

**NININS 2020****International Scientific Forum «National Interest, National Identity and National Security»****ETHNIC MASS MEDIA: ANALYSIS OF PROBLEMS AND PERSPECTIVES**

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**Abstract**

The article explores the problems of modern national mass media, which are on the verge of survival in many regions of Russia. The study aims at providing an overall analysis of the problems of the ethnic mass media in the Omsk region, which is historically multinational, in order to identify the reasons for their constant failures in the regional media market. The study focus is the Kazakh mass media in the Omsk region. The authors carry out the analysis of the concept of the ethnic mass media and provide a review of research works devoted to the Omsk ethnic mass media in various historical periods. The modern Kazakh mass media are analyzed from the point of view of expressing national stereotypes. The findings reveal the following problems of the ethnic mass media: the lack of hot topics of published materials resulted in the loss of a young readership, the little coverage of national events, the lack of journalists on the staff with the proper cultural, historical and professional training; the pursuit of commercial objectives; the poor knowledge of the mother tongue and refusal from bilingual publications. The authors make the following conclusions: the Omsk ethnic mass media pursue an ineffective development policy, which is associated with the thematic narrowness, editorial and staff problems, little consideration of the readership factor including the interests of the young people and a linguistic factor. Further interdisciplinary research should be done in relation to the ethnic mass media in multinational regions.

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*Keywords:* Ethnic mass media, journalism of national minorities of Omsk region, national identity, national stereotype, regional journalism



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## **1. Introduction**

The relationship between globalization and national identity has been disputed widely in modern humanitarian studies. While some researches are examining the impact of globalization on the national identity state that global integration undermines the latter, the others argue that globalization produces the opposite effect of reinforcing national feelings (Ariely, 2019; Halikiopoulou & Vasilopoulou, 2011; Holton, 2011; Wright et al., 2012). As Kokumbaeva (2007) reports, the present world situation is paradoxical as along with robust processes of globalization. There are different processes of preserving national identity in the global world. Hence, the concept of national identity has become the focus of recent humanitarian research works.

On the one hand, the identity of the Russian nation is connected with a sense of belonging to the Russian state and the Russian people, which is revealed in our symbols, values, achievements, language and culture. On the other hand, the idea of the Russian nation is based on its ethnic diversity and multiculturalism. This ethnic diversity and the wealth of languages and cultures of peoples living on the territory of the Russian Federation constitute a single Russian nation (Berezhnova et al., 2016).

The researchers note that the dissolution of the USSR has caused an increase in the national self-awareness in ethnic groups living in Russia (Iskhakov, 2008), which contributes to the development of the ethnic mass media playing a crucial role in strengthening the national identity. In the era of information technologies, the use of mass media platforms enables a stronger expression of the national identity. Therefore, national minorities must have their media platforms such as newspapers, magazines, radio, television, which is the key issue of the state's national policy similar to the question of territoriality of one or another ethnicity (Ershov, 2012). Korkonosenko (2012) gives data on the increasing influence of the mass media of ethnic minorities, who seek to preserve their culture through the mass media.

Thus, today the most important task of the modern mass media is to promote the positive intercultural interaction aimed at creating a tolerant attitude, ensuring social consolidation, interethnic and interconfessional stability both at the domestic and global levels (Berezhnova et al., 2016). At the same time, compared with the all-Russian mass media, the media of national minorities have not been studied thoroughly in philological, journalistic, pragmatic aspects (Khasanova & Valiev, 2011).

## **2. Problem Statement**

Nowadays, in many multinational regions, such as the Omsk region, there is no balance between different cultures, which results in, firstly, a minimal number of national mass media, and secondly, the imperfect manifestation of national identity in existing ethnic mass media. One of the solutions to this problem is related to the detailed study of the national mass media both in theory and practice.

## **3. Research Questions**

The present research aims to provide an overall analysis of the problems of the ethnic mass media in the Omsk Region, to describe the role of the ethnic mass media in the development of the national identity of the Kazakhs living on the territory of the Omsk Region, to study ethnic stereotypes about the

Kazakh nationality expressed in the Kazakh mass media of the Omsk Region as well as to determine the main perspectives in the development of the ethnic mass media in Omsk.

#### **4. Purpose of the Study**

The aim of the present research is to provide an overall analysis of the problems of the ethnic mass media in the Omsk Region, to describe the role of the ethnic mass media in the development of the national identity of the Kazakhs living on the territory of the Omsk Region, to study ethnic stereotypes about the Kazakh nationality expressed in the Kazakh mass media of the Omsk Region as well as to determine the main perspectives in the development of the ethnic mass media in Omsk.

#### **5. Research Methods**

The purpose of our research has defined the choice of analysis methods. In our work, we employed the following interdisciplinary research methods: 1. Descriptive and historical-comparative method to "the ethnic mass media" concept analysis; 2. Case study method, content analysis.

#### **6. Findings**

First of all, it is necessary to clarify the key concept of "journalism of national minorities". The hallmark of ethnic journalism is the focus of informational attention on the topics related to the ethnic identity and different aspects of the life of ethnocultural groups (Gasnov, 2007).

Along with these concepts, journalism theorists use other related terms such as "journalism of the peoples of Russia", "ethnic", "regional", "national", "provincial", "local" journalism.

According to Iskhakov (2008), the term "ethnic journalism" has already been adopted by most researchers". In the modern mass media, "the phenomenon of ethnic journalism acquires a new status of the nation-oriented media (Iskhakov, 2008).

Arakelyan (2004) identifies three features of the concept of the ethnic mass media: 1) the mass media of titular ethnic groups having forms of national-territorial autonomy; 2) the mass media of native ethnic groups with ethnic territories and ethnic borders; 3) the mass media of the diasporas who are: a) representatives of the peoples of Russia living during another titular ethnic group; b) representatives of other countries.

The mass media of the first two groups are closely related to the concept of the "regional mass media". As for the term "the mass media of the diasporas", it is often related to the concepts of "the ethnic group", "the ethnic community" but the latter are apparently of the broader meaning.

In her research, Gibova (2013) considers various approaches to the definition of the term "ethnic mass media" and concludes that the term is widely used by researchers, although it is debatable. The concept of the mass media belonging to the minor local ethnic communities has been studied incompletely. They are considered to be "the secondary mass media" as an alternative to "the dominant mass media". The characteristic features of ethnic mass media are their thematic focus, bilingualism, a close relationship with the reader (Gibova, 2013).

Taking into account the characteristic features of the ethnic mass media, we distinguish this concept from the concepts of "the regional mass media" and "the regional journalism". At the same time, we consider the concepts of "the mass media", and "journalism" as synonyms in our work.

According to Ovsepyan (1996), regional journalism is a subsystem of the Russian mass media, and it has its distribution area, a specific combination of administrative-territorial, demographic and national factors. It is involved in the social processes taking place in a given local community. Unlike the federal mass media, regional journalism serves the information needs of the readership, which is limited to the borders of this part of the country.

Thus, the concepts of "the ethnic mass media" and "the regional mass media" sharing standard features have a different level of coverage. Together with the concept of "the all-Russian media", they are logically correlated according to the principle of nested dolls: the all-Russian media include the regional media, which, in turn, include the media of national minorities.

In our research work, the focus of our analysis is the ethnic mass media in Omsk and the Omsk region in Siberia.

The history of Siberia covers the history of not only its vast territories and their development but also all numerous multilingual and multicultural tribes and peoples inhabiting it (Okladnikov, 1981). As for the ethnic diversity, the Omsk region is one of the unique subjects of the Russian Federation. According to the 2010 All-Russian Population Census, more than 120 ethnic groups are living on the territory of the Omsk region. The most numerous of them are 12 ethnic groups: Russians, Kazakhs, Ukrainians, Germans, Tatars, Armenians, Belarusians, Azerbaijanis, Chuvash, Uzbeks, Poles, Estonians. According to the Office of the Ministry of Justice of the Russian Federation, more than 70 national public associations are registered in the city of Omsk and the Omsk region (Berezhnova et al., 2016).

Taking into account the multiculturalism of our country on the whole and the Omsk region, in particular, the national mass media should contribute to the preservation of the ethnic language as well as cultural, educational and religious traditions (Gasarov, 2007). However, the studies show that the national mass media are currently in a challenging situation that necessarily impedes the fulfilment of this mission.

The analysis of the mass media in the Siberian region has been done by Ershov (2012), who describes the problems of the regional mass media. In the national republics, TV or radio channels in the native language are tiny in number. At regional universities, there is no particular system of training for a journalist profession provided for the representatives of minor ethnic groups. Only a small number of representatives of national republics study at Russian-language faculties and Journalism departments at Siberian universities. The regional mass media are experiencing financial difficulties. Also, there is a negative language situation, when many residents of the republics, especially in large cities, lose their native language skills.

In work by Bekbaeva (2009), the Kazakh periodicals published in the Omsk region during the last 30 years have been analyzed. The analysis shows that with a heavy demand for the ethnic periodicals, most national newspapers were closed within a few months after their start-up after publishing their first issues. The author names such reasons as the shortage of funds, the lack of publishing equipment, the need in journalistic staff, the destruction of the newspaper distribution system adopted in the Soviet Union, disagreements between sponsors and employed journalists.

Gasanov (2007), researching the mass media of diasporas, criticizes the archaic forms of work, the inefficiency of the management system, the lack of necessary marketing strategies, and the insufficient use of multimedia projects.

The existing reviews of the mass media indicate a certain thematic narrowness of the ethnic mass media. In most publications, there was information on religious traditions, a celebration of special events, migration. The hot topics remained without coverage.

In 2016, the monitoring of the Omsk mass media was done to analyze the interethnic relations in the area. The findings were published in the collection of works under the title "Information Support of State National Policy" (Berezhnova et al., 2016). The findings revealed the thematic variety of mass media materials. However, at the same time, there was an imbalance, which characterizes the apparent predominance of publications on international cooperation, holidays and migration problems. In general, few materials were published on issues of interethnic relations and ethnic culture. These topics are regularly covered only by certain mass media - television companies and news agencies. Also, another problem was noted as the lack of competence in journalists presenting the materials due to their insufficient knowledge of the relevant terminology (Berezhnova et al., 2016).

In her work, Sarsambekova (2007) made the content analysis of periodicals of the Omsk region aimed at the identification of ethnic stereotypes used by journalists when giving the Kazakhs-related information. The author concluded that they could have neutral, tolerant or intolerant content. According to the author, intolerant stereotypes are created due to the lack of information about the situation in Kazakhstan. As the author states, Omsk residents do not know about the real situation in Kazakhstan even though the Omsk region borders this country. So, it is necessary to organize broadcasting of at least one Kazakh television channel so that people in Omsk have a true idea of how the Kazakhs live.

Today, experts from public organizations, authorities and the mass media in Omsk and the Omsk region claim that information support for the implementation of state national policy should be based on the principle of the public image of the region as a successful model of comfortable living of the peoples of Russia, the territory of interethnic harmony and interconfessional interaction. In this regard, it is proposed to use public control measures in order to prevent publications aimed at creating interethnic or interconfessional hatred, the propaganda of the extremism ideas. It is also proposed to form a pool of journalists who specialize in the ethnic-related topics and prepare thematic television and radio programs, and newspaper publications (The topic of media coverage of state national policy in the Omsk region was discussed at the seminar, 28 October 2016).

Besides, researchers explore possible ways of developing national mass media. Gasanov (2007) writes about the need to clarify the concepts of newspapers and cable television broadcasting programs, changing the archaic forms of editorial work into more advanced media models.

According to Ershov (2012), several measures should be taken by mass media such as using the service of translators and making subtitles in case of broadcasting foreign-language programs; creating new television models that broadcast not only facts, opinions and knowledge, but also national images of the world; organizing an interdisciplinary study of television as a cultural institution of the nation developing the national identity.

Khasanova and Valiev (2011) gave an analysis of the universal competencies in the Federal State Educational Standard of Higher Professional Education in the field of 031300 "Journalism" (Bachelor's degree). The authors focus on tolerance as a universal competency and suggest special training skills in future journalists so that they can see how ethnicity can be expressed through the structural elements of the text.

It is noteworthy that the researchers who study the national mass media abroad often describe the same problems - a small number of educational programs, the sameness of headings in newspapers and television programs (Wofaa, 2004).

Such thematic narrowness creates intolerant national stereotypes. One of the aspects of our research work is to study ethnic stereotypes about the Kazakh nationality manifested in the Kazakh mass media of the Omsk region. We analyzed Kazakh newspapers "Zamandas" and "Omby Kazaktary" and revealed the following beliefs about the Kazakh nationality: 1. A resident of the Omsk region; 2. A person who does not know their native language; 3. A person who wants to learn their native language; 4. A person who does not know their national traditions; 5. A person who wants to learn about their national traditions; 6. A person who represents a nation with a rich and colourful culture and history; 7. A person who gets on well with other nationalities; 8. A religious person. The findings demonstrate positive or neutral connotations of the Kazakh-related stereotypes with a weak expression of the national identity.

## **7. Conclusion**

In the present study, we presented an overall analysis of publications devoted to the problems of the ethnic mass media in the Omsk region and made the following conclusions.

The mass media national topics are mainly culturally limited. Therefore, recent newspapers and magazines belonging to national minorities have a complementary cultural and educational character. The published materials lack hot topics. These limitations are caused by several reasons: journalistic conservatism, conventional methods of working with information, lack of sufficient funding.

From the economic view angle, the mass media of national minorities are often forced to pursue commercial interests. For example, as for the regional television, many experts believe that the current digitalization does not take into account the interests of private regional companies. The implementation of this project will lead to the destruction of non-state regional TV, which will make an impact on the development of the modern democratic processes in Russia, the formation of civil society and the development of public institutions.

Another problem faced by the ethnic mass media is related to the process of linguistic interaction in bilingual publications, which has both a negative and positive effect. The positive change is that the readers get the opportunity to learn about the specificity of a different culture, master two languages. The negative influence from such publications is that the linguistic norms of the foreign language are ignored as the reader gains only superficial knowledge of it.

Another hot problem faced both by ethnic and regional mass media is the shortage of qualified journalists. According to the statistics from various regions of the Russian Federation, not all journalists in regional mass media have a degree in journalism or philology, some journalists in regional mass media

do not have a University degree at all. The researchers who studied this problem see the reason in the lack of a sound economic and personnel policy in the region.

There is a need for a systematic study of the ethnic mass media in the Omsk region. A comprehensive analysis of the ethnic mass media should be done since there is no doubt that the ethnic mass media are extremely popular among the readers. However, at present, most of them are not able to carry out their missions.

We identify mainly historical, cultural and socio-political topics covered by the ethnic mass media. However, we can state that the phenomenon of the national mass media has not been studied thoroughly in philology. At present, there are no philological and linguistic works devoted to the ethnic mass media. In contrast, many specific features of these mass media can be explored through content analysis, conceptual analysis, pragmatic analysis and intertextual analysis.

The philological and linguistic approaches to the analysis of the media image of the Omsk region proved their effectiveness in the works of Malysheva and Gridnev (2016); Radiontseva (2014); Terskikh and Malenova (2015). The findings made by the researchers can be used in the analysis of the ethnic mass media that form media images of various nations. Thus, the reconstruction of media images may be linked with the identification of national stereotypes. The findings may be used in journalist training in order to work with textual indicators of ethnicity.

The intertextual analysis will reveal precedent phenomena, influential texts which are specific for a particular nation. It will be possible to form an intertextual thesaurus of the representative of such a nation, which will help journalists adequately understand their reader (viewer, listener). The content analysis often used for studying all-Russian mass media, can be successfully carried out to identify textual specifics of the national media.

Thus, the use of linguistic methods allows defining the main hot problems of the ethnic mass media more accurately, which will help create a better system of university training (retraining) of journalists who will be able to improve the status of the national mass media.

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