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## UNDERSTANDING OF PERSONAL BRAND BY TEACHERS

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**Аннотация.** С активным ростом пользователей социальных сетей выросла и потребность умения заявлять о себе в этой платформе. Активно пользователями начал использоваться термин личный бренд. Сейчас он используется не только коммерческими организациями, но и отдельными людьми. Данное исследование направлено на то, чтобы узнать насколько учителя Казахстана понимают значение персонального брендинга и определить ключевые составляющие его значения. Личный бренд учителя может быть эффективно использован в образовательных целях и популяризации профессии учителя.

**Abstract.** With the active growth of social network users, the need for the ability to express yourself on this platform has also grown. The term personal brand began to be actively used by users. Now it is used not only by commercial organizations, but also by individuals. This study aims to find out how teachers in Kazakhstan understand the meaning of personal branding and to identify the key components of its meaning. A teacher's personal brand can be effectively used for educational purposes and to promote the teaching profession.

**Key words:** Personal brand, social media, instagram, teachers' personal branding

### Introduction

In the 21st century, we cannot imagine our life without social networks. The 2020 pandemic has riveted even more people to their phone screens. People were in need of interaction with other people, posting and sharing their thoughts, commenting and discussing different topics, creating online communities, and sharing knowledge in a collaborative way.

Most kids today are at the stage of “content consuming”, they only possess Social Media Knowledge, the ability to use and understand social media. The goal is how to move them to the ultimate level of Social Media Intelligence. At this level, they have a complete understanding of the implications and strategic application of social media, which is a requirement of 21st century skills. Could this be done within social media with the help of educators? Students should be equipped with the social media intelligence to publish and communicate in ways that will help them to learn, grow and develop an online reputation that will follow and serve them well through many different life stages and identities [2].

The functionality of many social networks allows one to use them not only in an entertaining aspect, but also in an educational one. There are already studies on the use of various social platforms such as Facebook, Pinterest, Twitter and Reddit, describing their positive and negative sides. [1]. However, very little research has been done on the use of Instagram, despite the fact that it is one of the most popular social networks among young people [3].

M.Pittman and B. Reich made an experiment comparing different social media platforms and its effect on people's sense of loneliness [4]. The result was that platforms sharing photos and

videos gives people a sense of communicating with an actual person instead of an object, which facilitates the sense of social presence. This may occur “even without anthropomorphic features of the technology, although if there are cues in the interface that represent human characteristics such as voice, language, and personality, the social presence heuristic appears to be more strongly invoked” [5].

Instagram’s visual nature arguably distinguishes it from social media that are relatively more text-focused and may lead to educators using Instagram in ways that differ from how they employ other social media, giving more opportunities for interaction with others [1]. One of the options is to create a neutral space within social media where teachers can share their experience, problems, ideas, giving each other motivation and learning from each other, too.

### **Conceptual framing - personal branding**

The main function of social networks is making new communications. Public relations nowadays are transforming into strategic relationship building activities, where people as long as competing with each other are working on their reputation. Wetsch states that personal branding is a necessity for personal and organizational success [2]. The ability to share photos and videos, as long as text messages and live streams makes Instagram a platform to build trust and credibility among users. With 1,1 billion users worldwide [6] and 12 463 200 Instagram users in Kazakhstan in March 2022 [7] this platform is already used for branding by commercials and becoming more popular for identity branding. The findings of Nolan’s research highlight the importance of personal branding in the non-profit sector, which may be used to engage their executives in successful personal communications processes that raise awareness [8]. Parmentier defined personal brand as “how people can position themselves to be successful in any career pursuit” [9]. The term includes such words as “impression,” “reputation,” “individual's strengths,” “uniqueness,” “image,” “self-promotion,” or “identity.” These definitions position personal branding as a person-centric activity, focused on managing how others view the individual.

Gorbatov made an analysis of 100 papers on personal branding comparing the definitions and resulting on their formulation:

*“Personal brand is a set of characteristics of an individual (attributes, values, beliefs, etc.) rendered into the differentiated narrative and imagery with the intent of establishing a competitive advantage in the minds of the target audience.”* [10]

It is becoming quite popular to be an insta-teacher now. Some examples are: @proactive.teacher @saharova.teacher @budni\_zacha. These are Kazakhstan teachers who managed to pick an audience and build a reputation via instagram blogs. Sharing interesting professional and personal content step by step leads to building a personal brand resulting in a high level of influence on the audience and attention from students and colleges not only at school but also from the whole world. However there is limited understanding of the process of personal branding.

This study is aimed to analyze the understanding of personal branding of Kazakhstani school teachers.

### **Purpose of the research**

This research aims to investigate the view of teachers on personal brand. The following subproblem was addressed within the framework of this general aim: what teachers know about personal brand?

### **Methodology**

This research study utilizes qualitative data. Structured interview forms were used to collect teacher viewpoints on the social personal branding, as well as obtaining more in-depth information.

### **Participants**

In this study, 181 teachers from different schools in Kazakhstan participated in the interview process, who were determined with a convenience sampling method. Convenience sampling is a type of nonprobability sampling in which people are sampled simply because they are "convenient" sources of data for researchers [11].

### **Research method**

In order to analyze obtained data descriptive analysis and content analysis methods were used. Descriptive analysis helps to identify and describe trends and variation in populations, create new measures of key phenomena, or describe samples in studies [12]. Content analysis is a method designed to interpret meaning in recorded forms of communication and is particularly useful in situations where there is a large amount of unanalyzed textual data [13]. The interview questions were sent to participants by google forms link. 181 replies were received in a text form. During content analysis replies were labeled with codes and sorted into categories developing into theme [13]. Results were converted into tables.

### Findings

To get replies at first the survey link was sent via messengers to teachers from BIL schools where 60 responses were received. Second stage included respondents with an instagram account due to its spread via instagram. At the end 181 teachers took part in the interview. Among 181 responding teachers 30 were male and 151 female. 138 teachers are familiar with the term “personal brand” and 43 haven’t heard about it. Inside the extent of the review, the principal inquiry question addressed to educators is, "How do you understand the term Personal brand?". *Table 1* records the codes, categories and the theme acquired from the content analysis.

*Table 1: understanding of personal brand by teachers*

Theme	Categories	Code	
How do you understand the term personal brand?	Have no understanding	Don't know	2
	Have little understanding	Profession, work, field	4
		Product, business	6
		Calling card	
		Blog, mass media, audience, content	
		Association, opinion, name	5
	Have good understanding	Unique, personal, distinguish	0
		Trust, recommendation	
		Recognition, popularity	3
		Reputation, authority, image	

There were 13 wrong replies including words *CV, knowledge, algorithm, spiritual values, logo, being helpful*, which are not included in *Table 1*.

Based on teachers' responses to the question, 10 codes were displayed and grouped into 3 categories. Participants who have no understanding of personal branding didn't reply to the question or claimed "*don't know*" the answer ( $n=32$ ).

Respondents with little understanding of the term personal brand were grouped under 4 codes: *profession, work and field* ( $n=34$ ), *product and business* ( $n=16$ ), *calling card* ( $n=3$ ), *blog, mass media, audience and content* ( $n=8$ ). Teachers from this Category limit personal brand to one area, such as:

*"This is a view and opinion about you from a professional side."* or *"This is the image that is formed about you in the professional community."*

Participants used code product and business, understand personal branding as:

*"Promotion of goods, services under the brand name", "A marketing ploy and a plan for a personal business", "Product that I release and people recognize me from the same product/brand"*.

And 8 teachers used in their responses words *blog, mass media, audience and content*:

*"Informational and interesting content that has its own vantage point and features", "Active maintenance of your page, promoting yourself as an expert", "What can attract and retain an audience"*.

Category with good understanding of personal branding were grouped under 5 codes. Teachers under code association, opinion, name ( $n=15$ ) defined personal brand as:

*"When there is a certain formed image, at the mention of a name",*

*"A personal brand is positioning yourself that is associated with you, not only as a person, but also as a teacher. And vice versa, values, qualities, not only as a teacher, but also as a simple person"*.

Participants under code unique, personal, distinguish ( $n=20$ ) understand the term as:

*"Personal qualities that distinguish you from others in the social world",*

*"What shows your uniqueness, promoting your philosophy and broadcasting your values; it's when you can be identified with a certain activity",*

*"A teacher's personal brand is when a teacher stands out with his name, achievements, etc."*.

Respondents under code trust, recommendation ( $n=9$ ) gave the answers:

*"A personal brand is when you are recommended by those who were not your client. This is the image that people form when they hear your name. For example, Richard Branson, Steve Jobs, Oleg Tinkov, Anatoly Wasserman and so on. You already have a certain impression about all these people."*

*"When you are trusted because you are you"*.

Code recognition, popularity ( $n=13$ ) was for responses:

*"Knowledge, skills, lifestyle, creativity, appearance, etc. of a certain person, by which other people recognize him in social networks, the media, etc."*

*"A personal brand is a recognizable, well-known name of a person who "made himself". In order to become a brand, a person must first become a professional in his field and be an identity."*

Teachers under code reputation, authority, image ( $n=9$ ) defined personal brand as:

*"Professional image that is formed about you in society, as well as reputation, strong personal qualities."*

*"Positive authority of the teacher in front of colleagues, students and parents."*

### **Conclusion**

The theme of understanding the term personal brand consisted of 10 codes with all of them correlated with the definition of Parmentier's personal brand [9]. Wetsch mentioned that building a personal brand includes developing personal skills as well as improving communication technologies, such as social media [2]. Thus, category under codes from one particular area, such as work or blog, have a little understanding of a term. Personal brand can not be limited by one field, it is a complex term and a long process of making a unique identity [14]. Online personal brands could be built as the sum of human personality characteristics with highlighted strengths,

goals based on confident attitude [15]. Thus, groups under code opinion, unique, trust, recognition and reputation were put into the category of having good understanding. Favorable impression in the online platform among the target audience can fulfill the self-esteem needs of individuals both in online and offline environments, which consequence is a successful personal branding [15]. The study shows that this direction needs to be studied and conveyed to Kazakhstani teachers in order to popularize the teaching profession and demonstrate the capabilities of teachers with a personal brand. Authority and reputation of teachers directly affects the professional status of educators. Further study will be aimed at the development of guidebook for teachers to build personal brand.

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