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Transformation of Higher Education in Journalism in the Context of the Image of the Kyrgyz Republic

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Abstract. This article examines the modernization and transformation of higher journalism education in the Kyrgyz Republic in the context of digitalization and globalization of the information space. The relevance of this work stems from the need to improve the quality of journalism training as a factor in shaping the country's national and international image. The purpose of the study is to identify key areas for reforming journalism education, determine its compliance with modern media market requirements, and substantiate the role of educational changes in strengthening the state's image. The main ideas of the study relate to the integration of digital competencies, media literacy, ethical standards, and practice-oriented learning into the educational process. The research methods used include an analysis of regulatory documents and educational standards, a comparative analysis of the Kyrgyz journalism training system with models of leading foreign universities, and a summary of existing scientific and applied approaches. The scientific significance of this study lies in its systematization of the problems and trends in the development of journalism education in Kyrgyzstan. The practical significance of the study lies in the formulation of specific recommendations for improving curricula, strengthening the material and technical infrastructure, developing international cooperation, and facilitating university engagement with the media. The study identified key issues: a discrepancy between program content and media practice requirements, insufficient technical equipment, and a shortage of qualified personnel. The findings demonstrate that the effective transformation of journalism education is a strategic factor in shaping a positive image of the Kyrgyz Republic as an open, innovative, and democratic state. The study's value lies in its comprehensive contribution to the development of the theory and practice of journalism education and the development of practical areas for its modernization, which can be used in shaping educational policy and in the activities of specialized universities.

Keywords: journalism education; digitalization; media literacy; personnel training; state image.

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Introduction

The processes of digitalization, globalization of the information space, and transformation of the media environment are significantly reshaping the requirements for journalism education. Higher education in journalism is no longer limited to an academic function; it has become a strategic mechanism for developing human capital, fostering media culture, and strengthening the international image of a state. The quality of training media professionals directly influences the development of freedom of speech, the level of public trust in mass media, and a country's competitiveness in the global information landscape.

For the Kyrgyz Republic, the modernization of journalism education has become particularly relevant in the context of the rapid digital transformation of the media industry, the expansion of online communication, and the need to align with international educational standards. These changes necessitate a reconsideration of educational content, the integration of digital competencies, and the implementation of practice-oriented learning models. The aim of this study is to analyze the transformation of higher education in journalism and to assess its impact on the formation of a positive image of the Kyrgyz Republic.

International scholarship views the transformation of journalism education as a natural response to structural changes in the media environment caused by digitalization, platform convergence, and networked communication. Scholars note that the traditional model of journalist training, primarily focused on print and broadcast media has become less effective, requiring a transition to a multimedia and competency-based educational paradigm.

Many researchers emphasize that journalism education should combine academic theory with professional practice. In this context, it is important to incorporate project-based learning, newsroom simulations, and real media production experience into university curricula, while also developing students' entrepreneurial and managerial competencies. Such approaches help reduce the gap between university training and the demands of the contemporary media industry.

Studies on the digital transformation of journalism highlight the importance of mastering new technological competencies, including multimedia storytelling, data analysis, mobile journalism, and work with digital platforms. The digital media environment not only changes the tools used by journalists but also transforms their professional roles, which requires continuous updating of educational standards and teaching methods.

In a broader perspective, the development of journalism education is closely linked to the social role of mass media and the functioning of democratic institutions. High-quality training of journalists contributes to strengthening public trust in media, promoting civic engagement, and enhancing the international reputation of states. Therefore, journalism education should be considered not only as a professional training system but also as a significant socio-political resource.

A review of international research demonstrates that most studies focus on institutional and technological aspects of modernization, such as curriculum reform, the introduction of digital tools, and the development of partnerships between universities and media organizations. However, the relationship between the transformation of journalism education and the formation of a country's image remains insufficiently explored, particularly in countries with transitional economies and developing media systems.

In Kyrgyz academic discourse, research on journalism education primarily addresses

organizational and methodological issues, while the image-building and communication effects of educational reforms receive limited scholarly attention. This research gap highlights the need for a comprehensive analysis of the relationship between the transformation of higher journalism education and the formation of the national and international image of the Kyrgyz Republic, which constitutes the scientific novelty of this study.

Table 1. International Ranking Indicators of the Kyrgyz Republic (2025)

Index / Ranking	Organization / Source	Kyrgyzstan's Position	Score	Dynamics	Key Indicators	Category / Assessment
Compliance of national legislation with international standards	Financial Intelligence Unit of the Kyrgyz Republic	Included in the Top 12 countries worldwide	n/a	n/a	High level of harmonization of national legislation with international standards	Positive international assessment
Global Soft Power Index (2025)	Brand Finance	145th place	28.8 points	+2 positions	Improvement in the indicators "Education and Science" and "People and Values"; decline in "Sustainable Future" and "Familiarity"	Moderate growth dynamics
World Press Freedom Index (2025)	Reporters Without Borders	144th out of 180	37.46 out of 100	Global decline	Low level of media freedom	Category: "Very serious situation"

The presented data demonstrate a mixed trajectory in the international image of the Kyrgyz Republic. On one hand, the country has received positive assessments regarding the alignment of its legislation with international standards and has improved its position in the Global Soft Power Index, particularly in the dimensions of "Education and Science" and "People and Values." The Kyrgyz Republic was ranked among the top 12 countries worldwide in terms of compliance of national legislation with international standards (Financial Intelligence Unit of the Kyrgyz Republic, n.d.).

In 2025, Kyrgyzstan advanced two positions in the Global Soft Power Index, reaching 145th place with a score of 28.8 points. This improvement was driven primarily by higher scores in the categories of "Education and Science" and "People and Values." At the same time, the country experienced a decline in indicators such as "Sustainable Future" and "Familiarity" (Kabar News Agency, n.d.).

On the other hand, serious challenges persist in the area of media freedom. This is reflected in the country's low ranking in the World Press Freedom Index, where Kyrgyzstan is classified in the category of "very serious situation." In 2025, the country ranked 144th out of 180, scoring 37.46 out of 100, indicating a critical situation for press freedom (Reporters Without Borders, 2025). The index notes that the overall global situation for media freedom continues to deteriorate rapidly.

In this context, journalism, as a social institution, remains a crucial element of democratic

society, shaping both domestic and international public perceptions of a country's image. Strengthening media freedom and professional journalism is therefore essential not only for domestic civic engagement but also for enhancing the Kyrgyz Republic's international reputation.

As noted by international media experts, university-level training retains significant advantages, as journalism today functions as an effective institution of a country's information policy.

Materials and Methods

This study employs a comprehensive set of materials and methods aimed at a thorough analysis of the relationship between the transformation of higher education and the media image of the Kyrgyz Republic. The research materials include official and strategic documents, empirical data, media content, and scholarly literature. Specifically, official and strategic documents analyzed comprise state regulatory acts governing the higher education system of the Kyrgyz Republic, university curricula, and strategic documents related to media policy. Additionally, authoritative studies and reports from international organizations in journalism and media, including UNESCO and the World Bank, served as foundational references.

Empirical data consist of survey results from students and faculty members of journalism faculties across universities, as well as structured interviews with experienced journalists and media experts. Media content analyzed includes publications relevant to journalism in domestic and international Kyrgyz media, particularly materials aimed at shaping the country's public image. Scholarly literature reviewed includes both domestic and international studies on higher education transformation, media image formation theories, and contemporary trends in journalism education.

The study applies a combination of theoretical-analytical methods, surveys, structured interviews, content analysis, and comparative analysis. Multi-level methodological approaches were employed, encompassing stages from theoretical analysis to the processing of empirical data.

In the initial stage, an in-depth analysis of theories on higher education transformation and media image formation was conducted. The theoretical-analytical method was used to identify patterns in the development of journalism education models and to define core conceptual categories. Foundational works by Altbach and Knight (2007), Goffman (1974), Freedman (2007), and others provided the theoretical framework. A total of 270 participants from 60 media organizations, 8 universities, and more than 25 public organizations, foundations, and NGOs shared their insights through interviews, meetings, and surveys. This approach allowed for the collection of direct insights regarding the effectiveness of educational programs and their role in shaping the country's image.

Content analysis was employed to identify elements shaping the national image in both domestic and international media spaces. This included quantitative text-based measurements and qualitative descriptive analysis (Krippendorff, 2019). Furthermore, international journalism education program models were compared with Kyrgyz university curricula, highlighting potential directions for educational transformation (Knight, 2004).

The integrated use of these materials and methods enabled a comprehensive and accurate assessment of the relationship between the transformation of higher education and the media image of the Kyrgyz Republic. Theoretical frameworks, empirical data, structured instruments, and content analysis collectively underpin the scientific validity of the study's results.

Literature Review

The transformation of higher education systems is a complex process, primarily achieved through aligning curricula with global standards, updating educational content, and developing professional competencies. Altbach and Knight (2007) emphasize that the internationalization of higher education is a critical factor in enhancing its quality (Altbach & Knight, 2007). Stankevich and Kramarenko (2025), examining the role of universities in digital transformation in Belarus and Kyrgyzstan, argue that universities function not only as centers for skills development and competency acquisition but also as intellectual hubs operating through networked collaboration. The authors also note that not all higher education institutions in these countries possess the necessary infrastructure to train specialists in contemporary fields (Stankevich & Kramarenko, 2025).

Many scholars link higher education transformation directly to journalism. For instance, Freedman, Gross, and Skoczylas have analyzed the integration of journalism education into Western models in former Soviet republics (Freedman & Shafer, 2013). These studies reflect the fact that current journalism curricula in Central Asia do not fully account for technological changes or contemporary professional standards. In the regional context, the relationship between journalism education and professional practice has been a particular focus for researchers. Studies by Kurambayev and Freedman emphasize the importance of ethics and professional standards in regional journalism education. They highlight deficiencies in ethics education and recommend broader integration into curricula. Additionally, they examine challenges arising from the “publish or perish” policy applied to media and journalism faculties, which, while incentivizing international publications, can undermine research quality and create ethical dilemmas (Kurambayev & Freedman, 2019).

Journalism education in Central Asia remains complex. Research indicates that remnants of the Soviet educational system persist, creating a gap between curricula and practical journalism training. Zaripova and Kurambayev (2019) in their studies *How the Journalists' Association Evaluates Journalism Education in Kazakhstan* note that journalism programs do not adequately respond to the rapidly evolving media environment, and students often lack technical skills and practical tools and highlight difficulties in implementing Western models and the outdated nature of educational materials. These findings underscore the importance of studying higher education transformation in Central Asia and its impact on journalism curricula in alignment with international standards (Zaripova and Kurambayev, 2019).

Regional initiatives have also emphasized the role of investigative journalism in higher education. The 11th Central Asian Conference on Media, organized by the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media in cooperation with the OSCE Center in Bishkek (2009), called on journalism schools to recognize investigative reporting as a tool of democracy and anti-corruption. The conference recommended integrating investigative journalism into curricula and including courses on journalist safety (OSCE, 2009).

Journalism programs play a critical role in shaping a country's media image. Media image formation depends on the quality of media production, professional ethics, and educational content. According to media image theory, the development of a country's media image is closely linked to journalists' professional qualifications (Goffman, 2001). Regional studies further indicate that raising ethical and professional standards in journalism is essential for improving media production quality and enhancing the media image of a country. Kurambayev and Freedman (2019), Myssayeva (2021) stress the need to comprehensively integrate ethics

and international standards into journalism curricula, demonstrating that these issues remain highly relevant, particularly in Central Asia.

The concept of image formation has been widely studied in media, branding, and communications research. Issues of image creation through corporate media and university branding have been examined in both regional and international studies, including the use of corporate media to enhance institutional reputation. Research on media image confirms the importance of journalism education in shaping a country's informational image; the quality of the education system directly influences the professional level of media production.

In summary, the literature indicates that transforming higher education in journalism involves aligning curricula with professional standards, integrating ethical norms, and creating practice-oriented educational content. Regional studies, including the works of Gross, Kurambayev, and Freedman, illustrate the critical role of journalism education in shaping the media image of a country. These studies highlight the need for policy and pedagogical strategies aimed at updating curricula and improving the media image within the context of the Kyrgyz Republic.

Results and Discussion

Currently, ten leading universities in the Kyrgyz Republic offer programs in journalism at the bachelor's and master's levels, with instruction provided in Kyrgyz, Russian, Turkish, and English. The academic quality of journalism education in Kyrgyz higher education institutions has attracted significant attention from both domestic media experts and independent international organizations.

Media outlets in Kyrgyzstan frequently criticize the current system of journalist training, citing a lack of practical skills among students. Over the past two decades, analyses have focused primarily on systemic challenges in the academic sphere of journalism in relation to the country's mass media. For example, a 2013 study conducted by the NGO "Journalists" with support from the Danish international organization International Media Support analyzed the activities of electronic media and online resources for the first time (OO Zhurnalisty, 2013). In 2020, under the project "Enhancing Professional and Legal Literacy of Journalists," the NGO "Journalists," supported by the Soros-Kyrgyzstan Foundation, conducted a study examining the state of Kyrgyz-language journalism (Ashiraliyev, 2020).

In this study, out of 120 journalists surveyed, 59% held higher education degrees in journalism, 7% were graduates of philology programs, and 34.2% held degrees in other disciplines such as engineering, programming, economics, political science, law, history, sociology, or biology, but were currently working in journalism.

Of particular interest is the study by media expert Gulnur Toraliyeva, "Journalism Education in Kyrgyzstan: A Need for Major Reform", which identifies key critical trends in the higher education system for journalism. Toraliyeva notes:

"Analysis of curricula, focus group discussions, and surveys showed that, despite differences in how journalism education is delivered across institutions, the challenges faced by most universities are similar" (Toraliyeva, 2019).

These challenges include low levels of foundational knowledge among students, insufficient faculty qualifications, a lack of textbooks, restrictive state curriculum standards limiting departmental autonomy, inadequate technical resources for teaching, and, most importantly, a fragmented search for a modern curriculum.

Professor Parida Bostonova, who established the first and only Department of Economic Journalism in Kyrgyzstan, emphasized that many media outlets require not just competent writers

but professionals with expertise in economics, law, psychology, and other fields. Consequently, journalism students need both theoretical knowledge and applied disciplines that can be utilized in practice, such as psychology, computer literacy, economics, environmental studies, law, media technologies, photography, newspaper design, and technical layout (Bostonova, 2009, p.149).

In 2021, international journalism education experts from Ukraine and the United Kingdom collaborated with Kyrgyz colleagues to analyze the challenges and potential resources of journalism faculties in Kyrgyzstan (Cabar Asia, 2021). The expert team conducted in-person interviews with program directors at five universities: Kyrgyz National University named after J. Balasagyn, Bishkek State University named after K. Karasaev, Kyrgyz-Slavic University named after B. Yeltsin, Kyrgyz State University named after I. Arabaev, and the American University of Central Asia.

These findings highlight both the progress and persistent challenges in Kyrgyz journalism education, underscoring the need for curriculum modernization, enhanced faculty training, and the integration of practical and multidisciplinary skills to better prepare graduates for the evolving demands of the media industry.

Based on surveys and interviews, experts reached the following conclusions regarding journalism education in Kyrgyzstan:

- Approximately 70% of the curriculum consists of theoretical courses.
- A significant portion of instructional hours is devoted to humanities subjects, such as Kyrgyz language and literature and Russian language and literature.
- Contemporary courses, such as news journalism and data journalism, are absent.
- There is a shortage of modern journalism literature, particularly in the Kyrgyz language.
- Many students demonstrate insufficient proficiency in Kyrgyz and Russian.

Consequently, experts concluded that the current model of journalism education in state universities of Kyrgyzstan is outdated and does not meet the latest requirements of the media industry.

In 2023, a country-level study was conducted under the UNESCO Almaty Office project “Media Development Indicators”, which examined four key categories. One of the most relevant categories was “Building professional capacity and supporting institutions that strengthen freedom of expression, pluralism, and diversity” (UNESCO Almaty, 2023). The comprehensive content analysis identified significant challenges in both the practical and academic spheres of media education and provided actionable recommendations for modernizing higher education programs in journalism (program code - 530600).

To ensure transparency, accessibility, and objectivity, the experts conducted a combination of online and offline meetings, interviews, and surveys with a wide range of stakeholders.

Table 2. Stakeholder Participation in the Needs Assessment Process

Stakeholder Group	Organizations Represented	Participants
Program directors, media managers, technical staff, and journalists	60 leading media outlets	120
Faculty members from journalism departments	8 universities	56

Public organizations, foundations, and NGOs working in the media sector	More than 25 organizations	94
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A total of 270 participants from 60 media organizations, 8 universities, and more than 25 public organizations, foundations, and NGOs shared their insights through interviews, meetings, and surveys. Their contributions helped ensure that the needs assessment captured a wide range of perspectives from both the media industry and academia.

Most interviewees, including media managers and journalists, emphasized that journalism students need to acquire knowledge in the following areas:

- Media and information literacy
- Cybersecurity and information security
- Multimedia technologies
- Data journalism
- Fact-checking
- Gender sensitivity
- Language and style of journalistic texts
- Hate speech and xenophobia
- Legal foundations
- Podcast production
- Infographics
- Photodesign

As of 2025, Kyrgyzstan has ten journalism faculties and departments across different universities. The American University of Central Asia (Bishkek), Kyrgyz-Turkish University Manas (Bishkek), and the University of Central Asia (Naryn) follow international standards. These universities, supported by investments from the USA, Turkey, and the Aga Khan Foundation, are technically equipped with training television and radio studios. However, experts noted that these programs tend to focus more on strategic communications and public relations than on core journalism skills.

Globally, one of the main indicators of high-quality journalism education as seen at institutions such as MIT, Oxford, and Cambridge, is the success of graduates in achieving professional career growth in the labor market. In contrast, graduates from Kyrgyz journalism programs currently face significant challenges: many are unable to find employment in their field or achieve meaningful professional advancement.

This raises a critical question: why? The system of higher education in journalism in Kyrgyzstan faces several key challenges that must be addressed to ensure the modernization of these educational programs.

Findings and Key Challenges

Analysis of survey and interview data revealed that all journalism faculties and departments across Kyrgyz universities share a common and significant problem: admission policies for first-year students in journalism programs. In state universities, admissions to journalism programs rely solely on the results of the ORT (Unified National Test). Exceptions include the American University of Central Asia (AUCA), which uses a combination of internal exams and

ORT certificates, as well as the Kyrgyz-Turkish University Manas and the University of Central Asia, both of which conduct internal entrance examinations.

Interviews indicated that a large proportion of high school graduates enroll in journalism programs primarily to obtain a higher education diploma rather than out of professional interest. Additionally, faculties and departments accept students without clear guidance from stakeholders regarding the number of specialists required or the positions they are expected to occupy in the media industry.

Respondents also noted the need to include specialized courses in curricula that foster ethical and moral values in future journalists. Furthermore, there is no unified policy among journalism faculties and departments regarding which professional models of journalism are most relevant in Kyrgyzstan and internationally, whether broad-based generalists or specialists with in-depth expertise.

Additional structural challenges include:

- Lack of standard formats for degree recognition and conversion for Bachelor's and Master's programs in journalism.
- Limited academic mobility opportunities for journalism students domestically and internationally.
- Mismatch between students' professional skills and the demands of the media industry.
- Insufficient equipment in television and radio studios and creative laboratories.
- Limited practical journalism experience among faculty members.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The analysis demonstrates that journalism education is directly linked to how the Kyrgyz Republic is perceived both domestically and internationally. Today, a journalist is not merely a content producer; they are a professional shaping public opinion, influencing societal values, and contributing to the international image of the state.

Modern challenges, including digitalization, the growth of social media, information risks, and competition for audience attention necessitate a substantial update of higher education programs in journalism. Journalism training must integrate foundational knowledge, practical skills, technological literacy, and a strong ethical framework.

Global experience shows that multiple models of journalism education exist, ranging from university-based bachelor's and master's programs to short-term professional courses and journalism schools. Nevertheless, the university model remains the most foundational and sustainable, as it fosters systematic thinking, professional identity, and academic culture in future journalists.

Therefore, reforms to journalism education for the 2026–2027 academic year should be comprehensive and long-term. The profession requires early identification of talented and motivated youth. Without rigorous selection, it is impossible to ensure high-quality training. Curricula need updating with an emphasis on practical skills and modern media formats. Theoretical foundations remain essential but must be closely integrated with real media practice. Developing ethical and moral values is a key component of journalist training, as journalists significantly shape public discourse and the country's image.

The university-based model should remain central, complemented by flexible learning formats and professional development programs. Training should balance generalist education with the opportunity for specialization aligned with labor market demands.

Practical measures for updating Program - 530600 for 2026–2027 include:

- Establishing pre-university preparatory programs, such as specialized colleges and media classes, to allow talented youth to enter universities with foundational skills.
- Strengthening the ethical and educational components of curricula, including media literacy, professional responsibility, and information security.
- Expanding practical training through partnerships with media organizations, internships, and the creation of modern teaching media studios with practicing journalists involved in instruction.
- Developing multi-level educational pathways: bachelor's programs provide foundational knowledge, master's programs deepen professional competencies, and short-term practice-oriented courses and continuing education programs ensure ongoing development.

Modern journalists must be versatile and adaptable, demonstrating proficiency in digital technologies, data analysis, multimedia production, and fact-checking. Simultaneously, faculties can offer specialized tracks based on available resources and market needs.

Implementing these reforms will produce more competitive graduates and strengthen the professional capacity of the national media sector. Reforming journalism education must focus not only on updating curricula but also on cultivating a new generation of professionally competent, ethically responsible, and technologically prepared journalists. Only a comprehensive approach from pre-university preparation to continuous professional development, can ensure sustainable growth of the media sector and enhance the positive image of the Kyrgyz Republic both domestically and internationally.

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**Қырғыз Республикасының имиджі контекстінде
«Журналистика» білім беру бағытын трансформациялау**

Аңдатпа. Бұл мақалада Қырғыз Республикасындағы журналистік білім беруді жаңғырту және ақпараттық кеңістікті жаһандандыру жағдайында жоғары білім беру саласын трансформациялау қарастырылады. Бұл жұмыстың өзектілігі елдің ұлттық және халықаралық имиджін қалыптастыру факторы ретінде журналистік дайындық сапасын жақсарту қажеттілігінен туындайды. Зерттеудің мақсаты - журналистік білім беруді реформалаудың негізгі бағыттарын, оның қазіргі заманғы медиа нарығының талаптарына сәйкестігін анықтау және мемлекеттің имиджін нығайтудағы білім беру өзгерістерінің рөлін айқындау. Зерттеудің негізгі идеялары білім беру процесіне цифрлық құзыреттіліктерді, медиа сауаттылықты, этикалық стандарттарды және тәжірибеге бағытталған оқытуды интеграциялауға қатысты. Қолданылған зерттеу әдістеріне нормативтік құжаттар мен білім беру стандарттарын талдау, қырғыз журналистикасын оқыту жүйесін жетекші шетелдік университеттердің модельдерімен салыстырмалы талдау және қолданыстағы ғылыми және қолданбалы тәсілдердің қысқаша мазмұны кіреді. Бұл зерттеудің ғылыми маңыздылығы Қырғызстандағы журналистік білім беруді дамытудағы мәселелер мен үрдістерді жүйелеуде жатыр. Зерттеудің практикалық маңыздылығы оқу бағдарламаларын жетілдіру, материалдық-техникалық инфрақұрылымды нығайту, халықаралық ынтымақтастықты дамыту және университеттердің БАҚ-пен өзара іс-қимылын жеңілдету бойынша нақты ұсыныстарды тұжырымдау. Зерттеу бірнеше негізгі мәселелерді анықтады: бағдарлама мазмұны мен БАҚ тәжірибесіне қойылатын талаптар арасындағы сәйкессіздік, техникалық жабдықтың жеткіліксіздігі және білікті кадрлардың жетіспеушілігі. Зерттеу нәтижелері журналистік білім беруді тиімді түрде өзгерту Қырғыз Республикасының ашық, инновациялық және демократиялық мемлекет ретіндегі оң имиджін қалыптастырудағы стратегиялық фактор екенін көрсетеді. Зерттеудің құндылығы журналистік білім беру теориясы мен тәжірибесін дамытуға және оны жаңғыртудың практикалық бағыттарын әзірлеуге қосқан жан-жақты үлесінде жатыр, оны білім беру саясатын қалыптастыруда және мамандандырылған университеттердің қызметінде пайдалануға болады.

Түйін сөздер: журналистік білім беру; цифрландыру; медиа сауаттылық; кадрларды даярлау; мемлекеттің имиджі.

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Трансформация высшего образования по направлению «Журналистика» в контексте имиджа Кыргызской Республики

Аннотация. В статье исследуются процессы модернизации и трансформации высшего журналистского образования в Кыргызской Республике в условиях цифровизации и глобализации информационного пространства. Актуальность работы обусловлена необходимостью повышения качества подготовки журналистских кадров как фактора формирования национального и международного имиджа страны. Цель исследования заключается в выявлении ключевых направлений реформирования журналистского образования, определении его соответствия современным требованиям медиарынка и обосновании роли образовательных изменений в укреплении имиджевого потенциала государства. Основные идеи работы связаны с интеграцией цифровых компетенций, медиаграмотности, этических стандартов и практико-ориентированного обучения в образовательный процесс. В качестве методов исследования использованы анализ нормативных документов и образовательных стандартов, сравнительный анализ кыргызской системы подготовки журналистов с моделями ведущих зарубежных университетов, а также обобщение существующих научных и прикладных подходов. Научная значимость работы заключается в систематизации проблем и тенденций развития журналистского образования в Кыргызстане. Практическая значимость состоит в формулировании конкретных рекомендаций по совершенствованию учебных программ, укреплению материально-технической базы, развитию международного сотрудничества и взаимодействия вузов со средствами массовой информации. В результате исследования выявлены ключевые проблемы: несоответствие содержания программ требованиям медиапрактики, недостаточная техническая оснащённость и дефицит квалифицированных кадров. Полученные выводы свидетельствуют о том, что эффективная трансформация журналистского образования выступает стратегическим фактором формирования позитивного имиджа Кыргызской Республики как открытого, инновационного и демократичного государства. Ценность исследования заключается во внесении комплексного вклада в развитие теории и практики журналистского образования и разработке прикладных направлений его модернизации, которые могут быть использованы при формировании образовательной политики и в деятельности профильных вузов.

Ключевые слова: журналистское образование; цифровизация; медиаграмотность; подготовка кадров; имидж государства.

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