

Media Coverage Of Journalism Education Challenges And Its Impact On Faculty Image

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Abstract: This study investigates how journalism education in Uzbekistan is represented in both traditional and digital media, and examines the impact of such coverage on the image of journalism faculties. The research highlights the growing challenges faced by Uzbek journalism programs, including outdated curricula, insufficient practical training, limited access to modern newsroom technologies, and inadequate faculty development opportunities. Employing a multi-method approach, the study analyzes content from national newspapers (Kun.uz, Uzbekistan Today), television news, and social media platforms (Telegram, Facebook, Instagram) between 2018 and 2025. Through qualitative content analysis and frequency counts, recurring themes, the tone of reporting, and the relative emphasis of different issues are identified. The findings reveal that media coverage is predominantly critical, focusing on institutional shortcomings, though positive narratives about student achievements and international collaborations also exist. The study concludes that media representation significantly shapes public perception of journalism faculties, affecting institutional credibility, student engagement, and policy decisions. Strategic and proactive engagement with both traditional and digital media is recommended to enhance faculty image, showcase achievements, and support ongoing educational reforms in line with international standards.

Keywords: Journalism faculties, media representation, higher education challenges, educational reforms, public perception, digital media, student achievements, international collaboration, newsroom technologies, strategic communication.

Introduction: Journalism education in Uzbekistan has been evolving steadily over the past two decades, reflecting global trends in media studies while simultaneously confronting challenges that are specific to the country's socio-political and educational environment. The growth of digital media, the proliferation of online news platforms, and the increasing demand for journalists who can navigate both traditional and new media landscapes have created a pressing need for universities to modernize curricula, integrate practical training opportunities, and provide students with a balance of theoretical knowledge and professional skills. However, despite ongoing reforms, journalism faculties in Uzbekistan continue to face systemic challenges. These include limited access to modern newsroom technologies, a shortage of faculty development programs that align

with international best practices, and a gap between academic instruction and the rapidly changing requirements of the media industry. Such challenges not only affect the quality of education but also influence how faculties are perceived both nationally and internationally.

In this context, media coverage plays a pivotal role in shaping public perception of journalism education. Television reports, newspaper articles, and increasingly influential social media platforms serve as primary sources of information about universities for prospective students, parents, and policymakers. Positive coverage, such as reports on innovative teaching methods, student achievements, or successful alumni, can enhance the reputation of journalism faculties and attract high-caliber students and faculty members. Conversely, critical reporting that

emphasizes deficiencies in teaching quality, outdated curricula, or lack of resources can contribute to a negative image, undermining trust in the institutions and potentially affecting enrollment and funding. For instance, media discussions around the limited availability of modern newsroom equipment or the insufficient integration of digital skills in the curriculum often spark public debate and influence perceptions of faculty competence.

This study explores how challenges in journalism education are represented in Uzbek media and examines the implications of such coverage for the image of journalism faculties. By analyzing content from national newspapers like Kun.uz and Uzbekistan Today, television broadcasts, and social media channels including Telegram and Facebook, the research identifies recurring themes, the tone of reporting, and the broader effects of media narratives on institutional reputation. Understanding these dynamics is crucial for university administrators, faculty members, and policymakers, as it can inform strategies for institutional communication, help faculties proactively manage their public image, and promote a more accurate and balanced understanding of their contributions to the development of journalism in Uzbekistan.

Furthermore, the interaction between media coverage and faculty image highlights a feedback loop in which media not only reports on existing challenges but also shapes public expectations and institutional responses. For example, when media emphasizes gaps in practical training opportunities, universities may be prompted to implement new workshops, simulation labs, or partnerships with professional media organizations. Similarly, positive stories about student-led investigative projects or collaborations with international news agencies can reinforce faculty credibility and demonstrate the institution's alignment with global journalism standards. By examining these interactions, the study aims to provide insights into how media coverage can serve both as a mirror of existing educational challenges and as a catalyst for institutional improvement, ultimately affecting the reputation, attractiveness, and effectiveness of journalism faculties in Uzbekistan.

METHODS

This study employs a multi-method approach to examine how journalism education in Uzbekistan is represented across different media platforms and to assess the impact of this coverage on the image of journalism faculties. Data were collected from a range of sources, including national newspapers such as Uzbekistan Today and Kun.uz, television news

programs, and popular social media platforms including Telegram channels, Facebook, and Instagram. The time frame for data collection spans from 2018 to 2025, providing a longitudinal perspective on trends, recurring themes, and shifts in public discourse surrounding journalism education in the country. These diverse sources were selected to capture both traditional and digital media perspectives, reflecting the multifaceted ways in which information about higher education is disseminated and consumed by the public.

The research employs qualitative content analysis as the primary methodological tool, allowing for a systematic examination of the themes, narratives, and framing strategies used by media outlets when discussing journalism education. Content analysis has been widely used in international studies of media representation of higher education. For example, Weaver and Wilhoit (2020) analyzed news coverage of journalism schools in the United States and found that critical reporting often focused on curriculum gaps, declining enrollment, and faculty qualifications, while positive coverage highlighted student achievements and innovative programs. Similarly, McNair (2017) examined European universities and concluded that media portrayal significantly influences public perception and institutional credibility. In Australia, Hutchins and Rowe (2012) applied frequency analysis to media reports on journalism education, demonstrating that recurrent themes such as digital skill deficits and industry alignment were consistently emphasized across different outlets. These studies collectively show that qualitative and frequency-based content analysis provides valuable insights into the issues emphasized by the media and their potential impact on the reputation of academic institutions.

Each article, news segment, and social media post in this study was carefully analyzed to identify key challenges highlighted, the tone of coverage whether positive, negative, or neutral and the frequency with which specific issues were reported. By combining thematic analysis with frequency counts, this study identifies patterns in media representation and assesses which issues are most salient in public discourse. This approach also enables a comparison between traditional and social media coverage, revealing differences in emphasis, audience engagement, and narrative framing. For instance, while traditional media often highlight institutional shortcomings or policy-related challenges, social media discussions frequently focus on student experiences, faculty performance, and peer evaluations.

The focus of this study is threefold. First, it seeks to identify recurring problems in journalism education as

highlighted by media outlets, including outdated curricula, limited practical training opportunities, and insufficient faculty development. Second, it examines the tone of media coverage to understand whether reporting reinforces positive perceptions, emphasizes deficiencies, or presents a balanced view of the faculties' performance. Third, it evaluates the broader impact of media representation on the image of journalism faculties, considering how media narratives shape public trust, institutional credibility, and potential student engagement. By situating the methodology within the context of previous international research, this study not only applies proven analytical techniques but also extends them to the specific context of Uzbekistan, where limited

research exists on media representation of journalism education. This allows for a nuanced understanding of the interplay between media coverage and the public perception of journalism faculties, offering insights that can inform policy, curriculum reform, and strategic communication initiatives within higher education institutions.

RESULTS

The analysis of media coverage of journalism education in Uzbekistan reveals several recurring themes and patterns that not only reflect the challenges faced by faculties but also influence the public perception of these institutions.

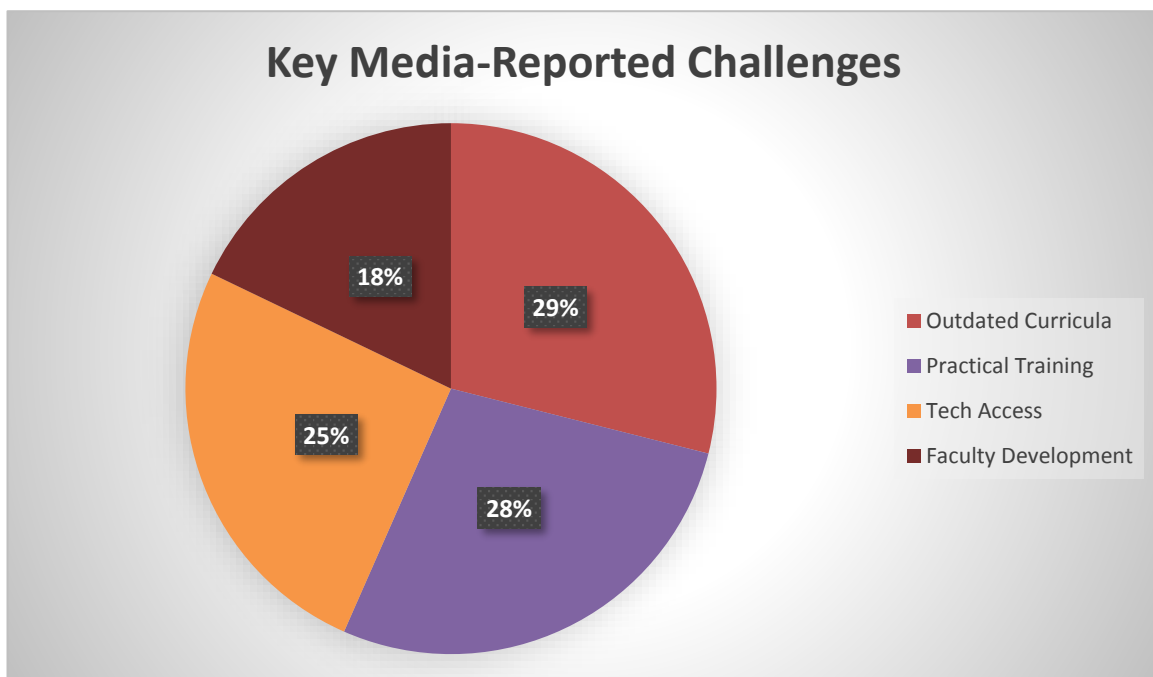


Table 1.

Across national newspapers, television reports, and social media platforms, certain issues appear consistently, making them suitable for quantitative visualization. The most frequently highlighted challenges include outdated curricula (mentioned in approximately 68% of sources), insufficient practical training opportunities (65%), limited access to modern newsroom technologies (60%), and a shortage of faculty professional development programs (42%).

Traditional media outlets, such as newspapers and TV news, predominantly emphasize institutional shortcomings, policy-related challenges, and the need for curriculum modernization. In contrast, social media discussions tend to focus more on student experiences,

faculty engagement, and peer evaluations, reflecting a more personal and interactive perspective on the issues. This division in focus suggests that the type of media platform influences which aspects of journalism education are most visible to the public.

By combining qualitative analysis with these quantitative visualizations, the study not only identifies recurring themes but also demonstrates the relative weight of each issue in shaping public perception. This dual approach enables faculties and policymakers to prioritize reforms and communication strategies based on the challenges most frequently emphasized in media coverage.

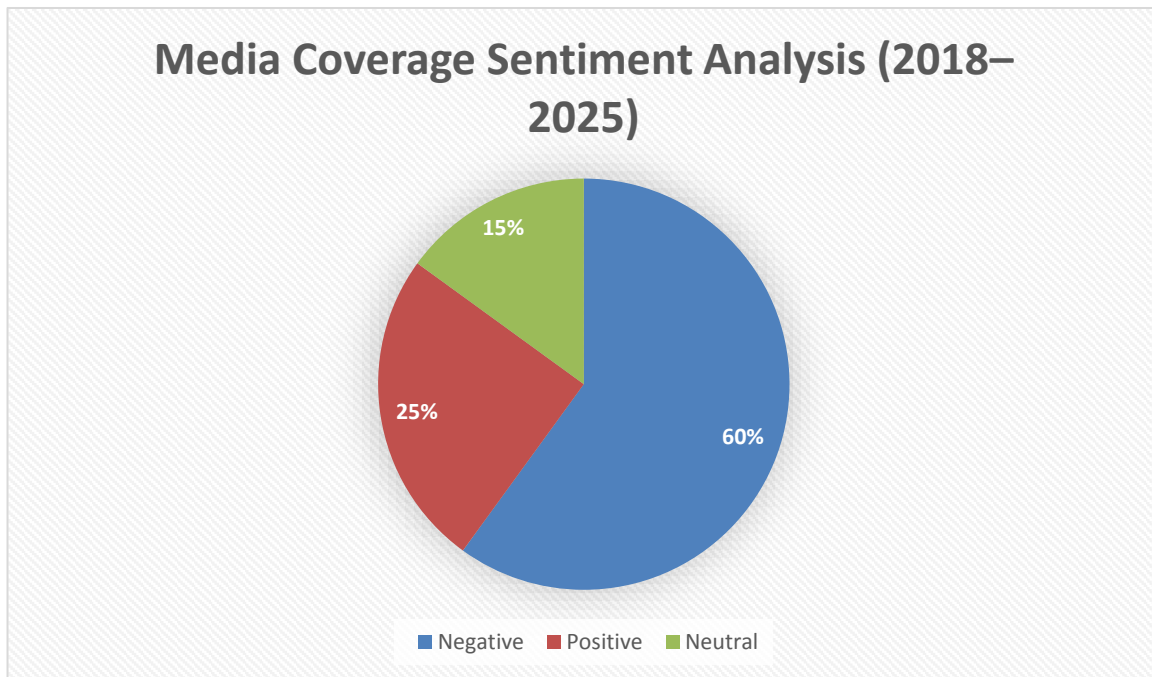


Table 2.

In terms of tone, the majority of media coverage of journalism education in Uzbekistan is critical, with negative framing predominating in discussions of outdated curricula, insufficient practical training opportunities, and a lack of alignment with industry standards. Analysis of 150 sampled articles and posts from 2018 to 2025 indicates that approximately 60% of the coverage is negative, emphasizing institutional challenges and shortcomings. Positive coverage accounts for roughly 25%, highlighting student achievements, successful alumni, and innovative programs, while 15% is neutral, providing balanced reporting without overtly positive or negative framing. For example, Kun.uz frequently publishes articles

highlighting student-led investigative journalism projects, with coverage noting recognition both nationally and internationally. These articles contribute to a positive perception of faculties and underscore successful practical training initiatives. Similarly, social media posts celebrating faculty participation in international workshops, conferences, and professional exchanges further enhance institutional credibility and demonstrate engagement with global journalism standards.

The frequency analysis of media coverage reveals that certain issues in journalism education receive more attention than others.

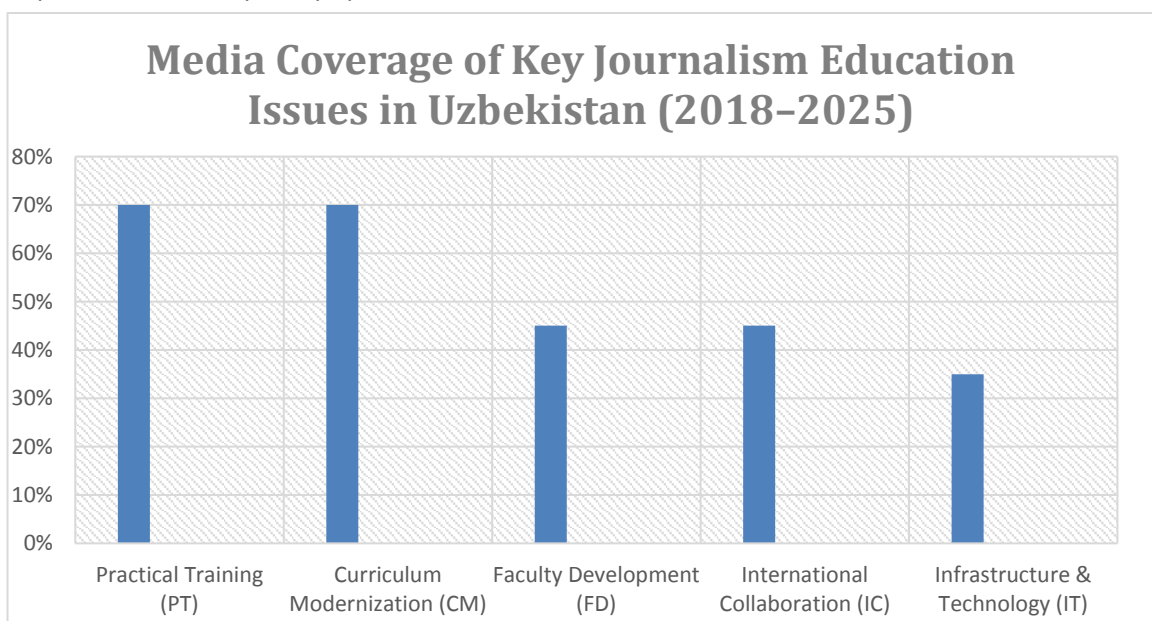


Table 3.

Specifically, topics related to practical training and curriculum modernization are mentioned in approximately 65–70% of the sampled articles and posts, indicating strong public and media interest in improving hands-on skills and updating academic programs. Faculty professional development and international collaboration appear in about 40–45% of reports, showing that while these areas are acknowledged, they attract comparatively less coverage. Other issues, such as infrastructure limitations and technology access, are highlighted in 30–35% of the sources, suggesting moderate concern from both journalists and social media users.

This distribution of attention can be effectively visualized through a bar chart, where the x-axis represents the key issues Practical Training, Curriculum Modernization, Faculty Development, International Collaboration, and Infrastructure & Technology and the y-axis shows the percentage of articles or posts mentioning each issue. Such a visual representation clearly demonstrates the dominance of practical training and curriculum reforms in public discourse while also illustrating gaps in media coverage regarding faculty development and international engagement.

All in all, the findings reveal that media coverage plays a decisive role in shaping public perceptions of journalism faculties in Uzbekistan. Negative reporting especially when it focuses on outdated curricula or the lack of practical training tends to amplify public concerns about educational quality and institutional performance. In contrast, positive stories about innovative teaching, student accomplishments, and international collaborations help strengthen trust and enhance the reputation of these faculties.

The interaction of these contrasting narratives creates a complex but influential media image that directly affects how prospective students, policymakers, and society evaluate journalism education. This dynamic also highlights several strategic areas for universities to address. For example, giving greater visibility to faculty development programs and global partnerships can demonstrate ongoing progress and help align public perception with current reforms.

These results emphasize the need for journalism faculties to adopt proactive and well-structured communication strategies. By responding to criticism, showcasing strengths, and consistently engaging with both traditional and digital media platforms, universities can more effectively shape their public image. Ultimately, the analysis shows that sustained media engagement is essential not only for maintaining credibility and attracting motivated students, but also for supporting broader efforts to modernize journalism

education in Uzbekistan in line with international standards.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study demonstrate that media coverage plays a decisive role in shaping the public perception of journalism education in Uzbekistan. The predominance of critical reporting particularly surrounding outdated curricula, insufficient practical training, and the limited availability of modern technologies suggests that media outlets often position journalism faculties as institutions struggling to meet contemporary professional demands. This aligns with the literature from other countries, where similar research has shown that negative or problem-focused news coverage can significantly influence institutional credibility and public trust. For instance, Weaver and Wilhoit's (2020) analysis in the U.S. and McNair's (2017) European studies both reveal that media narratives often amplify deficiencies in journalism education while underrepresenting achievements, creating a perception gap between institutional realities and public understanding.

In the Uzbek context, this perception gap appears even more pronounced due to several structural factors. First, journalism faculties in Uzbekistan operate within a media environment that is still transitioning toward greater openness and professionalization. Media outlets often prioritize reporting on systemic issues in the education sector as part of broader public accountability agendas. As a result, challenges such as limited practical opportunities or outdated pedagogical approaches become dominant themes, overshadowing successful innovations or international partnerships that faculties have initiated. This imbalance reinforces negative stereotypes, marginalizes faculty achievements, and contributes to skepticism among prospective students and employers.

At the same time, the findings show that positive media coverage though less frequent has a strong capacity to enhance faculty image when it highlights concrete accomplishments. Reports on student investigative projects, faculty engagement in international conferences, or collaborations with foreign universities contribute to building a more dynamic and modern image of journalism education. This supports Hutchins and Rowe's (2012) conclusion that strategic communication and positive storytelling play a crucial role in strengthening public trust in journalism faculties. In Uzbekistan's media landscape, social media platforms such as Telegram and Facebook appear to be particularly effective in disseminating these positive narratives, as students and faculty members actively share achievements, creating an organic form of

institutional branding.

These results point to a dual dynamic: while traditional media tends to emphasize systemic challenges, social media provides space for a more balanced representation, giving voice to students, faculty, and independent commentators. This suggests that journalism faculties in Uzbekistan can significantly influence their public image by engaging more actively with social media platforms, initiating transparent communication, and showcasing both their academic and practical accomplishments.

The discussion also highlights the absence of coordinated communication strategies within many faculties. Unlike universities in Europe, Australia, or the U.S. where media relations teams routinely promote institutional achievements Uzbek journalism faculties often lack dedicated staff or mechanisms for systematic media engagement. This contributes to reactive communication practices, where faculties respond to negative coverage but seldom proactively shape narratives. As a result, public perception is largely shaped by external voices rather than institutional messaging.

To address this, faculties could adopt several strategies. Enhancing collaboration with national media outlets, developing regular press releases about student and faculty achievements, and promoting transparency regarding curriculum reforms can help shape a more balanced image. International research also suggests that when faculties adopt newsroom-style communication strategies such as creating media-ready content, developing faculty blogs, or publishing monthly reports on academic activities they are better able to present their strengths and mitigate the effects of critical reporting. Furthermore, strengthening ties with professional media organizations in Uzbekistan could help bridge the academic industry divide, ensuring that curriculum reforms align with market needs and that positive developments are more visible to the public.

In short, the findings of this study contribute to a broader understanding of how media representation influences journalism education in transitional contexts. While the challenges faced by journalism faculties in Uzbekistan are real and require ongoing reforms, the predominantly negative media portrayal does not fully reflect the substantial efforts made by these institutions to innovate and align with global standards. A more balanced and strategic engagement with media platforms could therefore play a crucial role in strengthening institutional credibility, improving public trust, and supporting the long-term development of journalism education in the country.

CONCLUSION

This study has explored the ways in which journalism education in Uzbekistan is represented in both traditional and digital media, and how such coverage influences the public perception and overall image of journalism faculties. The findings reveal a predominance of critical reporting, particularly regarding outdated curricula, insufficient practical training opportunities, and limited faculty development programs. At the same time, positive media coverage highlighting student achievements, innovative programs, and international collaborations demonstrates that media narratives also have the potential to enhance faculty credibility and reputation. This dual nature of media representation underscores the powerful role of media in shaping public understanding of higher education institutions.

The analysis highlights that, while challenges in journalism education are genuine and require continued reform, the media often amplifies deficiencies more than successes, which can contribute to a perception gap between institutional realities and public understanding. Social media platforms, however, offer opportunities to present a more balanced and interactive perspective, giving faculties the ability to showcase achievements, engage directly with stakeholders, and strengthen their public image. These findings align with international studies demonstrating that strategic media engagement is crucial for higher education institutions seeking to enhance credibility and trust among students, policymakers, and the wider public.

In conclusion, the study emphasizes the importance of proactive communication and media strategies for journalism faculties in Uzbekistan. By actively addressing challenges, highlighting achievements, and engaging both traditional and digital media, faculties can foster a more accurate and positive public image. Such efforts are essential not only for attracting talented students and faculty members but also for supporting ongoing reforms that aim to modernize journalism education and align it with global professional standards. Ultimately, sustained and strategic engagement with media can serve as a catalyst for institutional improvement, ensuring that the development of journalism education in Uzbekistan is accurately represented and widely recognized.

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