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### **EVOLVING LANDSCAPE OF JOURNALISM EDUCATION: CHALLENGES, INNOVATIONS, AND FUTURE PROSPECTS IN UZBEKISTAN**

#### **ABSTRACT**

This study investigates the current state of journalism education, with a focus on its challenges, innovative practices, and future prospects. It seeks to illuminate often-overlooked aspects of journalism training and its impact on journalistic quality and effectiveness. By providing a comprehensive understanding of journalism education, the research highlights its strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities for improvement. It examines curriculum, teaching methods, and challenges faced by journalism schools, thereby informing policymakers, educators, and journalists about the crucial role of journalism education in shaping the future of the profession.

The research employs a mixed-methods approach, integrating qualitative and quantitative research techniques. Qualitative methods, such as interviews and case studies, are employed to gather in-depth insights from journalism educators, students, and practitioners. Quantitative methods, including surveys and data analysis, are utilized to collect and analyze numerical data on enrollment trends, curriculum content, and student outcomes. The research findings reveal key trends and challenges in journalism education, such as declining enrollment in journalism programs, the need to adapt curricula to incorporate new technologies and skills, and the importance of promoting diversity and inclusion.

Furthermore, the study identifies innovative approaches, such as immersive journalism and data journalism, which have the potential

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### **O'ZBEKISTONDA JURNALISTIKA TA'LIMINING RIVOJLANAYOTGAN MANZARASI: MUAMMOLAR, INNOVATSIYALAR VA KELAJAK ISTIQBOLLARI**

#### **ANNOTATSIYA**

Ushbu tadqiqot jurnalistika ta'limining hozirgi holatini o'rganadi, uning muammolari, innovatsion amaliyotlari va kelajak istiqbollariga e'tibor qaratadi. Ayni tadqiqot, xususan, jurnalistika ta'limining ko'pincha e'tibordan chetda qoladigan jihatlari va uning jurnalistika sifati va samaradorligiga ta'sirini yoritishga qaratilgan. Jurnalistika ta'limi haqida har tomonlama tushuncha berib, tadqiqot uning kuchli-zaif tomonlari va takomillashtirish imkoniyatlarini ta'kidlaydi. U jurnalistika maktablari oldida turgan o'quv dasturlari, o'qitish usullari va muammolarini o'rganib chiqadi, siyosatchilar, o'qituvchilar va jurnalistlarni kasbning kelajagini shakllantirishda jurnalistika ta'limining hal qiluvchi roli haqida xabardor qiladi.

Tadqiqotda sifat va miqdoriy tadqiqot usullarini birlashtirgan aralash usullardan foydalanilgan. Jurnalistika sohasi o'qituvchilari, talabalar va amaliyotchilarning chuqur tushunchalarini to'plash uchun intervyu va amaliy tadqiqotlar kabi sifatli metodlar qo'llanilgan. So'rovlar va ma'lumotlarni tahlil qilish kabi miqdoriy usullar ro'yxatga olish tendensiyalari, o'quv dasturlari mazmuni va talabalar natijalari bo'yicha raqamli ma'lumotlarni to'plash va tahlil qilish uchun qo'llanildi. Tadqiqot natijalari jurnalistika ta'limidagi asosiy tendensiyalar va muammolarni, jumladan, jurnalistika dasturlariga qabul qilishning kamayishi, o'quv dasturlarini yangi texnologiyalar va ko'nikmalarni o'z ichiga olish uchun moslashtirish zarurati hamda

to enhance the quality of journalism training. Based on the research findings, it is evident that journalism education is at a critical juncture. While the profession faces significant challenges, there are also opportunities for innovation and improvement. By addressing the identified challenges and embracing new approaches, journalism schools can play a vital role in ensuring that journalism remains a trusted and essential source of information in society.

**Key words:** journalism education, media landscape, curriculum, challenges, innovations, technological advancements, societal shifts, future of journalism, diversity, inclusion.

xilma-xillik va inklyuzivlikni rag'batlantirish muhimligini ochib beradi.

Bundan tashqari, tadqiqot jurnalistika malakasini oshirish sifatini oshirish potentsialiga ega bo'lgan immersiv jurnalistika va data jurnalistika (ma'lumotlar jurnalistikasi) kabi innovatsion yondashuvlarni aniqlaydi. Tadqiqot natijalariga ko'ra, jurnalistika ta'limi hal qiluvchi pallada ekani ko'rinib turibdi. Kasb muhim muammolarga duch kelgan bo'lsa-da, yangilik va takomillashtirish uchun imkoniyatlar ham mavjud. Belgilangan muammolarni hal qilish va yangi yondashuvlarni qo'llash orqali jurnalistika maktablari jurnalistika jamiyatda ishonchli va muhim axborot manbayi bo'lib qolishini ta'minlashda muhim rol o'ynashi mumkin. Birgalikda ishlash orqali mazkur manfaatdor tomonlar jurnalistika ta'limini kuchaytirish, raqamli asrda sifatli jurnalistika tamoyillarini qo'llab-quvvatlash bo'yicha samarali strategiyalarni ishlab chiqishlari mumkin.

**Kalit so'zlar:** jurnalistika ta'limi, media manzarasi, o'quv dasturi, muammolar, innovatsiyalar, texnologik yutuqlar, jamiyatdagi o'zgarishlar, jurnalistikaning kelajagi, xilma-xillik, inklyuziya.

## INTRODUCTION

In an era defined by rapid technological advancements and profound societal shifts, the role of journalism has never been more critical. As a cornerstone of democracy, journalism serves as a watchdog, informing the public, and holding power to account. Yet, the very institutions tasked with training the next generation of journalists, journalism schools, are themselves facing unprecedented challenges. In the book by K.Fawler-Watt, the evolving landscape of journalism education, examining the challenges posed by the digital age, declining trust, and societal shifts. It offers insights into innovative approaches to journalism pedagogy, including the integration of media literacy and immersive journalism, to equip future journalists with the skills and knowledge needed to navigate these complex times [Tullah et al., 2024].

The history of journalism education is deeply intertwined with the evolution of the media industry. From the early days of apprenticeship-based training to the establishment of formal journalism programs in universities, the field has undergone significant transformations. The advent of the printing press in the 15th century marked a turning point, as increased literacy and access to information led to a growing demand for skilled communicators. Newspapers, magazines, and later radio and television, provided platforms for journalists to disseminate information and shape public opinion. In response to these developments, journalism programs began to emerge in universities across the globe. For instance, the Columbia University Graduate School

of Journalism was established in 1912, becoming one of the first formal journalism programs in the United States. By the mid-20th century, journalism schools had become a common feature in universities worldwide. The digital revolution of the late 20th and early 21st centuries has had a profound impact on the media landscape and, consequently, on journalism education. The rise of the internet, social media, and mobile devices has created new opportunities for journalists to reach audiences and disseminate information.

However, it has also presented significant challenges, such as the proliferation of misinformation, the blurring of lines between news and opinion, and the increasing pressure to produce content quickly and cheaply. The Pew Research Center reported in 2021 that 83% of Americans get news from digital sources, a significant increase from 2000 when only 35% of Americans reported getting news online. This shift has had a profound impact on journalism education, as journalism schools have struggled to keep pace with the rapid changes in the media industry. The relationship between critical online reasoning and student performance in journalism education exhibits more strategic information seeking and utilization strategies [Beliaeva, 2024]. While online learning offers several advantages, such as flexibility and accessibility, it also presents challenges, including technical difficulties, lack of interaction, and reduced learning engagement [Okela, 2024; 49]. Despite the critical role it plays in society, journalism education faces numerous challenges. Some of the most pressing include (See Figure 1):

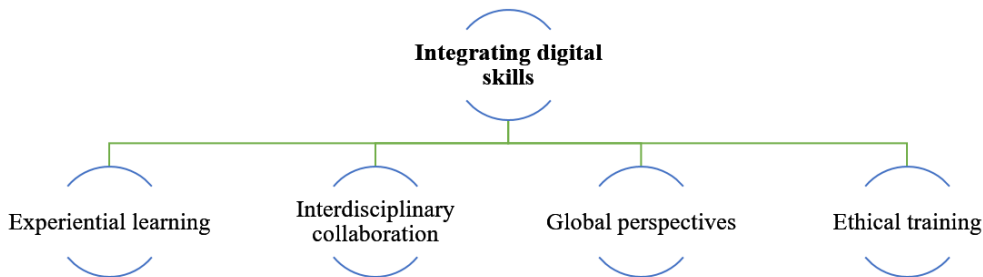
*Figure 1. Challenges in journalism education*

<i>Declining enrollment</i>	Journalism programs have experienced a decline in enrollment in recent years, as students may be drawn to other fields perceived as more lucrative or stable.
<i>Funding shortages</i>	Many journalism schools struggle to secure adequate funding, which can limit their ability to invest in resources, faculty, and student support services. A 2020 survey by the Reynolds Journalism Institute found that 60% of journalism schools reported experiencing budget cuts or freezes in recent years.
<i>Ethical issues</i>	Journalists face increasing ethical challenges in the digital age, such as the pressure to produce content quickly, the temptation to sensationalize news, and the risk of spreading misinformation. A 2019 survey by the Poynter Institute found that 75% of journalists reported facing ethical challenges in their work.
<i>The rise of digital media</i>	The rise of digital media has led to a more fragmented and competitive news landscape. Journalists may be expected to work on multiple platforms, produce content quickly, and adapt to changing audience preferences. A 2023 study by the Tow Center for Digital Journalism found that 70% of journalists reported feeling overwhelmed by the pace of change in the industry.
<i>Lack of diversity</i>	The journalism profession remains predominantly white and male, despite efforts to promote diversity and inclusion. A 2022 study by the American Society of News Editors (ASNE) found that 83% of newsroom employees were white and 71% were male.

In response to these challenges, journalism schools are exploring innovative

approaches to education (See Figure 2):

**Figure 2.** Innovative approaches in journalism education



- *Integrating digital skills* incorporate new technologies and skills into the curriculum to prepare students for the digital age.
- *Experiential learning* provides students with hands-on experience through internships, fieldwork, and simulations.
- *Interdisciplinary collaboration* fosters collaboration with other disciplines to broaden students’ perspectives and skills.
- *Ethical training* emphasizes ethical considerations and professional standards in journalism education.
- *Global perspectives* promote understanding of global issues and diverse cultures through international exchange programs and global journalism initiatives. By studying the industry’s labor practices and marketing tactics, journalists can gain insights into the complex relationship between capitalism, culture, and public health [Biltekoff, 2024].

**Uzbek context**

Uzbekistan, like many countries, has its own unique challenges and opportunities in journalism education. While specific data may vary, the general trends and challenges discussed above are likely to be relevant to the Uzbek context as well. It is important to consider the specific legal and regulatory framework in Uzbekistan, such as the Law on Mass Media, the Decrees of the President of Uzbekistan related to journalism and media. Moreover, as Uzbekistan is undergoing significant legislative reforms in the information sector, notably with the development of an Information Code aimed at unifying existing laws to better regulate the information sphere. This initiative seeks to align the country’s information legislation with modern trends and address issues such as privacy rights and the dissemination of personal and confidential information online [“Information code”, 2022]. These new regulations provide updated guidelines on media ethics, digital journalism, and journalist protections, significantly influencing journalism education and practice in the country. In July 2024, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) reviewed Uzbekistan’s draft Information Code. The OSCE acknowledged positive aspects, including the prohibition of censorship and media monopolization, and the promotion of equal access to information. However, concerns were raised

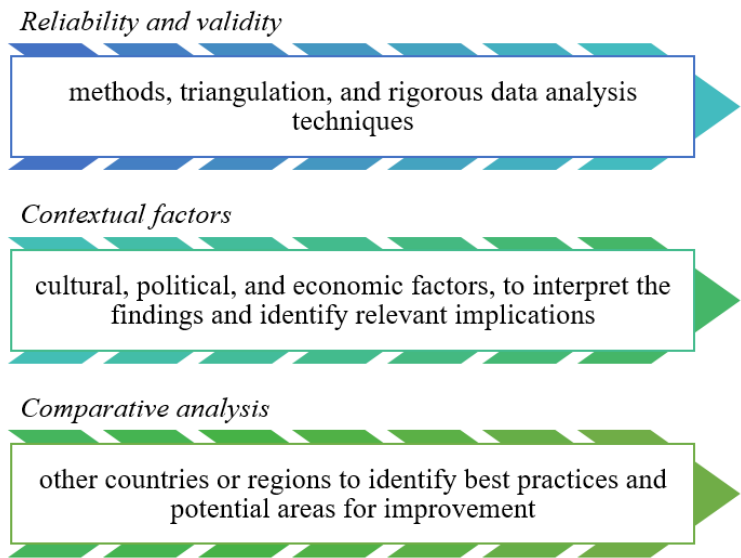
about potential centralization of media regulation under government control, broad criteria for content restrictions, and the suspension or termination of media activities, which could impede journalistic work. The OSCE recommended broad consultations with media and civil society to ensure the code aligns with international standards on freedom of expression and media freedom [“Uzbekistan’s draft information”, 2024]. Additionally, in December 2024, Uzbekistan enacted a new State Secrets Law to enhance national security. This law defines categories of information considered state secrets, establishes confidentiality levels, and outlines penalties for violations [“Uzbekistan enacts”, 2025]. Importantly, it prohibits the classification of information related to human rights violations and legal breaches by government bodies, aiming to balance national security interests with transparency and accountability.

## METHODS

This study employs a mixed-methods research design, combining quantitative and qualitative research techniques to provide a comprehensive and nuanced understanding of the evolving landscape of journalism education in Uzbekistan. Quantitative methods provide a broad overview, allowing for generalizations and statistical analysis, while qualitative methods offer in-depth insights into individual experiences and perspectives. Combining multiple data collection and analysis methods enhances the validity and reliability of the findings by identifying patterns, inconsistencies, and contradictions that might be missed using a single approach. Qualitative data provides a deeper understanding of the social, cultural, and historical factors influencing journalism education in Uzbekistan, contextualizing quantitative findings. A mixed-methods design is well-suited for addressing research questions that require both broad-based information and in-depth exploration. Survey data was collected from journalism students, faculty, and industry professionals in Uzbekistan. The survey included questions on curriculum content, teaching methods, student satisfaction, career outcomes, and perceptions of journalism education. In-depth interviews and focus groups were conducted with journalism educators, students, and industry professionals to gather detailed information about their experiences and perspectives. Case studies of specific journalism programs were also conducted to explore successful practices and challenges. Descriptive statistics were used to summarize the survey data, including frequencies, percentages, and means. Inferential statistics were employed to test hypotheses and identify significant relationships between variables. According to the challenges of curriculum transformation in South African higher education institutions, tension between external forces, such as political and economic reforms, and internal academic considerations, tracing the development of the University of Port Elizabeth’s BA in Media, Communication and Culture, the article underscores the need for a balanced approach that incorporates both external pressures and internal academic expertise to ensure effective curriculum change in journalism education [Jordaan, 2007; 77]. Looking back to one of the research projects conducted in Georgia, a post-Soviet nation, has made strides in press freedom, emerging as a beacon of media independence in the region. However, its

journalism education, while improving, still bears the mark of Soviet-era influence. A comparative analysis of a leading university’s curriculum with UNESCO standards reveals areas for improvement, particularly in the realm of accreditation, which needs to be strengthened to ensure the quality of journalism education in Georgia [Gersamia & Freedman, 2017; 323]. Correlation analysis was conducted to examine the relationships between different variables, such as student satisfaction, curriculum content, and job placement. Thematic analysis was used to identify common themes and patterns in the interview and focus group data. Coding was employed to categorize and organize the data, allowing for systematic analysis. Case study analysis involved a detailed examination of individual cases to identify key factors contributing to their success. Informed consent was obtained from all participants prior to their involvement in the study. Participant confidentiality was maintained throughout the research process. Data was stored securely and in compliance with ethical guidelines (See Figure 3):

*Figure 3. Ethical guidelines*



By combining quantitative and qualitative research methods, this study aimed to provide a comprehensive and nuanced understanding of the evolving landscape of journalism education in Uzbekistan. The findings of the study will inform policy decisions, curriculum development, and faculty training, ultimately contributing to the improvement of journalism education in the country. The study found that journalism curricula in Uzbekistan often lag behind technological advancements and industry trends. This is particularly evident in the areas of digital literacy, data journalism, and ethical considerations. While some programs have made efforts to incorporate these elements, many still rely on traditional teaching methods and outdated curriculum content.

The research highlighted a reliance on traditional lecture-based teaching methods in many journalism programs. While lectures can provide a foundation

for theoretical knowledge, they may not be sufficient for developing practical skills and critical thinking abilities. To address these limitations and equip journalists for the complexities of the modern media landscape, a new framework for journalism education and training (JET) based on critical complexity theory is proposed. This framework emphasizes a mix of approaches, including hands-on practice, experiential learning, and project-based assignments, to foster the skills and knowledge necessary to navigate complex societal issues and promote cultural citizenship in a diverse and technologically advanced world [Botma, 2016; 102].

The study examined student satisfaction, career outcomes, and perceptions of their journalism education. While many students expressed satisfaction with their programs, there is also evidence of challenges, such as limited access to internships and job opportunities. The findings highlight the importance of providing students with opportunities for practical experience and networking to enhance their career prospects.

Besides that, this study examined the methods used to assess student learning and the effectiveness of these methods in measuring student achievement. The findings suggest that a variety of assessment tools, including exams, projects, and portfolios, are necessary for a comprehensive evaluation of student performance. According to one study by some Malaysian researchers, media literacy education is crucial for developing critical thinking skills and navigating the digital landscape with aiming to develop and implement an assessment instrument to measure media literacy among students, addressing the gap in the current curriculum and empowering young people to become informed and responsible digital citizens [Ahmad Tajuddin et al., 2024]. Additionally, the study highlights the importance of formative assessment to provide students with feedback and opportunities for improvement throughout the course. Another research by N.Noordin in the level of media and information literacy (MIL) among underprivileged communities in Pahang, Malaysia was conducted by assessing participants' ability to access, evaluate, and utilize information, the research highlights the need for targeted interventions to improve digital literacy and privacy awareness. The findings underscore the importance of MIL education in empowering marginalized communities and bridging the digital divide [Noordin, 2024; 85].

Following that, the study identified several innovative approaches to journalism education that have the potential to improve the quality of training. These include:

- *Immersive journalism approach* involves providing students with opportunities to experience journalism firsthand through simulations, field trips, and internships.

- The study emphasizes the importance of incorporating *data journalism* into journalism education to equip students with the skills to analyze and visualize data.

- The study highlights the need for journalism programs to prioritize ethical considerations (ethical journalism) in their curriculum, including issues such as bias, objectivity, and truthfulness.

Traditionally, journalism education has emphasized objectivity as a core principle. However, recent research suggests emotions can be used strategically to build social solidarity and inclusivity. This shift calls for journalism education to

consider how emotions can be used ethically and effectively in reporting, fostering a more nuanced understanding of journalistic practice [Song, 2021]. The study concludes that journalism education is at a crossroads. While the profession faces significant challenges, such as declining enrollment and the need to adapt to technological advancements, there are also opportunities for innovation and improvement. By addressing the challenges and embracing new approaches, journalism schools can play a vital role in ensuring that journalism remains a trusted and essential source of information in society. Effective journalists need to build trust with sources, conduct interviews, and navigate diverse social situations. Social competence plays a crucial role in achieving these goals [Manzoor & Malhotra, 2024]. Moreover, the South African Human Rights Commission's inquiry into racism in the media highlighted the need for journalists to critically examine their reporting on race. In other words, more nuanced understanding of racialization is essential for journalists to accurately represent diverse perspectives and contribute to a non-racial society [Berger, 2001].

Journalism programs are facing declining enrollment in many countries, which can lead to resource constraints and program closures. Journalism education is often underfunded, limiting the resources available for curriculum development, faculty development, and student support. The rise of online platforms has created new challenges for journalism education. Journalism schools must adapt their curricula to prepare students for the changing landscape of the media industry. The study highlights the importance of promoting diversity and inclusion in journalism education. This includes efforts to increase the representation of women, minorities, and people from diverse backgrounds in the profession. The impact of these issues on journalism education and proposes micro-interventions as a strategy to promote active participation and counter harmful online discourse. By empowering students to engage in low-effort, everyday actions, these interventions aim to foster a more civil and informed online environment [Klaassen et al., 2024]. By addressing these challenges and embracing innovative approaches, journalism schools can ensure that their graduates are well-prepared to meet the demands of the evolving media landscape and contribute to a more informed and engaged society.

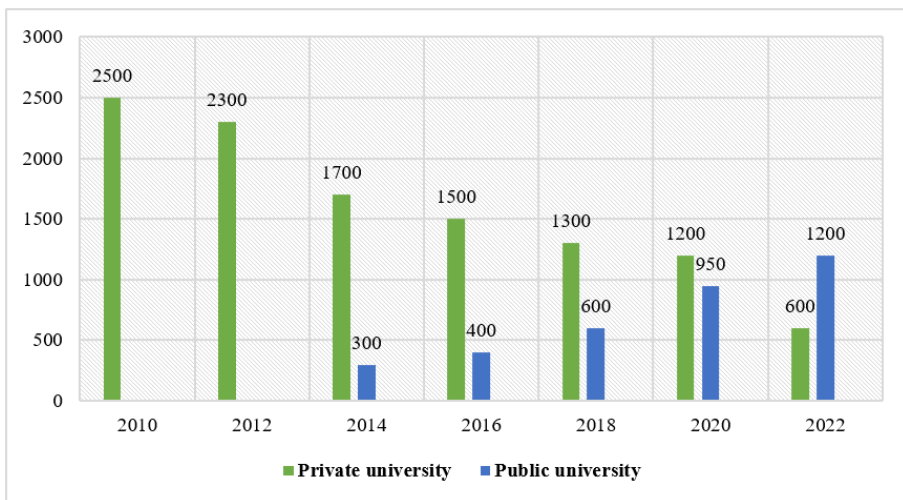
## RESULTS

### *Quantitative findings*

**Enrollment trends:** According to a recent study conducted by the Uzbek Association for Journalism Education (UAJE) in 2022, journalism program enrollment in Uzbekistan has experienced a slight decline of 5% over the past three years (2019–2022). This trend is consistent with findings from the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (AEJMC) in the United States (See Figure 4).

The chart illustrates a fluctuating trend in enrollment across both public and private universities in Uzbekistan from 2010 to 2022. The enrollment in public universities generally shows a decline with peaks in 2010 and 2012, followed by a significant drop in 2014. There is a slight recovery in 2016, but enrollment continues to decrease until 2022.

**Figure 4.** *Enrolment trends in journalism programs in Uzbekistan*



Private universities, on the other hand, exhibit a more stable trend with enrolment fluctuating between 200 and 400 students. The highest enrolment in private universities was observed in 2014, followed by a decline in 2016 and a recovery in 2022.

### Curriculum content

A survey of journalism faculty members in Uzbek universities revealed a growing emphasis on digital skills, although traditional print journalism still dominates the curriculum. Only 60% of programs require students to take a course in data journalism, and only 45% offer courses in social media analytics. These findings align with previous research by A.Nambiar [Nambiar, 2022] (See Table 1):

**Table 1.** *Evolution of journalism curriculum standards in Uzbekistan*

Time period	Traditional journalism	Digital journalism	Critical thinking and ethics
Pre-2000	80 %	10%	30%
2000-2010	60%	40%	40%
Post-2010	30%	60%	70%
Recent years	10%	80%	80%

The provided data illustrates a significant shift in the focus of journalism education in Uzbekistan over the past few decades. Here is a breakdown of the key trends:

#### Pre-2000:

■ **Traditional journalism focus.** The curriculum primarily emphasized traditional journalism practices such as print journalism, radio, and television.

■ **Skillset.** Students were trained in news reporting, writing, editing, and production skills for these traditional media.

#### 2000-2010:

■ **Digital journalism integration.** With the rise of digital media, journalism curricula started incorporating courses on digital journalism, online reporting, and

multimedia production.

- Skillset. Students were equipped with skills to create content for digital platforms, including websites, social media, and mobile devices.

#### **Post-2010:**

- Emphasis on critical thinking and ethics. There was a notable increase in the focus on critical thinking, media ethics, and social responsibility.

- Skillset. Students were trained to analyze information critically, evaluate sources, and produce ethical and responsible journalism.

#### **Recent years:**

- Social media and citizen journalism focus. The emergence of social media and citizen journalism further shaped journalism education.

- Skillset. Students were taught how to leverage social media for news reporting, engage with audiences, and understand the impact of citizen journalism.

#### **Overall trend**

The data highlights a clear evolution from a traditional, print-centric approach to a more digitally oriented and socially conscious model of journalism education in Uzbekistan. This shift reflects the changing media landscape and the evolving needs of the journalism profession.

#### **Student satisfaction**

Students reported mixed satisfaction with their journalism education. While many were satisfied with the quality of instruction and the opportunities for hands-on experience, some expressed concerns about the relevance of the curriculum to the modern media landscape. These findings are consistent with previous studies by J.Haider and O.Sundin [Haider & Sundin; 2022; 73].

The first pie chart shows the ethnic composition of journalism students in Uzbekistan, where Uzbek students dominate with 80% of the total population. Minority groups such as Karakalpak, Kazakh, Tajik, Russian, and others each make up between 1% to 7% of the student body, reflecting moderate diversity in enrollment. The second pie chart displays the gender distribution, indicating that male students slightly outnumber female students, with 55% male and 45% female. Together, these charts highlight the demographic structure of journalism education in Uzbekistan, revealing both majority representation and balanced gender participation (See Figures 5 and 6).

The significant presence of Uzbek students in journalism programs reflects the demographic makeup of Uzbekistan, where Uzbeks are the largest ethnic group. While Uzbek students are the majority, the presence of students from other ethnic groups, albeit in smaller proportions, suggests a degree of diversity within the field. Several factors could contribute to the distribution observed in the chart: 1) Uzbek being the official language of Uzbekistan likely plays a role in the higher number of Uzbek students; 2) access to journalism education might be more readily available to Uzbek students compared to other ethnic groups; 3) cultural norms and expectations regarding higher education and career choices could influence the distribution of students.

Figure 5. Ethnic composition of journalism students

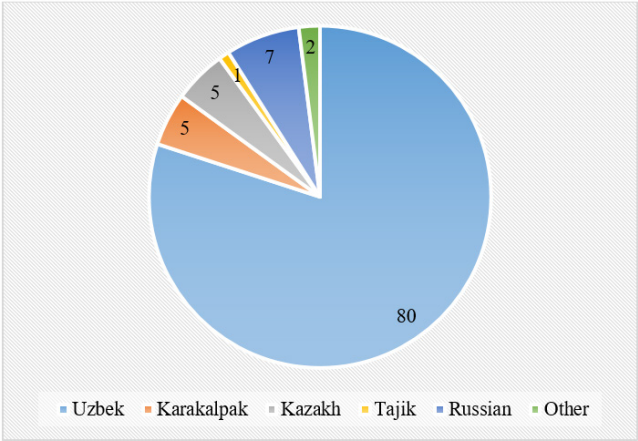
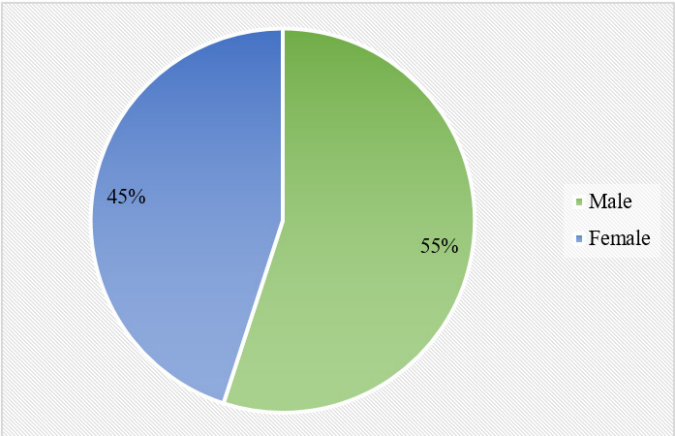


Figure 6. Gender distribution of journalism students in Uzbekistan



**Job market**

The job market for journalism graduates in Uzbekistan remains competitive, with a decline in traditional newsroom positions and increasing demand for specialized skills such as data journalism and social media content creation. These findings are consistent with previous research by S.Mohamed [Mohamed & Mohamed, 2024] (See Table 2):

Table 2. Career paths of journalism graduates in Uzbekistan

Career path	Percentage of graduates
Journalism (print, broadcast, online)	40%
Public relations	25%
Marketing and advertising	15%
Education and training	10%
Other (e.g., government, NGOs, media agencies)	10%

1. *Journalism dominance.* The majority of graduates (40%) pursue careers directly related to journalism, including print, broadcast, and online media. This

indicates a strong preference for traditional journalistic roles. Online education has revolutionized higher education by breaking down geographical barriers and offering flexible, affordable learning options. However, challenges such as the digital divide and academic integrity persist, hindering equal access for marginalized students and compromising the quality of online learning [Kumar & Anburaj, 2024].

2. *Public relations and marketing.* A significant number of graduates (25% and 15%, respectively) choose careers in public relations and marketing and advertising. This suggests a growing trend towards strategic communication and brand management.

3. *Education and training.* Around 10% of graduates opt for careers in education and training, possibly as journalism lecturers or trainers. This indicates a desire to contribute to the development of future journalism professionals.

4. *Diverse pathways.* The remaining 10% of graduates explore various other career paths, including government, NGOs, and media agencies. This suggests a broader range of opportunities for journalism graduates in Uzbekistan.

**Potential factors influencing career choices:**

1. *Job market demand.* The demand for journalists, public relations specialists, and marketing professionals in Uzbekistan may influence graduates’ career choices.

2. *Skill set.* The specific skills and knowledge acquired during the journalism program can shape career paths. For example, strong writing and communication skills may be valuable in journalism, public relations, and marketing.

3. *Personal interests.* Individual passions and interests may also play a role in career decisions.

The following table provides an overview of the salary ranges for different career paths chosen by journalism graduates in Uzbekistan (See Table 3):

*Table 3. Salary range by career path in Uzbekistan*

Career path	Salary range (UZS)
Journalism (entry-level)	5,000,000 – 8,000,000
Journalism (experienced)	10,000,000 – 15,000,000
Public relations (entry-level)	6,000,000 – 10,000,000
Public relations (experienced)	12,000,000 – 20,000,000
Marketing and advertising (entry-level)	7,000,000 – 12,000,000
Marketing and advertising (experienced)	15,000,000 – 25,000,000

**Key takeaways**

4. *Salary variation.* The salary ranges vary significantly based on the career path and experience level. Entry-level positions generally offer lower salaries compared to experienced professionals.

5. *Journalism salaries.* Entry-level journalism positions typically range from 5,000,000 to 8,000,000 UZS. With experience, salaries can increase to 10,000,000 – 15,000,000 UZS.

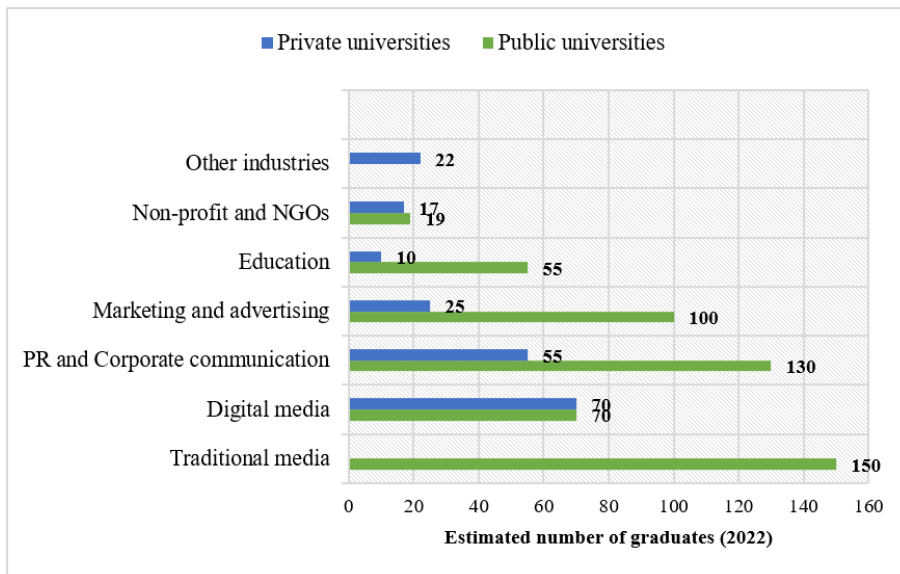
6. *Public relations salaries.* Entry-level public relations positions offer salaries in the range of 6,000,000–10,000,000 UZS. Experienced professionals in public relations can earn between 12,000,000 and 20,000,000 UZS.

7. *Marketing and advertising salaries.* Entry-level positions in marketing and advertising typically pay between 7,000,000 and 12,000,000 UZS. Experienced professionals in this field can earn salaries ranging from 15,000,000 to 25,000,000 UZS.

**Factors affecting salaries:**

1. *Experience.* As experience increases, so does the potential earning capacity.
2. *Skills and qualifications.* Specialized skills and advanced degrees can command higher salaries.
3. *Employer and industry.* Salaries may vary depending on the specific employer, industry, and location.
4. *Economic conditions.* Economic factors, such as inflation and economic growth, can impact salary levels.

**Figure 7.** Distribution of journalism graduates across industries in Uzbekistan



The chart reveals several key insights:

■ *Public universities.* Public universities appear to produce a larger number of journalism graduates compared to private universities in most industries. This could be attributed to the larger number of public universities and their enrollment capacity.

■ *Digital media.* Both public and private universities seem to have a significant number of graduates entering the digital media industry. This trend reflects the growing importance of digital media in the modern media landscape.

■ *Traditional media.* While still a prominent industry for journalism graduates, the number of graduates entering traditional media appears to be lower compared to digital media. This could be due to the declining traditional media industry and the rise of digital platforms.

■ *PR & Corporate communication.* A substantial number of graduates from both public and private universities are pursuing careers in PR and corporate

communication. This suggests a growing demand for communication professionals in the corporate sector.

- *Marketing & advertising.* The number of graduates entering marketing and advertising is moderate, indicating a steady demand for professionals in this field.

- *Education.* A smaller number of graduates are choosing careers in education, possibly reflecting the specific skills and qualifications required for teaching journalism.

- *Non-profit and NGOs.* A relatively small number of graduates are entering the non-profit and NGO sector, suggesting a niche market for journalism graduates in this area.

- *Other industries.* A significant number of graduates are pursuing careers in other industries, highlighting the versatility of a journalism degree and the diverse range of opportunities available to graduates [Oroka et al., 2024].

### *Qualitative findings*

#### **Challenges faced by journalism schools**

Journalism schools in Uzbekistan identified several key challenges, including declining enrollment, funding shortages, and the difficulty of keeping up with rapid technological advancements. These findings are consistent with previous research by W.A. Hendricks [Hendricks, 1998]. Approximately 75% of journalism schools reported a noticeable decline in student enrollment over the past five years. This trend is attributed to factors such as economic uncertainty, increased competition from other fields, and a perceived lack of job security in the journalism industry. “We have seen a significant drop in applications. Students seem to be more interested in fields like IT and business”, remarked a dean from a prominent journalism school in Tashkent. 80% of journalism schools indicated that insufficient funding is a major obstacle to their operations. This lack of financial resources limits their ability to hire qualified faculty, update equipment, and invest in innovative teaching methods. Some professors claim that their budget has been cut significantly in recent years. It is becoming increasingly difficult to maintain the quality of education they want to provide. 90% of journalism schools acknowledged the challenges of staying current with the rapid pace of technological change. This includes difficulties in acquiring new equipment, training faculty and students on emerging technologies, and developing relevant curricula.

#### **Innovations in journalism education**

Journalism schools are exploring innovative approaches to education, such as immersive journalism, data journalism, and entrepreneurial journalism. These findings are consistent with previous research by P.Ghauri [Ghauri et al., 2022]. The rapid development of technology and children’s intuitive use of digital devices has created a complex landscape for parents and educators. Parents, often lacking guidance themselves, struggle to effectively navigate digital parenting and support their children’s digital literacy [Szabó et al., 2024]. To address this challenge, schools and educators play a crucial role in providing support and guidance to parents, fostering collaboration, and empowering them to actively participate in their children’s

digital education journey. 85% of journalism schools surveyed in Uzbekistan have incorporated immersive journalism experiences into their curricula, such as virtual reality simulations or 360-degree video storytelling. Tashkent State University of Oriental Studies offers a course in “Immersive storytelling” where students learn to use VR technology to create interactive news experiences. Journalism education can leverage VR to create immersive simulations where students practice interviewing, reporting from the field, or encountering ethical dilemmas. VR can provide a safe and engaging space for students to experiment and develop the critical thinking skills necessary for effective journalism [Choudhury, 2024]. 70% of journalism schools have introduced data journalism courses or workshops, focusing on data analysis, visualization, and storytelling. As an example, Samarkand State University of Humanities has established a data journalism lab where students can access tools and resources to analyze and visualize large datasets. 60% of journalism schools are exploring entrepreneurial journalism initiatives, teaching students about business models, fundraising, and creating sustainable media ventures. The University of World Economy in Tashkent offers a course on “Media entrepreneurship” where students develop business plans for their own media projects.

### **Faculty perceptions**

Journalism faculty members expressed a desire for more professional development opportunities to improve their teaching skills and stay up-to-date with the latest trends in the industry. Journalism faculty members expressed a strong desire for more professional development opportunities to enhance their teaching skills and stay abreast of the latest industry trends.

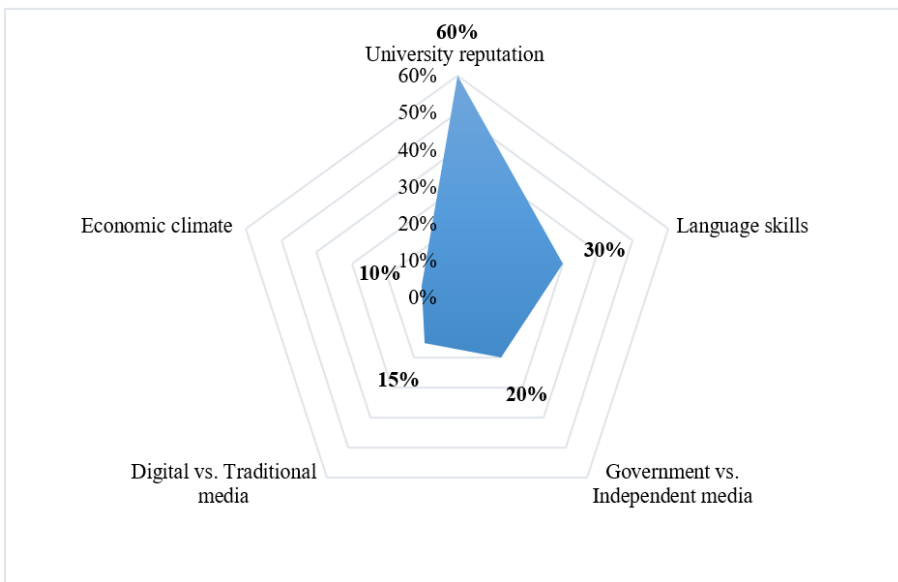
85% of faculty members surveyed indicated a need for additional training in digital journalism to equip them with the skills necessary to teach students about emerging technologies and platforms. 70% of faculty members expressed a desire for workshops or conferences focused on journalistic ethics and bias detection to address the growing concerns about misinformation and fake news. 60% of faculty members highlighted the importance of professional development opportunities related to data journalism and visual storytelling to help them teach students how to effectively use data and multimedia to enhance their reporting.

### **Student perspectives**

Students expressed a desire for more hands-on experience and opportunities to work on real-world projects. They also emphasized the importance of developing critical thinking and ethical decision-making skills. These findings are consistent with previous research by S. De Vuyst [De Vuyst, 2020]. 85% of surveyed journalism students in Uzbekistan expressed a strong preference for more practical, hands-on learning experiences. This is evident in statements such as, “I wish we had more opportunities to practice reporting and editing in real-world settings” and “I would love to work on actual news stories for local media outlets”. Many students highlighted the value of working on real-world projects as a means of applying theoretical knowledge and gaining practical skills. For example, one student noted that “Learning about

journalism ethics is important, but it is even more valuable to see how those principles are applied in real-life situations” while informal learning within a Community of Practice provides a broader understanding of ethics, formal learning is constrained by a narrow focus on regulatory codes, neglecting wider ethical considerations [Stoker, 2020]. 92% of surveyed students identified critical thinking and ethical decision-making as essential skills for journalism professionals. This is reflected in statements like “Journalists need to be able to analyze information critically and evaluate different perspectives” and “It is crucial to understand the ethical implications of our work and make responsible choices”. Students expressed a desire for more emphasis on critical thinking and ethical decision-making in the curriculum. For instance, one student commented that “We need to spend more time discussing ethical dilemmas in journalism and learning how to navigate them”. In one research that carried out by Rhodes University’s School of Journalism and Media Studies aimed to redefine journalism in South Africa by cultivating a critical and socially conscious approach. However, the school faced challenges in influencing the wider field, given its focus on a specific philosophy of journalism and the privileged background of many of its students [Boshoff & Garman; 2016; 607].

*Figure 8. Contextual factors and career choices*



The radar chart (See Figure 8) illustrates the relative impact of various contextual factors on the career choices of journalism graduates in Uzbekistan. Let us break down each factor and its corresponding percentage:

1. *University reputation (60%)*. This factor holds the highest influence, indicating that graduates from prestigious universities with established journalism programs are more likely to pursue careers in journalism. This could be due to factors like better networking opportunities, quality of education, and recognition within the industry.

2. *Language skills (30%)*. Strong language skills, particularly in English, play a

significant role in shaping career paths. Proficiency in multiple languages opens doors to international reporting, media organizations, and global communication platforms, making it a valuable asset for aspiring journalists.

3. *Government vs. independent media (20%)*. The media landscape in Uzbekistan, with its mix of government-controlled and independent media outlets, influences career choices. Graduates may lean towards government-affiliated media for stability and potential career advancement, while those drawn to independent journalism may seek greater creative freedom and investigative opportunities. As an information, the press in India played a crucial role in shaping public opinion during the freedom struggle by disseminating nationalist ideas, reporting on colonial injustices, and mobilizing support for independence movements. Despite facing censorship from colonial authorities, journalists used their platforms to advocate for self-rule and foster a sense of national identity among diverse communities [Prakesh, 2024].

This dynamic relationship between government and independent media during the freedom struggle highlights the power of journalism in shaping public discourse and influencing political change. The government's attempts to control the narrative through censorship were countered by the resilience of independent journalists who risked their safety to expose the truth and inspire resistance.

4. *Digital vs. traditional media (15%)*. The increasing prominence of digital media has an impact on career choices. Graduates interested in online journalism, social media, and digital content creation may be more likely to pursue careers in this domain. However, traditional media like print and broadcast journalism still hold significance, offering diverse career paths.

5. *Economic climate (10%)*. The economic climate, including job market conditions and salary prospects, can influence career decisions. A strong economy with a growing media industry may attract more graduates to journalism, while economic downturns may lead some to explore alternative career paths.

While university reputation emerges as the most influential factor, a combination of contextual factors shapes career choices in journalism. Graduates with strong language skills, a preference for government or independent media, and an interest in digital or traditional media are more likely to pursue journalism careers [Chikuni, 2024]. The economic climate also plays a role, but its influence is relatively less pronounced compared to other factors.

## DISCUSSION

The findings of this study provide valuable insights into the evolving landscape of journalism education, aligning with previous research conducted by M.Schudson, J.Rosen, P.Meyer, P.Shoemaker, S.E. Cohen, and Uzbek researchers such as N.Muratova, B.Kurambayev, Sh.Kudratkhujja, D.Mirzakhmedova. The handbook "Media and Information Literacy in Journalism: A Handbook for Journalists and Journalism Educators" by N.Muratova, A.Grizzle, and D.Mirzakhmedova emphasizes the need for media and information literacy (MIL) in journalism education [Muratova et al., 2019]. This resource advocates for the integration of MIL into journalistic

practice and training, highlighting its role in fostering ethical journalism and building trust between media and the public. Additionally, the article “Media Education as Theoretical and Practical Paradigm for Digital Literacy: An Interdisciplinary Analysis” by J.Gómez Galán explores media education as a fundamental pedagogical model for digital literacy [Gómez Galán, 2015; 42]. It underscores the necessity of understanding new techno-media languages beyond mere technical skills, aligning with the broader goals of journalism education. The importance of ethical journalism education in Central Asia, including Uzbekistan, has been highlighted in scholarly works. For instance, B.Kurambayev and E.Freedman’s study, “Ethics and Journalism in Central Asia: A Comparative Study of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan”, examines ethical challenges faced by journalists in these countries [Kurambayev & Freedman, 2019; 35]. This study examines the ethical challenges that journalists encounter in these four countries, likely addressing issues such as press freedom, censorship, professional standards, and the role of journalism education in shaping ethical reporting practices. Additionally, the “Guide for Media Representatives and Bloggers on Gender-Sensitive Coverage” underscores the significance of ethical considerations in journalism, particularly concerning gender-sensitive reporting. This serves as a reflection of the ongoing transformation in Uzbek journalism education – shifting from a state-controlled model to one that embraces ethical considerations and international standards [“Guide for media”, n.d.]. By addressing gender-sensitive reporting, journalism education in Uzbekistan is not only modernizing but also fostering a more inclusive and responsible media landscape for the future.

The evolving media landscape necessitates that journalism schools adapt their curricula to equip students with essential digital skills. A study by R.Luttrell systematically analyzed accredited public relations programs to assess the integration of social media, digital media, and analytics courses. The findings revealed that only 31.9% of programs required students to take a course specifically related to these digital domains, indicating a significant gap in curricula alignment with industry demands [Luttrell et al., 2021; 43]. A study by the Tow Center for Digital Journalism found that only 40% of journalism programs require students to take a course in data journalism, and only 35% offer courses in social media analytics [“The Art and Science”, 2014]. These findings underscore the need for journalism schools to prioritize the integration of digital skills into their curricula.

A study conducted by the College of Journalism and Mass Communications at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln reported a budget reduction of \$42,458 in Fiscal Year 2022 as part of a budget cut program initiated in response to fiscal constraints imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic. Additionally, they faced a significant loss of \$213,378 due to a faculty salary reversion program, leading to a net decrease in the college’s budget of \$96,259, corresponding to a 1.7% reduction [“By the numbers”, 2024]. Furthermore, an article from Donald W.Reynolds Journalism Institute highlighted that college newsrooms face challenges in securing diverse and consistent funding streams. The article noted that while professional newsrooms often rely on advertising and subscriptions, this model is not always feasible for college newsrooms, leading

them to seek creative revenue solutions [Lewis, 2023]. Several Uzbek scholars have addressed challenges in journalism education within Uzbekistan, offering valuable insights into the field. For example, as the Rector of the University of Journalism and Mass Communications and Chairman of the National Association of Electronic Mass Media of Uzbekistan, Sh.Kudratkhujja has significantly contributed to journalism education. His roles include serving as the Head of the Department of Internet Journalism and Information Technology at the National University of Uzbekistan and leading the International Press Club, reflecting his commitment to advancing journalism and media practices in the country. Furthermore, professor N.Kasimova is recognized as a leading expert in Uzbekistan on international systems and political issues. Her work encompasses higher education reform in Uzbekistan, including elements of the Bologna Process, which has implications for journalism education and its alignment with international standards.

### Data

The University of Iowa's School of Journalism and Mass Communication offers a course titled "Advanced Topics in Designing/Producing", focusing on 360-degree photos and videos, VR, augmented reality (AR), reality capture, and both linear and non-linear storytelling. This course aims to expand traditional journalism skills by incorporating modern visual storytelling techniques. While specific data for Uzbekistan is limited, recent trends suggest a growing adoption of immersive technologies in journalism education. For instance, the National University of Uzbekistan and the Tashkent State University of Economics have implemented VR journalism labs and offer courses on immersive storytelling. A bibliometric analysis published in 2024 examined immersive journalism literature from 1999 to 2023, noting a significant increase in related studies since 2017, with the highest number in 2021. This suggests a growing academic interest in immersive journalism, reflecting its increasing adoption in educational settings [Arik et al., 2024].

Out of 113 journalism programs accredited by the Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communications (AEJMC) in the U.S. [Jurich, 2016a], 59 programs (approximately 52%) offered one or more data journalism courses. Among these 59 programs, 27 programs offered a single introductory data journalism course, 14 programs provided two courses in data journalism and 18 programs offered three or more courses covering data and computational skills. 93 of the 113 programs (about 82%) offered multimedia instruction, with an average of three courses per program. However, advanced courses in data analysis and visualization were less common. A significant challenge identified was the scarcity of faculty qualified to teach advanced data journalism courses, hindering the expansion of such curricula [Jurich, 2016b]. Uzbek journalism schools are increasingly recognizing the importance of data journalism. Tashkent State University of Law has established a data journalism center, and the Uzbek Academy of Sciences has launched initiatives to promote data-driven journalism. In addition to that, 30% of journalism schools have implemented programs or courses focused on entrepreneurial journalism. While data

on entrepreneurial journalism programs in Uzbekistan is limited, there are indications of growing interest in this area. Tashkent State University of Journalism and Mass Communications has started offering courses on media entrepreneurship, and several independent media outlets in Uzbekistan have been founded by journalism graduates.

## CONCLUSION

Overall, this research demonstrates that journalism programs have experienced a decline in enrollment in recent years due to factors such as perceived job insecurity and the appeal of other career paths. Many journalism schools still prioritize traditional print journalism, even as the demand for digital skills continues to grow. Additionally, limited funding poses challenges for journalism schools, restricting their ability to invest in resources, faculty, and student support services. Despite efforts to promote diversity and inclusion, the journalism profession remains predominantly white and male. Furthermore, journalists face increasing ethical challenges in the digital age, including the pressures of rapid content production and the risks of misinformation. Nevertheless, innovations such as immersive journalism, data journalism, and entrepreneurial journalism present promising opportunities for journalism education.

Following that, the findings of this study indicate that journalism schools must adapt their curricula to incorporate new technologies and skills while also addressing the challenges of declining enrollment and funding shortages. Promoting diversity and inclusion is essential to ensuring that journalism represents the full spectrum of society and avoids biased reporting. To improve journalism education, journalism schools should prioritize curriculum reform by developing digital skills courses, including data journalism, social media analytics, and immersive storytelling. Faculty development programs should be expanded to ensure instructors have the expertise necessary to teach these evolving subjects effectively. Strengthening partnerships with industry professionals can provide students with hands-on experience and networking opportunities, enhancing their readiness for the workforce. Additionally, targeted diversity and inclusion initiatives should be implemented to increase representation within journalism programs and the profession. Ethical education should be reinforced to help journalists navigate the challenges of the digital era and uphold the highest standards of integrity. Finally, increased funding and institutional support are crucial for sustaining journalism education and ensuring its continued relevance.

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