

THE ROLE OF MASS MEDIA IN SHAPING THE IMAGE OF UZBEKISTAN

Mohichehra Orziqulova

*University of Journalism and Mass Communications
of Uzbekistan, @orziqulovamohichexra@mail.com*

Abstract: *This article analyzes the role of mass media (MM) and journalists in shaping the international image of Uzbekistan. In particular, it examines media activities in the field of tourism, journalistic approaches, the effectiveness of information policies, and regional tourism potential using the examples of Samarkand, Bukhara, and the Fergana Valley. The paper explores how the “Great Silk Road” concept contributes to forming Uzbekistan’s tourism brand and enhancing its global recognition.*

INTRODUCTION

In the era of globalization, a country's image is shaped in the international arena through information flows. Digital communications, social networks, and mass media have become the main platforms that reflect the political, economic, cultural, and touristic potential of nations. Since gaining independence, Uzbekistan has been striving to create a positive image in the world community through its rich cultural heritage, historical monuments, and hospitality. In this process, the role of the media and journalists is crucial, as they determine how the country is portrayed to the world and what values are emphasized.

The Role of Mass Media in Shaping Uzbekistan’s Image

Mass media play a crucial role as a “soft power” resource on the global stage. In recent years, Uzbekistan has seen the emergence of TV channels, internet platforms, and journalistic content specialized in promoting tourism. Projects such as “Dunyo Bo‘ylab”, and “Uzbekistan Travel” have introduced tourist destinations not only to the local but also to international audiences. The effective functioning of the media contributes to creating a positive image of the country and strengthening the trust of foreign investors and tourists. Therefore, journalists act not only as information providers but also as creators of the national brand.

Journalists’ Approaches to Covering Tourism

Journalists covering tourism are expected to think analytically, understand regional culture, and grasp the psychology of the international audience. When journalists approach tourism topics creatively and culturally, tourism opportunities become more visible. Instead of merely listing historical sites, showing their modern relevance and connection to local life makes journalistic content more engaging. Therefore, journalists are now using new formats such as experiential journalism, travel blogging, and multimedia storytelling. As a result, foreign audiences develop a warm and trustworthy image of Uzbekistan, which helps increase the flow of tourists.

Samarkand: Historical Heritage and Modern Image

Samarkand is the heart of Uzbekistan's tourism. The Registan Ensemble, Shah-i-Zinda, and Ulugh Beg Observatory are priceless treasures of world civilization. When journalists produce materials about Samarkand, they should cover not only historical facts but also modern developments: new hotels, international forums, and projects such as the "Silk Road Samarkand" tourist complex that redefine the city's image. In both local and foreign media, Samarkand is promoted as the "Heart of the Great Silk Road," which helps attract more tourists by portraying the city as "living history."

Bukhara: The Center of Culture, Spirituality, and Religious Tourism

Bukhara attracts global attention with its ancient madrasas, mosques, and handicraft traditions.

For journalists, this city is a "living museum." Religious and educational tourism plays a key role in Bukhara's media coverage. Reports about the Bahouddin Naqshband Complex, Ark Fortress, and Labi-Hovuz Ensemble promote ideas of tolerance, peace, and spirituality.

As a result, Uzbekistan's image as a tolerant and culturally open country is reinforced. International outlets such as BBC Travel and Euronews often describe Bukhara as "The Jewel of Islamic Civilization," which stems from well-prepared journalistic storytelling.

Fergana Valley: Handicrafts and Cultural Tourism

The main focus of tourism in the Fergana Valley is ethnographic and cultural tourism. The Margilan silk-making center, Rishton ceramics school, and historical sites in Andijan and Kokand are living examples of national traditions.

When journalists cover this region, they should emphasize the human factor artisans, artists, and hospitable locals. "Showing reality through people" is a modern approach to tourism journalism. Reports, videos, and photo stories about the Fergana Valley portray Uzbekistan as a country of cultural diversity, which in turn attracts more tourists.

The Great Silk Road Concept and Mass Media

Since the 2020s, Uzbekistan has been revitalizing the "Great Silk Road" concept as a national tourism brand.

This initiative connects cities like Samarkand, Bukhara, Khiva, and the Fergana Valley into a unified cultural tourism system. By covering this concept internationally, the media promote Uzbekistan's historical role and values of peace and cooperation.

This process contributes not only to tourism development but also to strengthening the country's image on the global stage.

Conclusion

The role of mass media and journalists in shaping Uzbekistan's international image is of strategic importance. Tourism is one of the most dynamic fields in this process. If journalists can present historical heritage in a modern context and link regional tourism to human values, the tourist flow will naturally increase.

Samarkand represents the unity of history and innovation; Bukhara symbolizes spirituality and tolerance; the Fergana Valley embodies tradition and craftsmanship.

Responsible media practices, analytical journalism, and international cooperation will further strengthen Uzbekistan's positive image worldwide.

REFERENCES:

1. Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan on the "Concept for the Development of Tourism," 2019.
2. Annual Reports of the State Tourism Committee of Uzbekistan, 2023.
3. Karimova N. Mass Media and State Image: Theory and Practice. – Tashkent, 2021.
4. UNESCO. The Silk Roads Programme. – 2022.
5. BBC Travel. Uzbekistan: Rediscovering the Heart of the Silk Road., 2023.
6. Euronews Travel. Explore Samarkand and Bukhara: Living History of Central Asia., 2023.