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REVIEW ARTICLES  
ОГЛЯДИ

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## Trend of personalization of journalism: personal brand of a journalist

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### ABSTRACT

The article analyzes the journalist's personal brand (PB). The article aims to discover the most essential characteristics of a journalist's PB, which make it possible to shape its success as part of the media. Special attention is paid to developing a journalist's PB through social media. We used the search and analytical research methods - to identify scientific developments on a given topic, concretization - to detail and systematize scientific knowledge, abstraction - to distinguish the components of PB, content analysis - to study specific PB of media personalities, and extrapolation - to formulate the characteristics of a journalist's PB.

A journalist's PB covers more characteristics than a media brand, including personal preferences, unusual circumstances, the emotional component, advantages and disadvantages of communication with the audience. Individual characteristics of PB are an image with which a journalist conveys the sense, declares principles and interests, strengths and weaknesses, demonstrates individual qualities and attitude to events in the world that belong to a media resource, and maintains one's reputation. The image of a journalist's PB does not always correspond to the genuine person. Accounts in social media are part of PB. PB includes visual, behavioral, and verbal components.

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## АНОТАЦІЯ

У статті аналізується персональний бренд журналіста. Мета статті – навести найважливіші характеристики ПБ журналіста, які дають змогу сформувати успішність його як частини медіа. Особлива увага приділена розвитку ПБ журналіста через соціальні мережі. Серед методів дослідження слід зазначити пошуково-аналітичний – для виявлення наукових розробок на задану тему, конкретизації – для деталізації та систематизації наукових знань, абстрагування – для виокремлення складників ПБ, контент-аналізу – для дослідження конкретних ПБ медіаособистостей, екстраполяції – задля формулювання характеристик ПБ журналіста.

ПБ журналіста ширше за бренд медіа, включає емоційну складову, переваги та недоліки комунікації з аудиторією. Індивідуальні характеристики ПБ – це образ, за допомогою якого журналіст доносить суть, декларує принципи і вподобання, сильні та слабкі сторони, демонструє індивідуальні якості і відношення до подій в світі, приналежність до медіаресурсу. Образ ПБ журналіста не завжди відповідає реальній персоні. Частиною ПБ є акаунти у соціальних мережах. ПБ включає візуальні, поведінкові, вербальні складники.

**КЛЮЧОВІ СЛОВА:** медіабренд; персональний брендинг; імідж медіа; медіаособистість; соціальні мережі; аудиторія медіа

## Introduction

The modern information field is becoming more complex every year, the crisis of attention and trust has affected many media. Mass media carefully study the audience's requests, attract readers in various ways and formats, and try to become the media without which the reader cannot imagine his (her) existence, that becomes a part of everyday life, a friend, an interlocutor. To this end, the media pays tremendous attention to its reputation, development, and support of the media brand, when the reader knows for sure when and what to expect from his media resource. On the other hand, there is a trend in the modern world. When journalists get as close as possible to their readers through the Internet, communicate with them outside the media resource, encourage the development of specific topics, and respond to comments, i.e., allow each reader to become a co-creator of a journalistic content. An important place here is the personality of the journalist or his personal brand.

Personal brand (PB) is how a journalist or media personality positions him- or herself, a unique combination of visual, behavioral, social characteristics, habits, and experience, in personal and professional life, with colleagues and opponents, with close people and strangers, but so what the journalist wants to be seen by the audience. PB of a media personality consists of stories and phrases, photos and videos, short lines, and long texts on various topics. So that a holistic view of the person, one's behavior, communication style, lifestyle, attitude to society's problems and life situations, and sense of humor will be gathered as well as about political position, professional achievements, and cultural level.

In the prior research, there are various concepts to denote a person who creates his own brand: media persona (Brown, 2015), media character (Cohen, 2001), media figure (Giles, 2002), media friend (Meyrowitz, 2008), persona (Hoffner, 2005), performer (Hawes, 2009).

In most scientific works, journalists and participants of news items, those who speak to the viewer or listener, are included as media persons: (Horton, 1956, p. 216):

A person is a typical figure of the social sphere, presented on radio and television. To say that she is familiar and intimate is to use pale and weak language to describe the pervasiveness and closeness many people feel to media personalities.

K. Syvazh uses the concept of "media person" as a concept in social communications, which emphasizes the communicative and perceptive features of persons who communicate with the audience through mass media (Syvazh, 2018). She refers to media persons as television presenters, showpeople, journalists, bloggers, as well as famous people whose faces appear in the media and who shape public opinion. Based on the works of media psychologists (L. Naidyonova, Yu. Chaplinska, I. Zhylavska), K. Syvazh considers the characteristics of this persona, infers that media persona causes reactions in media consumer, prompts specific actions, affects the psycho-emotional state, changes the opinion, i.e., enters the parasocial interaction. When defining a media personality, L. Naidyonova uses the term "simulacrum" (a model without a primary analog) (Naidyonova, 2009). In the book "Simulacra and Simulations", J. Baudrillard examined in detail simulacra as symbols that construct reality, signs that depict something that does not exist or that existed but disappeared over time (Baudrillard, 1981). Fictional characters from movies, series, and cartoons, are often referred to as "media persona" (Bocarnea, 2007): "A media persona is a real person or a popular fictional character to whom media consumers respond".

Therefore, professional journalists, presenters, bloggers, showpeople, newsmakers, well-known politicians, actors, political scientists, talk show guests, characters in films, TV series, advertisements, cartoons, and heroes of journalistic materials can be considered media personalities. Moreover, each of these personalities significantly impacts the audience, conveys their own ideas and content, and shapes public opinion. Thanks to PB, the journalist's personality is identified with how the target audience perceives him. In our article, we consider the PB of professional journalists whose brand is correlated with the brand of the media in which the journalist works.

Modern media positions itself as a brand with unique content and visual characteristics that are memorable and distinguish the media from competitors on the market. Numerous studies of the media audience confirm that more than 80% of people do not trust either advertising or the brands that create them. However, the same audience is ready to trust people whose lives they know and with whom they have virtually communicated. In 2009, Professor V. Ivanov noted that the media could be a substitute for interpersonal communication (Ivanov, 2009, p. 68): "When there is a shortage of one type of communication, a person immediately subconsciously seeks to compensate for it with another".

Trust in the media can come through trust in the journalist, i.e., there is a need for the parallel existence of the media brand and the PB of the media employees. In the age of fake news, there are many "fake" people, which means that people tend to distinguish truth from fake and seek to read media that involves journalists they know. Audiences prefer real people. Although, on the other hand, real journalists in their PB appear not or not necessary in a way they are in real life.

In this article, we focused on media personalities who are professional journalists and examined their media resource as a brand while acting as PB themselves.

Accordingly, **the article's main objective** is to find out the most essential characteristics of a journalist's PB, which make it possible to shape his or her success as part of the media. For this, we performed the following steps:

- singled out the characteristics that are effective for the development of the journalist's brand as part of the media
- found out how the development of a journalist's PB is carried out through social networks.

## Methods

We proposed a study to formulate the characteristics of PB of media personalities. Accordingly, we first applied a search-analytic method to identify scientific developments on this topic, focusing on PB's understanding and analysis. The most suitable for this are theoretical methods: for the detailing and systematization of scientific knowledge - the concretization method; for separating components of PB based on the examining scientific sources - the abstraction method. Then, while searching specific PBs of journalists, we applied the method of content analysis (we collected and analyzed the verbal and visual content of the personal pages of 28 journalists, their publications, and comments in the media and social media). In the final stage, we applied the analysis and synthesis method to generalize scholars' views and the obtained practical results. Finally, the extrapolation method enabled us to formulate the most critical characteristics of a journalist's PB, which make it possible to shape a brand's success as part of the media.

## Results

The journalist's PB is a system of signs that a person broadcasts and which reflect, on the one hand, certain traits of the character, social role, and communicative attitudes, and on the other hand, create a new public virtual persona that interacts with the media consumer. At the same time, in most cases, a genuine person and the brand may differ significantly. It is like the work of a writer who associates himself with the character of his work and attributes this hero to the traits he would like to have himself. Alternatively, specific brand characteristics are created later according to the request or interest of the target audience. E.g., the audience loves cats, so a media personality occasionally tells stories about their pet's life. PB is built according to a pre-deliberated template, which includes visual, behavioral, and verbal structures. Y. Chaplinska points out that media personalities often broadcast an artificially created image through the screens, bringing their individuality to it. The viewer interacts with this image, not with a real person, adding their meanings to it (Chaplinska, 2014, p. 102).

Journalists are detached from the media whose face they represent, use a conversational style, and speak, addressing the reader (spectator) directly, building a monologue in such a way as to evoke reciprocity from the audience. E.g., Sonya Koshkina prepares the audience for the release of new material through social networks before each publication in "Livvy Bereg" ("Left Bank"): "Do not go to sleep! Soon it will be "bang!".

A vital part of PB is the image it creates - the journalist should look like a person with the same problems as the audience, with the difference that the audience has problems. The media person found a solution to some of them and is ready to share his or her experience. The purpose of PB is not to advertise goods or services, not to offer specific things, but to attract the audience through one's personality, hint indirectly, talk about a problem, and draw attention to a specific issue. E.g., the deputy editor-in-chief of Hromadske, Nastya Stanko, shares her experience of engaging the audience in social media: it is very easy to study the audience and understand the image which should be used. You need to know how to present content so that it is attractive to the public and, at the same time, find a balance not only to entertain but also to discuss serious issues.

By creating PB, one provides an opportunity to emphasize the strengths and develop the abilities of a media personality that relate to either the journalism craft or the subject of the content or may find feedback from a potential audience. This gives readers the impression that they know a particular journalist better and, accordingly, trust them more. Trust and a positive or negative attitude can arise subconsciously only because media consumers are already familiar with the journalist's name. F. Koenig and H. Lessan (Koenig, 1985, p. 263) note:

Media personalities regularly appear in people's homes; the viewer can even organize his weekly schedule around their virtual presence. They take on identifiable traits, always speak and behave according to a specific pattern that

has been specially designed and has already produced positive results, making the media persona attractive.

Journalists become something more than "people on screens", turning into acquaintances and friends. Nevertheless, simultaneously, the viewer's personal relationship with them is sometimes not only equal to but also more significant than interpersonal relationships.

A journalist's PB, in many cases, stimulates readers and viewers to use the media more often. It is possible to maintain a media personality's PB, first of all, by raising regularity of communication with the audience. It does not matter how often content is published or updated on a media website or how often a person appears on the screen - it is crucial that the audience expects a message that warms the attention on certain days and times. A journalist offers constant communication that a person embeds in everyday personal life. Supporters of a particular journalist expect content from him, not from the media, adjust their time, comment, ask questions and wait for answers, sometimes imitating and adjusting their actions following the journalist's image.

The audience subscribed to the media personality has the opportunity before and after each piece of content, interview, and broadcast to ask questions and participate in the process of creating media content. In this way, media consumers feel like creators of a specific program, they are pleased to know that their opinion is considered, and the journalist, in one way or another, has direct contact and reacts to the reader's message. For a successful PB, a journalist must not only possess those features that impress the audience but also be an expert on the subject he or she covers since the audience is mostly well versed in the issue details.

A journalist who develops his or her brand is personally responsible for what he or she creates and is ready for discussion, positive or negative attention to every word, photo, and interference in his or her personal life. The audience wants to see and know everything about a person, to look behind the public image. For example, from the beginning of her cancer disease, Alla Mazur openly shared her experience with people. She told a broad audience how to overcome the disease from her experience. She did not die herself, return to her previous hairstyle, with which all viewers remembered her.

And even changing my hairstyle, which cannot be avoided after chemical treatment, I found my advantage. My new image is completely in the European style. There they save for natural beauty and are not afraid of gray hair. Even young girls today are repainted in gray color - this is the new trend of the year (Mazur, 2020).

This is how trust is formed: the audience trusts the journalist, which means they also trust the media journalist represents.

Another important aspect related to a journalist's PB is reputational and image, achieved by daily work on PB: systematic publishing of relevant content, responses to comments, regular communication with the target audience, involving experts and persons who enjoy respect and interest of the target audience. Thus, a unique image appears in the minds of people, which is associated with a person-brand ("intellectual", "competent", "emotional", "sincerely open soul", "empathetic", "scandalous") and creates the necessary social image.

The crucial part of PB are accounts on social media used by media readers, these accounts must be open to everyone (not private), and the journalist must respond to not-so-pleasant comments. PB is not what a journalist presents to the public but what people discuss after reading or viewing a message that a journalist has published. On the personal page of a media personality, there must be an actual portrait photo, not an abstract image, because readers need to see a person, recognize, and perceive him or her as their friend. Besides, connecting personal information to a journalist's brand or media is necessary. This holds true also for partially professional information, e.g., in which media the journalist worked previously, which awards he or she has, in which projects participated. In addition, in each content item, the media personality provides a link to the publication in the media. In this way, the audience of the media itself is significantly expanded. I.e., before each of her interviews, Yanina Sokolova not only makes a preview but encourages viewers to ask questions that she later addresses during the interview.

Since people spend much time on social media, they are a kind of leisure for them. Journalists use them as "another type of digital marketing channel to communicate with consumers through advertising content" (Savytska, 2020, p.119). The content on personal pages in social media is mainly entertaining, in a lighter form than in the media. On Twitter, PBs are built through "fame by association", asymmetrical communication, and "lifestreaming" (Olausson, 2018), but primarily as self-promotion.

To improve the status of a journalist and develop PB, friends and subscribers must include famous people - both politicians and actors or singers, scientists, and business people who support the discussion and react to certain journalist publications. The more a journalist demonstrates his ties with the media community or has real experts among his friends, the more audience trusts him. Personal information does not contribute to the brand's formation; it only adds emotionality and indicates the closeness of the journalist to the audience.

During Russia's war against Ukraine, journalists cover military operations at the fronts and their unique reports become the hallmark of the media for which they work. On their personal pages on social media, such journalists gather a large audience waiting for news and veiled hints about events that cannot be written and discussed due to the non-disclosure of military secrets. Yuriy Butusov has been discussing the events at the front for more than one year; his active position and independence have always caused outrage from the authorities and public conflicts with those who rule the country. The journalist's comments and analysis received mixed reactions from politicians; i.e., Maryana Bezugla, a member of the Defense, Security, and Intelligence Committee of the Verkhovna Rada, demanded that the Security Service of Ukraine (SSU) open a case against Butusov because of the information he disseminates. However, millions of readers are waiting for his photos and texts, and the popularity of his website, [Censor.net](http://Censor.net), rests on this journalist's undeniable independence and objectivity.

Each social media is used by journalists for a different purpose, according to the requests of the audience. E.g., on Facebook, the audience is ready to discuss serious issues and read long texts. Therefore it makes sense to publish not only a preview of articles but also entire articles. In this way, the communication property of the brand is strengthened and more people can go to the material in the media and familiarize themselves with it. In Telegram, readers subscribe to channels to regularly receive operational information, watch short videos, and participate in discussions. Instagram is an excellent platform for increasing the love and loyalty of readership to the editorial office. There is no point in posting serious materials. However, readers are interested in backstage photos from filming and funny moments from the life of the editorial office, which will show what interesting people make media content. On Instagram, emotional stories and social videos get many views. In addition, photo and video content uploaded to Stories and Instagram and receives user support engages the audience on Facebook and Instagram simultaneously. However, for this, the images must be of high quality and accompanied by thematic hashtags.

The journalist's PB encompasses much more characteristics than a media brand, including personal preferences, unusual circumstances, and locations where the consumer of information can meet, from a sports club, and cooking recipes to business cards on the table in the dentist's waiting room, from stories on Instagram with a favorite cat, to discuss family problems on the Facebook page. Therefore, it is essential to follow the journalist's style and manner, which are unique and not like others. Individual style should be followed in everything: conversation, clothes, individual words or addresses to the audience, intonations, and reactions to situations. It connects all components of the brand and determines the brand's integrity and its image. Yaroslava Gres claims that the basis of PB is authenticity. "Everything else is based only on authenticity. First the mission and values, then beliefs and mantra, then experience, legend, emotions, competences, uniqueness". (Sudakova, 2019). E.g., Tetyana Mykytenko, journalist of the project *Ragulivna* (<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCf4A8MGpasfQTa28WncfreQ>), in which she discusses the speeches of public figures for whom she feels "Spanish shame". She expresses a subjective opinion about why something is wrong with them, has a unique style and manner, and positions herself as

a person who opens up in seemingly familiar speeches, sarcastic and stylistically marked expressions. The journalist uses YouTube as a PR platform, where the audience expresses its affection and respect in the chat of the online broadcast.

Journalists' social media accounts contribute to a fan community's creation and existence. Such account's success is directly related to the content: there should not be publications for the sake of publication; there should always be a purpose for which the content is created. E.g., draw attention to the problem, expand the audience through opening new issues, encourage the audience to do something, to be involved in the discussion. It is also crucial for the audience that the stated topic was resolved, or that it had inevitable consequences or continuation, and that the journalist responded to comments and gave feedback. Appealing to values that are important to the audience, that shape the public consciousness, contributes to the fact that in the audience there is a desire to spread the message, express their own opinion or develop the topic according to their preferences. The individual style of Vadym Karpyak, the host of the "Freedom of Speech" (ICTV) program - poise, intelligence - makes it possible to express critical opinions on personal pages that do not cause aggression or disturb the audience. Such opinions are more attractive than those shouted by opponents in arguments. People are affected by short, catchy phrases expressed by the journalist, and they wait for programs in which they expect a continuation.

Regularly filling accounts on social media and monitoring their effectiveness, reactions of subscribers, distribution of content from them, as well as responding to readers' comments, involving experts and famous persons in the discussion contributes to the reputation of the journalist's PB. Reputation management is a critical component of PB. It can develop trust in information, encourages discussion, stimulates the popularity of media content, and is simultaneously a sign of the editorial team's corporate unity.

The success of a journalist's PB is based on consistent development while adhering to a pre-selected concept and style. This applies first of all to visual characteristics – profile photo, color scheme, fonts, style of photos, and presence of certain symbols. Besides, the PB of a journalist who represents a media includes factors that reflect the attributes of the brand symbols of this media (logo, colors, fonts), to which are added individual characteristics that characterize the personality. E.g., Yuliya Borysko, when she left the "1+1" channel, she created the "Yellow sneakers" project, and this color and sneakers became the visual business card of the journalist's PB.

## Discussion

A journalist should be careful about his or her PB, constantly scan the audience and respond to its appeals while expanding new topics and trying to attract a wider audience. Every journalist who works in a particular media is its representative, its face. On the one hand, a media person broadcasts individual opinions; on the other hand, as part of a media resource with appropriate background and given status, he or she involves in discussion and broadcasts the concept of media.

The initial hypothesis that a journalist's PB is the personification of a media brand was partially confirmed: a journalist's brand is broader than a media brand, PB includes an emotional component, advantages and disadvantages of free communication with the audience, and interference in private life. At the same time, the journalist in PB is not who he or she is in real life but whom he or she wants to be perceived by the audience. This is achieved by the characteristics of the journalist's PB, which develop it as part of the media.

The individual characteristics of a journalist's brand are the image with which he or she conveys the meaning and content of this persona, declares his or her principles and preferences, strengths, and weaknesses, demonstrates individual qualities and attitude to events in the world, affiliation to a media resource. PB is also individual because a person cannot be similar to someone else. Emotionality and individual qualities interest and retain the audience. Professionalism and depth of personality expand the circle of readers. Therefore, before creating and developing PB, the journalist carefully studies the audience's interests and requests. In addition to regular articles

waiting for the audience of subscribers to the journalist's page, it is necessary to work to attract a new audience, try to expand the topic in-depth, and add accents for which those who have not yet become an audience are looking. Interestingly, any content that is not made to meet the needs of the core audience can interest and encourage new consumers of information to subscribing.

## Conclusions

Consideration of the characteristics of PB as a whole and the study of specific existing PBs of journalists made it possible to formulate individual characteristics that affect PB:

- personality characteristic that forms an image;
- the main topic on which the journalist specializes (focuses);
- an idea that only the brand owner can solve;
- communication with the audience, attitude towards other people;
- legend and personal history.

A PB includes visual, behavioral, and verbal components of an individual image that communicate the brand's characteristics to the audience in the media and on social media:

- name (pseudonym);
- a visual image that is comfortable for a journalist (i.e., the hats and open dresses of Kateryna Osadcha, the casual look of Savik Shuster, the glasses and bright clothes of Garik Korogodskiy ) and that is remembered by consumers of information;
- individual content features of PB (phrases, address, style of communication with the audience, voice, pronunciation, and catchphrases);
- social image as a member of society (attitude to socially significant topics, reaction to current problems, participation in events);
- formation of a community of like-minded people and direct communication with them on social media (communication takes place both with familiar people and with strangers because acquaintances can immediately set the desired tone in communication and turn questions in a specific direction);
- collaboration with other people and brands to support each other and stimulate discussion on various issues;
- consistent development of the PB concept;
- imperfection, the image of a real person with flaws like all people, the possibility of making mistakes, doubting;
- the effect of presence (live broadcasts, recording of video programs, family holidays or traditions, life problems, quick reaction to current events related to the main topic);
- reputation management;
- professionalism, experience, and knowledge.

Social media accounts are an integral part of PB. Content analysis of journalists' accounts made it possible to identify several types of content used in PB, to which consumers of information respond better. The balance and systematic mix of viral, expert, issue-oriented, and analytical content, provocative reposts warm attention to the journalist and expands such attention to the media itself. It is through personalities that comes trust in the media. The regularity and stability of the disclosure of certain topics make readers wait for each journalist's post. With the opportunity to communicate, react, and comment on the journalist's posts, the audience becomes a co-creator of media content, feels its importance, and can influence the processes in society.

The journalist's PB stimulates readers and viewers to turn to the media more often. Examining journalists' personal pages allows us to assert that personal data play a predominantly emotional role, and audience engagement is facilitated by a conversational style and addressing the reader directly. In order to expand the audience, it is more important to connect with the media itself,

other well-known brands and personalities, and a lively discussion in which both media consumers and experts, other journalists, and politicians participate; there is a link to the media content. It fully corresponds to the modern cross-media world, the need of information consumers for multimedia, and the use of various platforms for information consumption. Therefore, in the modern information environment, not only the media brand becomes cross-media. The same holds relevant for journalists' personal brands.

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