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## POLITICIAN'S FAMILY MEMBERS AS AN ELEMENT PROMOTING THE PROFESSIONAL BRAND

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### *Abstract*

This article is devoted to the trends of creation and presentation of the image of a politician and his family members in the media and their impact on the promotion of the personal brand. The concept “personal brand” was defined, and the degree of its dependence on the media and public image was examined. The goals of creating and promoting a personal brand and its components were indicated. Particular attention is paid to the latest trends in representing the image of Donald Trump and his family members in the media. To this end, American Internet articles about each family member of the 45th president of the United States were studied. Praise or discreditation statements were analyzed. The influence of the media on the political image and the personal brand was identified. The authors conclude that the personal brand depends on the image created by the media; the personal brand influences the public image of the politician and images of his family members in the media which praise or discredit them. The article aims to expand the practical and theoretical basis of political linguistics.

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**Keywords:** Personal brand, political image, mass media, public authority, politician's image.



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## 1. Introduction

Success of a politician depends on the degree of his “publicity” as a positive character and socially useful citizen and patriot of the country. Therefore, politicians aim to promote their personal political brands revealing shortcomings of their political opponents. However, despite all the attempts of politicians to discredit their opponents, the media pay attention to their families and friends as well. This has a significant impact on the image and confidence of the potential electorate.

## 2. Problem Statement

Recently, the brand has become a prerogative of politicians who also render and accept services, and need to have their own brand, which would reveal their identities as something unique and outstanding. In order to remain popular and recognizable, a professional has to promote his personal brand and maintain his image. A personal brand is the image that appears in the minds of people hearing about a person (Pitko, 2015). According to Dolgikh (2017), the brand is the quintessence of uniqueness. A properly created professional brand can help achieve goals and create correct self-presentation. It is focused on the values embedded in the brand which are fundamental in the structure of the individual (Pitko, 2016).

Politics, being one of the social activities, needs to build and maintain public relations. The success of a politician’s brand depends on his success in the political arena. The personal professional brand

- has an emotional impact on the public;
- establishes contacts with the potential electorate and audience;
- builds a good reputation in the eyes of voters;
- contributes to the recognition and fame (Pitko, 2016).

The personal brand, according to Peters (2006), consists of three components:

1. Exclusivity and consistency. The brand should distinguish a politician from other people;
2. Mastery and relevance. Professional development and continuing education are driving factors for brand promotion if a politician wants to show himself as an experienced and professional manager;
3. Self-presentation and communication. A brand is formed for the public, with whom it is necessary to maintain constant communication. That is why high-quality self-presentation is necessary for self-promotion (Peters, 2006).

It is necessary to study how the personal image of a politician and the image of his family members in the mass media influence each other, and how they affect the promotion of each professional brand.

## 3. Research Questions

The main subject of this study is a degree of interaction between the image of a politician and the image of his family members in the media space.

#### **4. Purpose of the Study**

The aim of this work is to identify the degree of influence of the image of a politician and his family members in the media space on the promotion of a personal professional brand.

#### **5. Research Methods**

A content analysis of Internet articles about Donald Trump and his family members is carried out to identify discrediting or praising statements and establish the relationship between the influence of the image of an individual family member on the politician's personal brand in the media. The materials are analyzed in order to identify general trends in the influence of the image of a politician and his family members on their professional brand (Bredikhin & Bredikhina, 2018) in the media.

#### **6. Findings**

Let us analyze the image of Donald Trump and his family members in the media. The topic of impeachment caused by the loss of parliamentary confidence in the president has been discussed in the media.

Trump's wife Melania is an American fashion model from Slovenia, whose name appeared in the American media long before she became the first lady of the United States; recently, she is a topic of a great number of publications in "The New York Times" And "The Washington Post" because of her special status as a wife of the 45th president of America. Her merits include fluency in English, German, French, Italian and Serbo-Croatian. In the American media, she is famous for her love of outfits. The headline of the Friedman's article is "On the Fourth of July, Melania Trump Dresses for Independence. But whose, exactly? Her own, or the country's?" The headline attracts attention of readers to Melania's dress on the Independence Day, but the subtitle in the form of a rhetorical question focuses on one more aspect of this event: what was the hidden motive for choosing the dress? Journalists discerned some tacit disagreement with the spouse's policy against sex minorities due to the peculiarities of the image of the first lady (Friedman, 2019). Journalists often project policies by Trump on his personal and family relationships. In his TV comedy "The Daily Show" Noah (2019) introducing the new anti-emigration law on the removal of green cards from migrants said that Donald Trump wants to deport his wife because she, rarely appears in the White House and when he tries to hold her hand in public, she resists like Dikembe Mutombo. However, he expresses his sympathy for the first lady of the United States and asks Donald Trump not to deport his wife referring to the desire of the majority. Focusing attention of the public on such a small detail, he concludes that the family life of the president is not easy, and the public begins to evaluate Donald Trump negatively as a person and a politician which deteriorates his public image (Popova et al., 2018). This journalistic tool was used in the about the business trip of Donald and Melania Trump to London on June 2, 2019. The subtitle says that "The First Lady's dress paid homage to London with its pattern featuring city landmarks, but some deeper political meanings were lost. The article describes the Melania's dress by Gucci on which one can see the most famous sights of London. The journalists found hidden motives for choosing this style, arguing that Melania Trump wanted to express a certain view. According to Schmidt (2019), Melania Trump expressed her position against her

husband's policy on the issue of abortions. That is, journalists try to find hidden links between unrelated events, which indicates the media's desire to discredit the president's image through personal failures in his family life.

We can see that in the American media, the image of Melania Trump is sharply opposed to the image of her husband, which affects the image of both spouses. The first lady is a kind of hidden and silent opposition to the current policy of Donald Trump, personifying the entire American people. Thus, actualization of the negative attitude of the class of clients (Bredikhin & Bredikhina, 2018) (consumers of the Trump's policy) represented in the image of his wife, negatively affects the political brand of the agent (the president himself).

Let us analyze the political image of Trump's daughter Ivanka who is a businesswoman, writer, and model. In 2016, Ivanka took an active part in organizing her father's election campaign. After the victory of Donald Trump in the presidential election, Ivanka became an "unofficial first lady", since Melania and her son Barron remained in New York; she became an assistant to the president. Despite the seemingly active civic stance and violent political activities, Ivanka Trump was criticized by journalists. For example, The Washington Post negatively evaluated its activities. All her meetings with heads of Colombia, Argentina, Paraguay, and North Korea, her visit to the G20 Summit in Japan were considered as a way to establish strong ties, provide support and strengthen the image of Donald Trump (Hesse, 2019). All her activities in Argentina were presented as work for the brand. The article describes how the sleeves of her dress swelled from the wind and looked like locators, but Ivanka did not pay attention to it, which was displayed in the headline of the article "Ivanka Trump is acting as if everything is normal". The Newsweek described a case where Ivanka Trump posted about her intention to visit Alabama; satirical comments were made by F. Filiuzzi ("Will you assess the damage caused by the hurricane?"), J. Pavlovitz ("Two natural disasters in one week?"). H. Kennedy added: "Bring a boat just in case" (as cited in Da Silva, 2019). Media coverage of such cases makes clear intentions of journalists to discredit the image of politicians and level their merits by presenting their activities as something inconsequential or absurd.

Trump's elder son Eric is also of interest. He is an American businessman who became the head of the Trump Organization after the victory of his father in the presidential election. Henderson (2019) described how the presenter of the TV show "The Late Show with Stephen Colbert" discredited Eric Trump's appearance. Another article claims that 95 % of the Americans support Donald Trump's migration policy, but in fact only 57 % support the president, and 59 % said that most of Donald Trump's Twitter posts are "non-American." Accordingly, there is an indication of falsity of the information presented by Trump's family members which forces readers to critically evaluate and distrust everything that the official media report. One can observe an attempt to discredit members of the presidential family.

Yasharoff (2019) writes that Jimmy Kimmel criticized a new line of camouflage uniform by Donald Trump Jr., who is not able to achieve his goals. J. Kimmel draws his conclusions by referring to the Twitter and Instagram posts.

And finally, newspapers have a lot of impeachment articles initiated by the Democrats, which shows a low level of trust in the president. Deterioration of the professional brand in the political arena discredits the personal image of a politician in the media.

## 7. Conclusion

Taking into account the fact that these articles were written during the decline of Donald Trump's image in the political arena, it can be concluded that a personal brand plays an important role in the life of a politician. In the American media, it is a determining factor of the public image. The family and friends can play a significant role in the development of the media image. Until the politician has universal recognition, meets public expectations, the media create his positive image which contributes to the promotion of his professional brand (Zheltukhina et al., 2018). It is influenced by personal brands of each family member. When his image becomes worse, the media discredit his activities, referring to his personality and appearance, which is also influenced by personal brands of the family members. This effect is achieved through the hidden links between various events and phenomena covered in the media.

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