HSR (LONDON),
HOUGHTON STREET REVIEW JOURNAL
ISSN: 2058-5519|Impact factor-15.9
http://houghtonstreetreview.com/index.php/hsr

DEVELOPMENT OF TRAVEL JOURNALISM IN UZBEKISTAN

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Abstract. This article scientifically analyzes the formation, stages of development, modern trends and role of travel journalism in Uzbekistan in the popularization of the tourism industry. It also covers the state policy implemented in the country to develop tourism, the impact of digital media, social networks, blogging and multimedia journalism on travel journalism. The current issues of promoting the historical and cultural heritage, natural tourist potential and national values of Uzbekistan in the international arena through travel journalism are revealed. The results of the study serve to identify promising areas for the development of travel journalism and strengthen the country's tourism brand.

Keywords: travel journalism, tourism, Uzbekistan tourism, media, digital journalism, tourism marketing, tourist brand, cultural heritage, travel journalism, multimedia, social networks.

Annotatsiya. Ushbu maqolada O'zbekistonda sayyohlik jurnalistikasining shakllanishi, rivojlanish bosqichlari, zamonaviy tendentsiyalari va turizm sanoatini ommalashtirishdagi roli ilmiy tahlil qilinadi. Shuningdek, unda mamlakatda turizmni rivojlantirish bo'yicha amalga oshirilayotgan davlat siyosati, raqamli media, ijtimoiy tarmoqlar, blog yuritish va multimedia jurnalistikasining sayyohlik jurnalistikasiga ta'siri yoritilgan. Sayyohlik jurnalistikasi orqali O'zbekistonning tarixiy va madaniy merosi, tabiiy sayyohlik salohiyati va milliy qadriyatlarini xalqaro maydonda targ'ib qilishning dolzarb masalalari ochib berilgan. Tadqiqot natijalari sayyohlik jurnalistikasini rivojlantirishning istiqbolli yo'nalishlarini aniqlash va mamlakatning sayyohlik brendini mustahkamlashga xizmat qiladi.

Kalit so'zlar: sayyohlik jurnalistikasi, turizm, O'zbekiston turizmi, ommaviy axborot vositalari, raqamli jurnalistika, sayyohlik marketingi, sayyohlik brendi, madaniy meros, sayyohlik jurnalistikasi, multimedia, ijtimoiy tarmoqlar.

Аннотация. В данной статье проводится научный анализ формирования, этапов развития, современных тенденций и роли туристической журналистики в Узбекистане в популяризации туристической индустрии. Рассматривается также государственная политика страны по развитию туризма, влияние цифровых медиа, социальных сетей, блогинга и мультимедийной журналистики на туристическую журналистику. Выявлены актуальные проблемы продвижения историко-культурного наследия, природного туристического потенциала и национальных ценностей Узбекистана на международной арене посредством туристической журналистики. Результаты исследования позволяют определить перспективные направления развития туристической журналистики и укрепить туристический бренд страны.

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Ключевые слова: туристическая журналистика, туризм, туризм в Узбекистане, медиа, цифровая журналистика, туристический маркетинг, туристический бренд, культурное наследие, туристическая журналистика, мультимедиа, социальные сети.

Introduction. In today's globalization and digital transformation, travel journalism is one of the most rapidly developing areas of the media. This area is emerging as an important communicative tool for promoting the tourist potential of countries, introducing their historical and cultural heritage to the world, developing domestic and foreign tourism, and forming a positive image of regions. In particular, the popularity of online publications, social networks, video platforms, and mobile applications is transforming travel journalism from traditional journalism to digital multimedia journalism.

In recent years, special attention has been paid to the development of tourism as one of the strategic sectors of the economy in Uzbekistan. The country's rich historical and cultural heritage, historical cities such as Samarkand, Bukhara, Khiva, and Shahrisabz, unique architectural monuments, and the opportunities for ecological and pilgrimage tourism are increasingly attracting the attention of international tourists. In this process, travel journalism is becoming an important factor in widely promoting the country's tourist potential, providing reliable information, and strengthening the national tourism brand.

Travel journalism is a scientific and practical direction that serves not only to cover travel impressions, but also to comprehensively cover history, culture, ethnography, gastronomy, ecology, and modern tourism infrastructure. Today, along with professional journalists, bloggers, content creators, and media influencers have also become important participants in the tourist information space. Therefore, the authenticity of information, visual quality, multimedia technologies, and interactive communication with the audience are of paramount importance in travel journalism.

The purpose of this article is to analyze the stages of development of travel journalism in Uzbekistan, its place in the modern media space, its importance in the development of tourism, and its promising directions from a scientific, theoretical, and practical perspective. The impact of the reforms implemented by the state in the field of tourism and information and communication on the development of travel journalism is also covered.

Literature Review. Travel journalism is one of the fastest growing areas of the modern mass communication system, and its theoretical foundations were formed at the intersection of journalism, communication, tourism, marketing, and media studies. In the world scientific literature, travel journalism is considered not only a means of disseminating information about travel, but also an important communication mechanism that creates a tourist image of the region, develops a national brand, and supports economic growth.

Among world scientists, one of the researchers who scientifically substantiated the theory of travel and tourism is John Urry[2]. In his work "The Tourist Gaze", the formation of how tourists perceive a certain region through the media, advertising, photography, and travel journalism is scientifically substantiated. According to the scientist, the choice of a tourist is determined not by the natural or historical object itself, but by the image created in the media.

Dean MacCannell, evaluating tourism as a cultural phenomenon of modern society, emphasizes that the main task of travel journalism is to introduce the tourist to cultural heritage and truthfully depict the authentic environment. His scientific views remain relevant even in today's digital media environment[3].

The famous scientist in tourism marketing Philip Kotler pays special attention to the role of media and journalism in the concept of regional marketing. According to him, the tourist attractiveness of a country is formed primarily through reliable information, high-quality visual

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content and effective media communications. Therefore, travel journalism is an integral part of tourism marketing[4].

With the development of digital media, travel journalism has also changed radically. Scientific research has widely covered the importance of blogs, vlogs, podcasts, virtual tours, artificial intelligence and social networks in creating travel content. In particular, according to the theory of multimedia journalism, the modern audience pays more attention to video, photos, infographics and interactive maps than to text. As a result, travel journalism is moving from traditional newspapers and television to digital platforms.

A number of scientific studies have also been conducted by Uzbek scientists on tourism and journalism issues. Local studies emphasize the role of the media in promoting Uzbekistan's rich historical and cultural heritage, pilgrimage, ecological, gastronomic and ethnotourism opportunities in the international arena[1]. Researchers note that, along with professional journalists, bloggers, content creators and media influencers are also increasingly playing an important role in covering the country's tourism potential.

In recent years, the development of travel journalism in Uzbekistan has become one of the priorities of state policy. The Presidential Decree adopted on January 12, 2024, set out a set of measures to sharply increase the flow of foreign tourists and develop domestic tourism[5]. This document sets out the tasks of actively promoting the country's tourism potential in the international information arena, expanding media campaigns and effectively using modern means of communication[6].

The Presidential Decree of July 18, 2024, introduced new mechanisms to further improve tourism infrastructure, create a new national tourism brand of Uzbekistan, organize international media campaigns, and attract foreign journalists, bloggers, and content creators to the country. This document was an important milestone in the development of travel journalism[7].

The Presidential Decree for 2025–2026 set a priority task to sharply expand the volume of tourism services, increase the flow of foreign tourists, develop domestic tourism, and increase Uzbekistan's competitiveness in the international tourism market[8].

The widespread use of international media, travel journalism, and digital communication tools is recognized as an important factor in achieving these goals.

The state has also adopted a number of decisions aimed at improving the system of personnel training for the tourism sector, training modern media specialists, developing tourism marketing, and strengthening regional branding. These documents create a solid legal basis for training professional travel journalists, expanding cooperation with international media, and strengthening the positive image of the country[9,10].

An analysis of scientific literature shows that travel journalism today is not just a direction that highlights travel impressions, but also a strategic communication tool that strengthens the country's economic development, investment attractiveness, international image, and cultural diplomacy. The experience of Uzbekistan also shows that it is developing in this direction in line with global trends.

Methodology. This study used a comprehensive methodological approach to scientifically study the development trends of travel journalism in Uzbekistan. The research methodology was based on the integration of media and communication theory, journalism, tourism, marketing, and information and communication technologies. This approach allowed for a thorough analysis of not only the place of travel journalism in the mass media system, but also its strategic importance in promoting the country's tourism potential.

The theoretical basis of the study was the scientific work of international and local scholars in journalism, media communication, tourism marketing, digital journalism, and media economics. In

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particular, modern concepts of travel journalism development, multimedia journalism, convergent media, digital platforms, visual communication, and the principles of creating tourist content were studied. Also, regulatory and legal documents aimed at the development of tourism and mass media in the Republic of Uzbekistan, presidential decrees, resolutions, state programs, and strategic development concepts were analyzed.

The comparative-analytical method was widely used during the study. Through this method, the stages of development of travel journalism in Uzbekistan were compared with international experience. In particular, the specific aspects of the development of travel journalism in Great Britain, the USA, Germany, Japan, Turkey and South Korea and their impact on national tourism policy were studied and analyzed in comparison with the experience of Uzbekistan. This method made it possible to identify the strengths and weaknesses of our country's travel journalism.

Using the content analysis method, travel-related materials published in national and foreign media, Internet publications, tourism portals, social networks and video platforms were analyzed in terms of content. During the analysis, special attention was paid to the topic of the articles, genre characteristics, information sources, the level of use of visual materials, factors influencing the audience, multimedia elements and the use of interactive tools.

Based on a systematic approach, travel journalism was assessed as a component of the media system. This approach made it possible to identify the inextricable link between travel journalism, the tourism industry, public administration, marketing, information technologies and international communications. The relationship of travel journalism with tourism infrastructure, hotel business, transport services, cultural heritage sites and regional branding was scientifically covered.

Using the statistical analysis method, the development indicators of the tourism sector in Uzbekistan, the dynamics of domestic and foreign tourism, the flow of foreign tourists, the volume of tourism services and the trends in the popularity of travel content on media platforms were analyzed. Based on statistical data, the level of influence of travel journalism on tourism development was scientifically assessed.

Also, based on the observation method, the practical activities of travel journalism at tourism fairs, international tourism forums, cultural festivals, tourist routes and mass media events in our country were studied. This made it possible to analyze the methods of travel journalists in collecting information, checking facts, preparing photo and video materials and communicating with the audience.

During the research, induction and deduction methods were used, general scientific conclusions were drawn from individual observed cases, and the prospects for the development of travel journalism were determined based on existing theoretical views. Using analysis and synthesis methods, scientific sources, regulatory and legal documents, and practical experience were systematized and summarized.

This methodological approach allowed for a comprehensive study of the factors influencing the development of travel journalism in Uzbekistan, a scientific assessment of its role and prospects in the modern media space. The results obtained will serve to develop scientifically based recommendations on increasing the effectiveness of travel journalism in promoting the country's tourism potential, improving the use of digital media, and implementing international experiences into national practice.

Results and Discussion. The results of the study of the development of travel journalism in Uzbekistan show that in recent years this direction has been gaining significant strategic importance not only in the mass media system, but also in the tourism industry and national branding policy. The main result identified during the study is that travel journalism has moved beyond the traditional

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information function and has now become a multifunctional communication tool that shapes the country's image, increases investment attractiveness, and strengthens cultural diplomacy.

As a result of the analysis, it was found that three main factors have a strong influence on the development of travel journalism in Uzbekistan: the first is state policy and regulatory framework; the second is digital media and technological transformation; the third is competition in the global tourism market and the expansion of international communications. In particular, the special attention paid to the issue of promoting the country in the international information space, along with the development of tourism, in Presidential decrees and state programs has strengthened the institutional foundations of travel journalism.

During the discussion, it was found that travel journalism in Uzbekistan is developing mainly in two directions: the first is professional journalism (television, newspapers, online publications), and the second is digital and social media (bloggers, vloggers, influencers and independent content creators). These two directions, in harmony with each other, are giving effective results in bringing the country's tourism potential to a wider audience.

The results of the study also show that the main topics of travel journalism content in Uzbekistan are focused on historical and cultural heritage, pilgrimage tourism, ecological areas, gastronomy and ethnotourism. However, from the point of view of modern trends, there is a lack of interactivity, visual quality, storytelling style and multimedia elements in the content. This indicates the need to introduce new methodological approaches for the development of the industry.

The analysis also confirmed that the travel journalism audience on digital platforms is expanding rapidly. Travel content distributed through social networks, YouTube, Instagram, TikTok and Telegram channels is gaining greater reach and speed compared to traditional media. This requires journalists not only to prepare text, but also to develop skills in visual storytelling, video editing, geolocation and working with interactive maps.

According to the results of the discussion, another important problem of travel journalism in Uzbekistan is the lack of professional personnel and insufficient development of specialized educational programs. Although many content creators have practical experience, the level of scientific and methodological training and compliance with journalistic standards is not always high. This can affect the reliability and professional quality of information.

In addition, the opportunities created by the state are having a positive impact on the development of travel journalism. The expansion of tourism infrastructure, an increase in the flow of international tourists, the opening of new tourist destinations and the introduction of digital marketing strategies are contributing to the improvement of the quality of media content. At the same time, the attraction of foreign media representatives and bloggers to Uzbekistan contributes to the formation of a positive global image of the country.

In general, the results of the study show that travel journalism is a promising and rapidly developing direction in the conditions of Uzbekistan. For the further development of this area, it is necessary to strengthen the system of training professional journalists, widely introduce multimedia and digital technologies, and expand international cooperation. On this basis, travel journalism will become an important strategic tool in promoting the country's tourism potential on a global scale.

Conclusions. The results of this study showed that the formation and development of travel journalism in Uzbekistan is taking place gradually, and this direction is gaining strategic importance in the modern media system. Today, travel journalism, in addition to providing simple travel information, has become an important tool for shaping the country's tourist image, promoting its cultural heritage, and creating a positive brand in the international arena.

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The analysis confirmed that the development of travel journalism in Uzbekistan is directly influenced by state policy, digital transformation, and global media trends. The processes of developing tourism infrastructure, increasing the flow of international tourists, and integrating the country into the global tourism market based on presidential decrees and state programs create broad opportunities for travel journalism. At the same time, social networks and digital platforms have significantly expanded the audience of this direction.

According to the results of the study, the current state of travel journalism in Uzbekistan is at the development stage, in which the level of professional content production, use of multimedia tools, and adaptation to international standards has not yet been fully formed. In particular, opportunities for storytelling, visual journalism, and interactive content creation need to be expanded.

Recommendations. Based on the above research, the following recommendations can be made.

1. It is recommended to introduce special curricula in travel journalism and digital journalism in higher education institutions and strengthen practical training. This will serve to improve the professional and creative skills of future journalists.

2. It is necessary to widely introduce a multimedia approach in creating travel journalism content, that is, effectively use video, photos, infographics, podcasts and interactive maps. This will increase the audience coverage and improve the quality of content.

3. It is recommended to develop special media projects, documentaries and the creation of serial content on digital platforms on the tourist regions of Uzbekistan.

4. It is necessary to strengthen the image of Uzbekistan in the global media arena by expanding cooperation with international travel journalists, bloggers and content creators.

5. It is advisable to organize advanced training courses, trainings and international seminars for journalists working in the field of travel journalism.

6. It is recommended to strengthen cooperation between tourism organizations and the media, simplify the information exchange system and create an open database.

In conclusion, travel journalism is a strategic direction that plays an important role in the economic, cultural and social development of Uzbekistan. Its further development will increase the country's competitiveness in the international tourism market and serve to strengthen the national brand.

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ISSN: 2058-5519|Impact factor-15.9
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