

## THE CONCEPT OF "IMAGE" AS AN OBJECT OF STUDY IN MODERN JOURNALISM

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**Abstract:** The comprehensive socio-economic and political reforms being implemented in the Republic of Uzbekistan are manifesting as a complex and multifaceted process aimed at ensuring the country's sustainable development and improving public welfare. It is widely acknowledged in scientific circles that the effectiveness and success of these reforms directly depend on the level of mutual trust and cooperation between various segments of society. From this perspective, the reputation of business entities, non-governmental non-profit organizations, and public administration bodies operating in the country, as well as the level of trust formed towards them, holds special scientific and practical significance.

**Keywords:** Image, personal image, corporate image, PR communications, mass media, manipulative influence mechanism, consciousness perception.

### Introduction.

As one of the fundamental requirements of scientific research methodology, when forming the conceptual foundations of any scientific research, there is a need for a deep analysis of the theoretical aspects of the research object and a comprehensive illumination of its essence. Based on this methodological approach, it is important to thoroughly consider the theoretical foundations of the concept of "image," which is considered the central object of this research work.

### METHODS.

The National Encyclopedia of Uzbekistan defines the concept of image as follows: "Image (English image, Latin imago - symbol, appearance) is the image of a person, event, thing formed with the aim of having an emotional and psychological impact on people for the purposes of popularization, advertising, etc.; one of the means of propaganda." [1] Of course, this is a brief description typical of encyclopedias and is not complete from the point of view of communication theory. Image is a complex, multifaceted, and dynamic phenomenon, a social construction formed as a result of continuous communication processes. The definition does not adequately reflect the communicative nature of the image, the role of digital tools, interactivity, and the nature of the media. The relevance of image not only to individuals and products, but also to organizations, brands, and countries, its role as a means of strategic communication, has also been overlooked. Therefore, it is necessary to develop a broader definition of image within the framework of modern communication theory, which should encompass all its aspects.

One of the classical trends in the conceptualization of the image phenomenon as an image, in Uzbek, as a figure or image, was substantiated in his research by American sociologist and psychologist George Herbert Meade in 1934. According to the theory developed by Meade, the image is interpreted as a mechanism of the individual's self-expression, self-awareness, and self-actualization. [2] This approach allows us to understand the process of image formation in the context of a complex dialectical connection between the inner world of the individual and the external social environment.

One of the aspects to which J. Meade's scientific concept pays special attention is the symbolic nature of communication between individuals in society. According to him, "the process of social interaction is carried out through symbolic means." These symbolic means, in turn, are an integral component of the communicative mechanism that integrates individuals and social groups into a holistic system. In Meade's theoretical views, the creative function of the symbolization process is of particular importance. He emphasizes that the process of symbolism allows for the creation of objects that previously did not exist and could only arise in the context of specific social relations. This, in turn, reveals the social nature of the concept of image. Thus, in his research, Meade emphasizes three important features of image: its symbolic nature, the possibility of social

construction, and the subjective nature of perception. This conceptual approach serves as an important theoretical foundation for understanding the phenomenon of image and makes a significant contribution to the development of modern imagology.

The ideas that played an important role in shaping the conceptual foundations of modern image theory are also reflected in the concepts of public consciousness developed by leading representatives of the European school of social psychology and communication theories. In particular, the fundamental research of Serge Moskovichi, Denis Jodele, and Pierre Kodol is of particular importance in this regard.

Serzh Moskovichi is the founder of the theory of social representations, who defines social representations in his work "The Image of Psychoanalysis and the Public" as follows: "Social representations are a unique system of values, ideas and practices that perform two main functions: first, it establishes an order that allows individuals to be oriented and controlled in the material and social world; second, it creates a code for mutual understanding and communication between members of society, ensuring social exchange." [4]

Another French scholar, Denis Jodele, developing Moskovic's ideas, emphasizes the dynamic nature of social representations, defining image as a social representation and indicating that it acts as a connecting link that ensures the relationship between the individual and society. [5]

Philip Kotler, a leading theorist in the field of marketing communications, defines image as follows: "An image is a set of cognitive structures, mental representations, and empirical impressions of an individual about a particular object." An individual's attitude towards an object and behavioral models largely depends on the perceptual image of that object. Kotler's definition deeply illuminates the psychological and socio-cognitive nature of image. It shows the interaction of internal psychological processes of the individual and external social factors in the formation of image. This definition reveals the dependence of image not only on personal experience and perception, but also on general views and values in society. Thus, Kotler characterizes image as a complex, multifaceted, and dynamic phenomenon. Jean-Noelle Kapferer, a leading expert in brand management, highlighting the multifaceted nature of image: "Image is a synthesis of all associative relationships and information constructs in the consumer's cognitive system." It integrates both rational-analytical and emotionally-affective components." [7] This concept of Kapferer illuminates the multi-layered and integrative nature of the image. He describes the image not as a mere superficial representation, but as a result of deep psychological processes. This approach emphasizes the interaction of cognitive, emotional, and social factors in image formation.

Kapferer's theory also reveals the role of image in consumer culture. Image shapes an attitude towards a particular product or brand, but also towards the consumption process as a whole. This demonstrates the socio-cultural significance of image not only in the field of marketing, but also in modern society.

The concept of image by Russian scientists E. Bortnik, E. Korotkov, and A. Nikitaeva has made a significant contribution to modern socio-psychological and marketing theories. They describe image as "a set of a number of variable components" [8], emphasizing the superiority of form over content. This approach considers image as a strategic way of self-expression. Bortnik's theory reveals the following aspects of image: multi-component, form dominance, self-expression strategy, emphasis on positive traits, self-esteem and reputation, as well as its role as a means of communication with the public.

This approach emphasizes its important role in the success of individuals, organizations, and brands in modern society by examining the image from a marketing or psychological perspective. Bortnik's concept views image as a central element of PR - a public relations strategy.

Uzbek scholar S. Juraboeva, describing image, writes: "Image is an image, a system of external characteristics of a person, and the uniqueness of a person determines its uniqueness." His individuality is always reflected in his communication with other people. Image elements form an integral part of a person's character and individuality, shaping the attitude of people around them towards them. A person's image is also their recognition by others to a certain extent. The image, as a working tool of a specific person, closely helps to build relationships with those around him." [8]

Another researcher, G. Samadov, believes that "image is an image of a brand, institution, or people." These are factors such as the Industrial Revolution, globalization, mass culture, and the rapid development of technology." [9]

Overall, the conceptual approaches presented above demonstrate the complex, multifaceted, and integrative nature of image. It is characterized as a socio-psychological phenomenon that significantly influences people's decision-making processes. Therefore, image formation and strategic management are an integral part of modern marketing concepts and communications.

### **CONCLUSION**

Based on the above, in our opinion, the concept of image can be defined from the perspective of communication theory as follows: image is a holistic image, more precisely, an imagination, formed in the process of transmitting, receiving, and interpreting information about the subject (individual, organization, product, or brand). This image is created and perceived by all participants in the communicative process. Image manifests itself as both a means and a result of the communication process. While it is purposefully formed by the subject, it also evolves through the process of reception and interpretation by the audience. From this perspective, image is considered a dynamic phenomenon that continuously undergoes transformation as a result of communicative influences. The communicative functions of image are wide-ranging, and through these functions, image performs tasks such as distinguishing the subject from others, placing it in a specific context, conveying important information, evoking emotions in the target audience, determining the subject's place in society, and influencing the audience's behavior.

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