

The Political Leader and His Image

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Abstract

This article examines the concept of a political leader and attempts to reveal its essence. Based on the scientific conclusions of researchers who have studied the factors influencing the formation of a political leader's image, the main elements contributing to the creation of a political image are identified. Special attention is given to the importance of clothing culture in the process of shaping a political image. The article offers suggestions and recommendations on how a political leader should dress in order to create a positive and convincing image.

Key words: political leader, image of a political leader, factors influencing the image of a political leader, clothing culture, classical and modern styles of clothing

Introduction

At the beginning of the 20th century, an analytical scientific and theoretical field known as imagology entered the sphere of socio-political governance in global development. The term "image" is derived from the English word "image" and denotes meanings such as representation, depiction, and perception. [1] It should be acknowledged that it has evolved into a new field that studies how politicians, leaders, or groups are evaluated by analysts (experts). Political image refers to the assessment and opinions expressed regarding those engaged in political activity (such as political parties, groups, and others) in the process of governance[2].

Materials and Methods

This study was aimed at identifying the role and significance of a political leader's image in shaping public perception and political effectiveness. The research process was carried out through the analysis of political communication practices, using methods such as observation, comparative analysis, discourse analysis, and case study[3]. Political speeches, media appearances, campaign materials, social media content, and biographical sources of political leaders were selected as the main research materials. In addition, visual and digital materials, including televised debates, interviews, political advertisements, and online platforms, were involved in the research process[4].

Research methods were implemented in several directions. First of all, a methodological approach was developed to analyze the formation of a political leader's image through verbal and non-verbal communication tools. Political speeches and public statements were examined to identify rhetorical strategies, persuasive techniques, and ideological positioning[5]. At the same time, visual elements such as appearance, body language, and media presentation were analyzed to understand their role in shaping the leader's public image. This method helped to reveal the connection between communication style and public perception. Also, comparative methods were used to examine differences in the construction of political images across various leaders and political contexts. Several case studies were selected, and their communication strategies, media representation, and public reception were compared[6]. This approach made it possible to identify common patterns and distinctive features in political image-building processes. Furthermore, methods based on audience perception analysis were applied. Public reactions to political leaders were studied through media reports, opinion polls, and social media feedback. This method helped to evaluate how effectively the constructed image influences public trust, credibility, and political support[7].

Result and Discussion

The central element of leadership is the personality of the leader. The term "leader" is derived from the English word "lead," meaning to guide or direct, and it denotes a person who governs or manages. [8]

Scholars have attempted to identify leadership traits, study how to measure them, and use them to distinguish leaders. In other words, this approach was based on the belief that leaders are born rather than made[9].

Numerous attempts to formulate such a set of traits can be found in the works of classical scholars of human relations. For example, A. Fayol argued that a high-level administrator should possess qualities such as good health, moral and volitional skills, a broad worldview, the ability to work with people, planning and control skills, general competence, and others[10].

This view of leadership was most fully developed in the concept of O. Tead, who associated leadership with the ability to influence people to achieve a specific goal—namely, something desired by all participants of joint activity. According to this concept, the universal traits of a

leader include:

- physical and emotional endurance;
- understanding of the organization's goals and objectives;
- enthusiasm;
- friendliness and compassion;
- integrity;
- the ability to inspire trust in others. [11]

Significant changes were associated with the studies conducted in 1945 by specialists at Ohio University. According to R. Stogdill, the key characteristics of leadership are as follows:

- intelligence or intellectual abilities;
- dominance over others;
- self-confidence;
- activity and initiative;
- knowledge of the task. [12]

It is well known that today many politicians and political leaders actively use technologies related to the formation, development, and improvement of image to achieve their goals. This is because gaining the trust of the public—primarily the electorate—and securing their votes has become the primary objective of political leaders. In such conditions, shaping the image of a leader, enhancing their positive perception not only within a particular society or country but also on the international stage, has become a crucial task. This, in turn, contributes to the development of disciplines such as imagology, public relations (PR), and various branches of the social sciences[13].

In order to create a long-term image of a political leader, it is now necessary to develop a comprehensive image strategy. Within this framework, specific tasks are defined, and elements such as public speeches, style of dress and communication, media appearances, and debates play a significant role in ensuring the success of a political leader's image. Image is a social phenomenon, formed as a composite representation consisting of various perceptions of a person or object held by different social groups. [14]

In other words, even if you present the same idea to society, your image is formed as a result of the combination of various perceptions held by different social groups about you. These perceptions are shaped by your speech, manner of dress, behavior in different situations, political, economic, and social views, background, character, personal and family life, as well as your status in society.

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The culture of dress reflects a person's external appearance, inner world, aesthetic sense, moral qualities, and overall potential. Attitudes toward dress also express an individual's views on beauty, elegance, and propriety. In today's rapidly changing world, alongside providing modern education to the younger generation, it is essential to raise them in the spirit of universal and national values, high moral qualities, and to protect their minds and consciousness from ideological, spiritual, and informational threats by fostering ideological resilience.

A person's clothing creates the first impression on others. Dress culture reflects our attitude toward surrounding events and realities. Clothing reveals an individual's taste, worldview, and behavior. It is a part of a person's inner world, and every element of it, in essence, communicates something about who we are.

Clothing generally includes both classical and modern styles, which are appropriate for formal and informal situations.

Colors: neutral and confidence-inspiring tones such as blue, gray, white, beige, burgundy, and dark green.

Types of clothing: classic suits (blazer paired with a skirt or trousers), neatly pressed shirts, and elegant dresses. Clothing should be well-fitted without restricting movement and should not be overly attention-grabbing. This ensures both comfort and a professional appearance.

In general, such clothing is characterized by the following features:

- Formal and professional appearance: Classic elements such as blazers, trousers, and skirts are suitable for a business environment.
- Minimalist colors: Neutral tones such as white, black, and gray help create a serious and trustworthy image.
- Modern details: Elements such as waist-accentuating belts, wide-leg trousers, and distinctive buttons add a contemporary touch.
- Comfort and elegance: Clothing should be comfortable for formal meetings and long working hours while maintaining feminine grace.

The street attire of a female politician should прежде всего reflect a harmonious combination of dignity, seriousness, and simplicity. It should represent not only beauty but also intelligence, reliability, and activity. The clothing design should be simple yet well-tailored to create an elegant silhouette. Footwear is recommended to be low-heeled or mid-heeled, preferably in black or beige.

Hairstyle: The hairstyles depicted reflect professionalism and neatness. For a female politician, tied or smoothly styled hair is appropriate, as it ensures a formal and confident appearance. Simple and elegant accessories may also be used.

Style of dress: During the autumn-winter season, female politicians are recommended to wear classic clothing in neutral colors (gray, beige, black, brown). Layered outfits such as coats, sweaters, wide trousers, or classic skirt-suit combinations provide both style and professionalism.

Both styles present a clear, reliable, and intellectual image for students in the field of politics. These clothing choices serve as practical elements in shaping a political image, expressing order, harmony, cultural taste, proper public conduct, and professional maturity.

Such attire is particularly suitable for public political activities, meetings with voters, or informal political appearances. It helps politicians appear natural yet respectable among the public[15].

Conclusion

Footwear and ties are among the most essential elements in shaping a politician's personal brand. For example, shoes should have a classic design, be made of black or brown leather, and be well-maintained. In ties, simplicity in color and pattern, silk material, and harmony with the overall outfit are important. These two elements often create an impression even before a person speaks, establishing an initial sense of trust within the audience. Therefore, male students studying politics should not overlook these details.

Winter coats also play an important role not only in protection from the cold but as a symbol of status and style. Smooth-textured, knee-length coats in monochrome colors (dark gray, black, or deep blue) perfectly complement a formal image. The harmony between coat and suit enhances a male politician's appearance, making him look more organized, trustworthy, and authoritative.

The primary purpose of dress code ethics is to align the clothing culture, external appearance, and behavior of public officials with moral and ethical standards, thereby increasing citizens' respect and trust toward state institutions, as well as improving work efficiency.

In conclusion, the image of a political leader is a phenomenon that non-verbally conveys to others one's position within the social hierarchy, professional affiliation, character, temperament, taste, and even financial standing.

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