special influence - an essay on the childhood of a politician. Participants noted the importance of origin "from the people, from the village", "from the hinterland, where they speak the Tatar language and honor traditions." However, an annoying factor was also recorded - the creation of a "personality cult." The positive changes in the "patriotic" characteristic are due to the media material, which contains the statements of political figures about M.Sh. Shaimiev's contribution to the peaceful way out of the separation of Tatarstan in the 1990-ies. The characteristic "diplomacy" strengthened its features: "People's and not rude, makes balanced statements." The average level of changes has undergone the image characteristics of "literate" (negative modulation), "communicative, entrepreneurial" (positive modulation).

Table 2. Change of M.Sh. Shaimiev's image characteristics after a positive media influence (in Group A).

Feature Group	Characteristics	High level of changes	Average level of changes	Low/zero level of changes
Professional	Intellectual			
	Literate		Negative modulation	
	Communicative, diplomatic, businesslike		Positive modulation	
Civic identity	Honest, incorruptible			
	Sharing the values of the people	Positive modulation		
	Patriotic	Positive modulation		
	Tolerant			

Group B participants showed a high degree of change in civic consciousness characteristics "honest, incorruptible" (Table 3). The vector from the conditionally neutral assessment shifted towards sharply negative, the participants emphasized: "As if the clan moment was highlighted with a red marker." The negative modulation of the characteristics "patriotic," "sharing the values of the people" was influenced by portrait essays mentioning the wealth of the Shaimiev's family ("it turns out, he shares not the values of the people, but only the values of his family"). Also the image characteristics "literacy" was transformed in a negative way like in group A.

Table 3. Change of M.Sh. Shaimiev's image characteristics after a positive media impact (in Group B).

Feature Group	Characteristics	High level of changes	Average level of changes	Low/zero level of changes
Professional	Intellectual			
	Literate		Negative modulation	
	Communicative, diplomatic, businesslike			
Civic identity	Honest, incorruptible	Negative modulation		
	Sharing the values of the people		Negative modulation	
	Patriotic		Negative modulation	
	Tolerant			

The plot with a neutral assessment of the image, where M.Sh. Shaimiev asks the Commissioner for Human Rights in the Republic of Tatarstan to take the oath in the Tatar language, was assessed as negative in both groups. The participants highlighted such qualities as "vanity", "complacency", "the desire to defend his point of view by any means."

Re-examination of the association to M.Sh. Shaimiev's image in Group A and Group B showed a zero level of change. The experiment participants noted that even after a media influence provision, the semiotics of the image did not change their content.

5. CONCLUSION

1. A comprehensive methodology for measuring the transformation of image characteristics with a variable vector of media influence has been developed. Modeling of individual consciousness image made it possible to single out the essential image features of the ideal politician. Work on the focus group methodology adjusted the pool of characteristics in the collective understanding of the image. The method of free associations made it possible to diagnose an irrational understanding of a politician image.

2. Among the essential image-making characteristics of a politician, the characteristics of civic consciousness play a primary role, and professional qualities are in the background. With media influence, significant changes occur in the characteristics of civic consciousness, the average level of changes is noted in professional qualities.

3. They recorded the transformation of image features at the level of consciousness and an insignificant level of changes in the associative perception of the image after a single short demonstration of stimulus material. With the initial positive filling of the image, positive modulation has a higher level of transformation as compared to negative modulation.

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