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The Application of Internet Technologies for the Formation of the Professional Image of Heads of an Educational Institutions

Summary

The study reviews Internet technologies that contribute to the formation of the professional image of the head of an educational institution, as well as pedagogical terms that ensure the effectiveness of this process.

Based on the understanding of the essence and content of the professional image of the heads of educational institutions, the need for updating approaches and tools to ensure the effectiveness of its formation has been highlighted with the use of the most modern Internet technologies. It has been defined that the leading strategy to shape the professional image is online branding. The digital tools and means for that so have been found and described. It has been emphasized on personal websites or portfolios, blogs, professional social media profiles, digital publications, online courses and workshops, engagement with online communities, multimedia content, feedback and reviews, collaboration with influencers, engagement with alumni online, use of latest educational technologies, digital newsletters, webinars and virtual tours, and active crisis management. It has been shown that the application of such promotion channels extends the interested audience and contributes to the formation of a positive image of the head of the educational institution.

The pedagogical terms for the formation of the professional image of the head of an educational institution have been highlighted. Among them the purposeful development of media literacy and digital competence of heads, blogging, personal branding, working up the visual branding, engagement, transparency of the activity of an educational institution and its head, implementation of crisis management, compliance of digital etiquette, constantly professional development, regular update of content and develop digital skills, presence and partici-

pation, as well as feedback and iteration in online networking.

It has been concluded that while the internet offers tools and platforms to shape the image of educational leaders, it is the manager's authenticity, vision, and dedication that really resonate with the surroundings. Digital platforms merely amplify and disseminate the intrinsic values and leadership qualities of the head of an educational institution.

Keywords: image, professional image, head of an educational institution, Internet technologies, pedagogical terms

1. Introduction

Today, it is difficult to imagine life in modern society without the Internet and social networks, because thanks to their functionality, there is an exchange of information, the acquisition of new knowledge and an increase in the number of new contacts. For a modern person, the use of social networks is quite a familiar phenomenon. For those who hold managerial positions, it is not only business and private communication, but also an opportunity to carry out the branding of one's institution and establish one's own professional image.

Let us consider some statistical data highlighting the advantages of using Internet technologies in image formation. According to *Statista and Internet World Stats*, at the end of 2011, the number of Internet users

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in the world exceeded 2.3 billion. During the next five years, this figure increased to 3.2 billion, and in 2019 it reached 4.5 billion. During the year of the pandemic, users increased by 280 million people, in general, since 2021 the number of network users has raised by 4.5% (“Kil’kist’ internet-korystuvachiv”, 2021). As of April 2023, this figure has already reached 5.18 billion people (64.6% of the population) who spend an average of 6.5 hours daily online. At the same time, 4.8 billion (59.9%) pass an average of 2.5 hours on social networks (“Digital 2023: April”, 2023).

A survey conducted by *DataReportal* among 1700 business structures showed that 81% use the network to study the level of demand for their services; 71% – to attract new customers and improve advertising, and 62% – to better understand potential customers (“Digital 2023: October”, 2023).

Changes have also occurred in Ukraine (“Mayzhe 23 mln ukrayintsiv”, 2021). According to research by the *Factum Group Ukraine* holding, as of November 2019, 71% of Ukrainians (22.96 million) regularly used the Internet, and 21 million people (65%) had Internet access at home (“Tendentsiyi 2021”, 2022). Meanwhile, during the year (2020–2021), as noted by *GlobalLogic*, the representation of the Ukrainian audience in social networks increased by 7 million people. *Interfax-Ukraine* indicates a rise in Internet users in Ukraine to 26 million, while there is a growth in social network users by almost 50%. Officially, 60% of the population of Ukraine is registered in them, compared to 40% of users in January 2020. Due to quarantine measures, over 2021 worldwide, 57% more people watched videos and movies via the Internet, 37% listened to music, and 15% more viewed podcasts (“Kil’kist’ internet-korystuvachiv”, 2021; “Tendentsiyi 2021”, 2022; “Mayzhe 23 mln ukrayintsiv”, 2021). Consistent with *DataReportal*, at the beginning of 2023 in Ukraine were 28.57 million Internet users (79.2%). Although formally compared to the previous year, the number of Internet users in Ukraine decreased by 5.8 million (-16.8%), this figure does not include those citizens who are living abroad due to the war (“Digital 2023: Ukraine”, 2023).

In January 2023, there were 26.70 million users of social networks which is 74% of the total population residing immediately in Ukraine. In the rating of social networks, the first place is occupied by Google

Workspace, 2nd – YouTube, 3rd – Facebook, 6th – Twitter, 7th – Wikipedia, 8th – Instagram, 12th – TikTok (“Digital 2023: Ukraine”, 2023). Data published in *Meta* advertising resources observes that at the beginning of 2023, Facebook in Ukraine had 12.85 million users (41%), and Instagram – 11.00 million (35%) (“Brand Resource Center”, 2023). *Google’s* advertising resources point out that at the beginning of 2023, YouTube in Ukraine had 26.70 million users (74%). At the same time, according to *ByteDance*, TikTok had 13.01 million users aged 18 and over (44.2%) (“ByteDance. Events”, 2023).

As of April 2023, 59.3% of the world’s users apply the Internet to search for information, and 38.1% for educational purposes. 94.5% of the world’s population visit Internet pages to exchange messages and communication, 94.2% spend time on social networks (“Digital 2023: April”, 2023). As stated by *BrightLocal* research, 82% of consumers read reviews of local businesses, and 91% of them trust online reviews as much as personal recommendations (“Local Consumer”, 2023).

Analysis of social networks popularity shows that Internet technologies today are an important factor in shaping a positive image of an educational institution. This fact was noted by 90% of education entrants and their parents who primarily turn to Internet sources in search of information about the educational institution that interested them (Greenhow & Lewin, 2015).

Thus, the image of an educational institution is a certain representation created in the mind of the environment. Today it broadcasts not only via traditional channels of social communication, but mainly through the Internet. Due to the fact that the head is the face of an educational institution, their professional image plays a decisive role in institutional success, as well as ensures trust, popularity, attractiveness and competitiveness.

The purpose of the article is to review Internet technologies that contribute to the formation of the professional image of the head of an educational institution, as well as pedagogical terms that ensure the effectiveness of this process.

The tasks of the study are: 1) to reveal the theoretical aspects of the formation of the professional image of the heads of educational institutions withing digital transformation of the economy and society;

2) find out appropriate Internet technologies for this;
3) identify pedagogical terms for the formation of the professional image of the head of an educational institution with the use of Internet technologies.

The research used **methods** of content analysis and collection of statistical data on Internet users including for the professional goals, analysis of best pedagogical experience, generalization, specification and modelling of activities related to the application of Internet technologies in the professional image formation of the head of an educational institution.

2. The theoretical background

In our study, we proceed from the fact that the search for appropriate technologies for professional image formation should be based on a developed theoretical basis.

It is rightly believed that the manager's professional image is an integral part of the image of any organization. In the educational sphere, such an image determines the positive perception of the head by employees, students, parents, the public, state administration bodies, and social partners. It also ensures innovative development of the institution, support for pedagogical innovations founded on effective leadership.

The study of a manager's professional image is a complex and multifaceted topic that is explored within such disciplines as sociology, psychology, management, and business communications. Many scientists (Dzyadevych, 2012; Marmaza, 2013; Nikolayesku, 2011; Pshenychna, 2018; Romanovska, 2017) are studying the problems of the peculiarities of the professional image formation in the educational sphere. Researchers determine the essence and structure of the leader's image, as well as claim that educational institutions need to meticulously make their image and realize their branding to resonate with their target audiences.

World-renowned researchers P. Kotler and K.F.A. Fox delve into the pivotal role of marketing for educational entities, from schools and colleges to universities. The authors underscore the essence of branding and positioning institutions in an increasingly competitive educational landscape, elucidate the principles of crafting a distinct institutional identity, fortifying reputation, and cultivating an appealing

image, not only to attract students but also to enhance stakeholder relations (Kotler & Fox, 1995).

In our previous publications, it has been defined that the image of the head of an educational institution is a qualitative dynamic characteristic of his/her personality, which contributes to the manifestation of internal guidelines, personal qualities, life positions, pedagogical and managerial mastery and professionalism. The professional image of the head of an educational institution can be defined as a complete and dynamic image formed in the minds of state administration bodies, teaching staff, parents, students, and public representatives. Such image corresponds to, supports and presents the high moral values of the individual, his/her professionalism, norms and strategies of innovative development of the educational institution, ensuring its management on the basis of effective leadership (Tytarenko, 2023).

It was determined that the structure of the professional image is represented by separate types of image, each of which has an independent meaning, but only in combination with others creates a complete professional image of a specialist. Among them are mental, habitual, communicative, kinaesthetic, environmental and professional kind of image (Tytarenko, 2023).

It was found that the professional image of the head of an educational institution has a complex structure. The *core of the specialist's professional image* consists of such formed image structures as the mission, goals, positions, guidelines, images and legends, "Self-concept" and the hierarchy of image development in time and professional space: "Self-past," "Self-present," and "Self-future." Adjacent to the core are structures combining *individual-constitutional* (physiological, psychological, age descriptions), *social-and-behavioural* (visual and communicative images, stylistic varieties of behaviour, communication and organization of activities) and a *person's professional competence characteristics* (Myttseva, 2021; Tytarenko, 2023).

As has been concluded, it is the personal component that is the topical formation in the structure of the professional image of the head of an educational institution. This component covers the individual image of an educational leader and the professional constituent reflecting the image formed by society for the head of a modern competitive educational institution (Tytarenko, 2023).

Predictably, image formation is a long-time process including stages of transition from initial impressions about a person to a systematic representation of him/her in audience consciousness. The image of a specialist is a projection of his/her personality perceived by the public during social communications. It covers both the subject's internal capabilities and the demands placed on him/her by the external environment (Vasylenko, 2019).

In recent decades, interest in the study of professional image has increased due to the development of social media, personal branding and the importance of reputation in the digital age. During this period, many new researchers and authors appeared to investigate these issues, among them I. Bondarenko, L. Bozhuk, M. Demchenko, O. Myttseva, O. Naboka, V. Vasylenko and others (Bondarenko, 2016; Bozhuk, 2020; Myttseva, 2021; Naboka & Demchenko, 2019; Vasylenko, 2019). E. Sheninger and T. Rubin emphasize the technologies, in particular social media, which can be used to enhance school communication, public relations, and branding. Researchers examine strategies to apply branding as a tool to showcase the strengths and achievements of the schools, as a means of fostering stronger community relationships and stakeholder engagement (Sheninger & Rubin, 2017).

With relation to the above, today it should be talking not just about image-making, but about digital branding in educational area (it is alternatively referred to as e-branding, I-branding, or online branding). A.D. Del Pino and A.A. Garcia this concept pertains to managing a brand's online presence, integrating aspects of e-commerce, e-marketing, and

e-business (Del Pino & Garcia, 2021). Essentially, online branding is a strategy to manage a brand's digital reputation in the market. Techniques to bolster digital branding encompass website design and optimization, using social media searches, blogs, electronic press releases, and promotional videos.

3. Review of Internet technologies for the formation of the professional image of educational institution managers

The use of internet technologies has profoundly impacted various sectors, and the educational domain is no exception. For heads of educational institutions, such as principals, deans, directors, or other leadership roles, the internet offers multiple avenues to shape their professional image, engage with stakeholders, and showcase the institution's achievements and vision. Below are some ways in which internet technologies can be leveraged to form and enhance the professional image of heads of educational institutions (see Figure 1).

The first and foremost tool of professional image formation is *personal websites or portfolios*. It can serve as digital CVs, showcasing their professional journey, achievements, philosophies, and experts' testimonials. A well-maintained website also provides a platform to share articles, blogs, or research relevant to the field of education (Romanovska, 2017).

Next for the significance rank is *professional social media profiles*. Platforms like LinkedIn, Twitter, Facebook and even Instagram, when used appropriately,

Fig. 1. Tools of profession image formation via Internet technologies



can reflect an educational manager's professional image. Sharing updates, participating in discussions, and endorsing educational innovations be able to increase his/her visibility and credibility in the community. Publishing expert articles, participating in professional groups, communicating with colleagues and students will all promote and maintain a professional image (Sheninger & Rubin, 2017).

Blogging is an effective way to showcase an educational leader's expertise, share his/her experiences, and interact with colleagues by means of posts, comments or chats. At the same time, blogging aids in orienting the image toward the audience making it advisable for time and place (Naboka & Demchenko, 2019).

Engagement with online communities plays an important role in professional image development. Active participation in public organizations, online forums, educational webinars, and web conferences can help managers establish themselves as thought leaders in the administrative and educational field.

Online courses and workshops suggested by the head of an educational institution on online platforms like Prometheus, Coursera, Udemy, or edX, or even the institution's digital platform, can demonstrate a manager's commitment to disseminating knowledge and his/her care for the development of the educational environment. It also allows to sharing of knowledge with a wide audience and shows the manager's leadership qualities.

Publishing articles, research findings, or e-books online within a website or personal blog provides another medium for showcasing the expertise and vision of educational leader.

Multimedia content such as podcasts, vlogs, and online interviews can be used to discuss educational trends, challenges, and solutions. This not only highlights the managers' knowledge and erudition but also humanizes them, making their professional image more comprehensible for a broad audience and consequently more distinct and attractive. Recording a video in which a leader talks about their teaching philosophy, projects and achievements can be a very influential tool in his/her professional image formation ("Buty mediahramotnym", 2017).

To present their own personality, heads of educational institutions actively take part in *feedback and reviews*. Obviously, actively seeking feedback and ad-

ressing concerns on social media or educational platforms reflect responsiveness and a commitment to continuous improvement. Imagemakers recommend educational leaders collect positive feedback from colleagues, students or parents and publish it on personal websites, blogs or social media. Such activity enriches the social-and-behavioural constituents of their professional image (Bojtkov, 2023).

Collaboration with influencers or social partners via the Internet including educational bloggers, YouTubers, followers, and whoever, can help reach a wider audience and bring a new perspective to a manager's professional image.

A powerful alumni network speaks volumes about an institution, especially if they are successful. Regularly engaging with them online fosters a sense of community and acts as a testament to the leader's impact on the quality of educational services.

Implementation of the latest educational technologies, adopting and endorsing high-tech decisions like Learning Management Systems (LMS), e-learning tools, or AI-driven educational solutions, can bolster a leader's image as forward-thinking and technologically adept.

Periodic digital newsletters updating stakeholders on recent achievements, innovations, and future plans can be an effective communication tool and means to translate of manager's professional image.

Especially in a post-COVID world and in terms of war in Ukraine conducting *webinars and virtual tours* of the institution allow to demonstrate adaptability and a commitment to reaching out to the community. Such events reveal the system of administrative activity and the unique personality of the educational manager.

Last but not least approach to professional image formation is the introduction of *active crisis management*. How a leader manages and communicates during crises, especially online, can significantly impact their professional image. Transparent, regular updates and using online platforms to address concerns can enhance trust in his/her (Kartashova, Kyrychenko & Sorochan, 2020).

It should be taken into account the fact that the formation of an online image is a long process. Regularity, authenticity and quality of content are key factors contributing to success in forming the professional image of the head of an educational institution.

4. Pedagogical terms for the formation of the professional image of the head of an educational institution with the use of Internet technologies

Today, we are witnessing the digital transformation of all social relationships and connections. From consumers of information, Internet users have turned into creators of content (posts on Facebook, videos on YouTube, their own blogs, etc.), broadcasting live a large part of their personal and professional lives. Therefore, an urgent condition for the formation of the professional image of the head of an educational institution is the development of his/her *media literacy and digital competence* which are necessary for active and conscious participation in the life of the media society, retransmission of his/her individuality in it (Motuz, 2020; “Buty mediahramotnym”, 2017).

Researchers conditionally divide media literacy into four groups of competencies, which determine the ability to understand media, use media, communicate using media and the capacity to achieve one’s own goals using media. The head of an educational institution should purposefully develop these important qualities within the framework of the program to improve his/her professional mastery (Sushchenko, 2021).

Above, *blogging* was defined as one of the effective Internet technologies in forming the professional image of the head of an educational institution. A blog that can reveal both professional and personal image components is an effective tool for its development and improvement. For this, researchers recommend following important principles during the blogging process.

First of all, the manager should decide on the target audience (colleagues, parents, students, the public, social partners, professional communities, etc.) and be authentic and competent in publications. It is necessary to choose relevant topics, and at the same time, it is necessary to clearly define the boundaries in their discussion. It is advisable to establish the regularity of publications, use visual content (photos, graphics, videos, etc.) and be sure to respond to comments. Bloggers should also be open to criticism, considering it as a new field of development. To increase traffic to the blog, colleagues or industry experts can be invited to write a guest post. Promotion

of the blog through the official website of the educational institution, social networks, e-mail, and social advertising is also an effective way (Couros, 2015).

Undoubtedly, developing the image of the head of educational institutions via the Internet is a complex endeavour that blends elements of personal branding, leadership, and digital communication. As educational leaders increasingly interact with various stakeholders (students, parents, faculty, and the larger community) online, their digital presence becomes a pivotal aspect of their professional image.

As a result of analyses of primary sources (Greenhow & Lewin, 2015; Sheninger & Rubin, 2017; Vasylenko, 2019), some strategies and considerations for forming this image can be allocated.

1. *It is personal branding* including the following:
 - Self-assessment and understanding of own strengths, values, vision, and mission as an educational leader.
 - Consistency of online profiles both LinkedIn and Facebook, as well as the institution’s website.
 - Content creation (articles, blogs, social media posts, videos) that reflect beliefs about education, leadership, and other relevant topics for educational managers.
2. *It is engagement* covering:
 - Active listening and engaging with the online community through their feedback, concerns, and praises.
 - Participation in discussions, webinars, and online forums related to education and administration. It showcases the manager’s dedication to continuous learning and social engagement.
3. *The transparency of the activity* of an educational institution and its head can be provided through the following approaches:
 - Open communication via digital platforms about institutional decisions, changes, or any critical information.
 - Feedback mechanism by means of online channels where stakeholders can share their feedback or concerns directly.
4. *It is constantly professional development*:
 - Showcasing learning and participation in webinars, online courses, or workshops shows that managers value continuous learning and encourage others to do the same things.

- Collaborating and engaging with other educational leaders online, sharing and learning from best practices globally contribute improvement of professional image.

5. *Implementation of crisis management* which supposes:

- Quick responses on the challenges from outside. Managers should have a plan to address any institutional issues or crises promptly and transparently.
- Apology when necessary. It demonstrates responsibility and accountability can enhance trust in a manager and educational institution.

6. It is necessary *to work up the visual branding*, namely:

- Professional Imagery on institutional websites and social media profiles.
- Consistent visual identity when the design, logos, and other visual elements are consistent across all digital platforms representing the institution and its leadership.

7. Manager ought to *digital etiquette*, in particular:

- It is privacy which assumes avoiding sharing overly personal information or details that might compromise the institution or its stakeholders.
- Respect and professionalism in online communications.

8. *Regular updates of content and develop digital skills*:

- Managers should stay current with the latest digital technology.
- It is worth sharing achievements, and regularly posting about the achievements of the institution, its staff, and its students.

9. *Online networking* is a tool for professional image distribution. It means the following:

- Connecting with peers – heads of institutions or educational leaders, joining groups or forums dedicated to educational leadership.

10. *Feedback and iteration* as regards the content of the professional image is

- sensible to periodically assess online image and reputation, as well as make adjustments based on feedback and changing dynamics.

Thus, while the internet offers tools and platforms to shape the image of educational leaders, it is the manager's authenticity, vision, and dedication that really resonate with the surroundings. Digital platforms merely amplify and disseminate the intrinsic values and leadership qualities of the head of an edu-

cational institution personifying in his/her professional image.

5. Conclusions

The study of the issues of the formation of the professional image in heads of an educational institutions in terms of the vigorous digital society transformation permits the formulation following conclusions.

Primarily, based on the understanding of the essence and content of the professional image of the heads of an educational institutions, the need for updating approaches and tools to ensure the effectiveness of its formation is highlighted with the use of the most modern Internet technologies. Among them the leading is online branding which is a strategy to manage a brand's digital reputation in the market among state administration bodies, teaching staff, parents, students, and public representatives. A judicious combination of various tools tailored to the leader's strengths and the institution's unique offerings, can significantly enhance their image, credibility, and reach in the digital age.

The review of Internet technologies for the formation of the professional image of an educational institution managers made it possible to focus on the following digital tools and means, namely: personal websites or portfolios, blogs, professional social media profiles, digital publications, online courses and workshops, engagement with online communities, multimedia content, feedback and reviews, collaboration with influencers, engage with alumni online, use of latest educational technologies, digital newsletters, webinars and virtual tours, and active crisis management.

The application of such promotion channels extends the interested audience and contributes to the formation of a positive image of the head of the educational institution. The conducted research is convincingly evidence that the more Internet resources an educational leader uses in his/her activities, the closer he/she becomes to the audience: students, applicants, their parents and the public in general.

Pedagogical terms for the formation of the professional image of the head of an educational institution by means of Internet technologies are the purposeful development of media literacy and digital competence of heads, blogging, personal branding,

working up the visual branding, engagement, transparency of the activity of an educational institution and its head, implementation of crisis management, compliance of digital etiquette, constantly professional development, regular update of content and develop digital skills, presence and participation, as well as feedback and iteration in online networking.

Thus, while the internet offers tools and platforms to shape the image of educational leaders, it is the manager's authenticity, vision, and dedication that really resonate with the surroundings. Digital platforms merely amplify and disseminate the intrinsic values and leadership qualities of the head of an educational institution personifying in his/her professional image.

The author sees prospects for further research in the creation of a complex methodology for the formation of the professional image of future heads of an educational institutions in the master's training course.

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