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**ANALYSIS OF THE EFFECTIVENESS
OF THE PUBLIC RELATIONS DEPARTMENT
OF THE EXECUTIVE AUTHORITIES
OF THE REPUBLIC OF KAZAKHSTAN**

The formation of a positive image in society is one of important tasks for every executive body. The presence of positive comments on their activities in the mass consciousness, possession of a positive image and attractive image, allows the government to get support of the population in the state's policy. This fact is an important condition for the growth and strengthening of public confidence, as well as to the state authority and the state.

Nowadays, the image of state institutions is constructed under the influence of various factors. The mass media, which are the main designers of images of government bodies, play an important role here. In a modern democratic society, state bodies can not directly influence the media. For this reason, each department of executive power has a special department that is responsible for interaction with the media.

This paper analyses the effectiveness of the public relations department of the Ministry of education and science of Republic of Kazakhstan. To study the activities of the press service of the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Kazakhstan, the author interviewed two former press secretaries of the Ministry.

Key words: The image of the executive body, the media, the Ministry of Education and Science, the press service, the media space.

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**Қазақстан Республикасының атқарушы билік органдарының
қоғаммен байланыс жөніндегі бөлімінің талдауы**

Қоғамдағы оң имиджді қалыптастыру – әрбір атқарушы орган үшін маңызды міндеттерінің бірі. Бұқаралық санаға, оң және тартымды бейненің ие болу бойынша олардың қызметі туралы оң пікірлердің болуы мемлекеттің халық саясатына, мемлекеттің қолдауына ие болуына мүмкіндік береді. Бұл факт қоғамдық сенім мен мемлекеттік билік пен мемлекеттің сенімін нығайтудың маңызды шарты болып табылады.

Бүгінгі күні мемлекеттік мекемелердің имиджі әртүрлі факторлардың әсерінен құралған. Мұнда мемлекеттік органдардың бейненің басты құрушысы болып табылатын бұқаралық ақпарат құралдары маңызды рөл атқарады. Қазіргі заманғы демократиялық қоғамда мемлекеттік органдар бұқаралық ақпарат құралдарына тікелей әсер ете алмайды. Осы себепті әрбір атқарушы билік бөлімшесі бұқаралық ақпарат құралдарымен өзара әрекеттесуге жауапты арнайы бөлімшеге ие.

Бұл мақалада Қазақстан Республикасы Білім және ғылым министрлігінің Қоғаммен байланыс департаментінің тиімділігі қарастырылады. Қазақстан Республикасы Білім және ғылым министрлігінің баспасөз қызметінің жұмысын зерттеу үшін автор екі министрдің бұрынғы баспасөз хатшысымен сұхбаттасты.

Түйін сөздер: Үкімет, БАҚ бейнесі, Білім және ғылым министрлігі, баспасөз қызметі, медиа кеңістік.

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Анализ эффективности отдела по связям с общественностью органов исполнительной власти Республики Казахстан

Формирование положительного образа в обществе является одной из важных задач каждого органа исполнительной власти. Наличие положительных комментариев о своей деятельности в массовом сознании, обладание положительным образом и привлекательным имиджем позволяют органу власти получить поддержку населения в проводимой государством политике. Этот факт является важным условием роста и укрепления доверия общества как к органу государственной власти, так и к государству.

На сегодняшний день образ государственных институтов конструируется под влиянием различных факторов. Здесь немаловажную роль играют средства массовой информации, которые являются основными конструкторами образов органов власти. В современном демократичном обществе государственные органы не могут напрямую влиять на СМИ. По этой причине в каждом органе исполнительной власти функционирует специальный отдел, который ответственен за взаимодействие со СМИ.

В данной статье исследуется эффективность деятельности отдела по связям с общественностью Министерства образования и науки Республики Казахстан. Для исследования деятельности пресс-службы Министерства образования РК автор брал интервью у двух бывших пресс-секретарей Министерства.

Ключевые слова: образ органа власти, СМИ, министерство образования и науки, пресс-служба, медиaprостранство, имидж.

Introduction

The image of the state authority as a social representation in the mass consciousness is formed under the influence of many factors: officially distributed information about its activities; experience of interaction with government employees working in this authority; satisfaction with the quality of public services; opinions of friends and acquaintances; communications in the media (Mircea 2014:309). In conditions of intensive development of mass media, citizens are increasingly influenced by images, formed not so much by their personal experience, but by media resources.

Methods of research work

The modern media space is saturated with huge amounts of information. It continuously forms contradictory types of content, including about the activities of public authorities, broadcasts to mass audiences ambiguous interpretations of the same events. Images of state bodies created in media space can both contribute to strengthening the positive attitude of the population towards these bodies, and to undermine to them trust, to form a negative attitude to the conducted state policy.

In the scientific literature various interpretations of the concept of “media space” can be found: “the possibility of free access to any information in the

world” (Ибраева), «the environment that will swallow everything in the future ...» (Volkova 2012:3), etc. Despite different approaches, the authors unite the notion that media space is a specific form of the information space. It is created by a special system of communication, where the leading role is played by the mass media. Thus, N.A. Khlopaeva believes that the main components of the media space are traditional media and Internet media. In her opinion, the media act as a storage device for the processor, producer, translator and information interpreter. (Khlopaeva 2007:14)

Results and discussion

In a democratic society, the authorities cannot directly influence the media space. Nowadays, each department of government has a special department, which is responsible for interaction with the media, and first of all with journalists. Such a department is the press service that provides not just the presence of an authority in the media space, but also, corresponding to the goals and tasks of positioning, the modality of the image being designed. The structure and size of the press service depends on the size of the authority, as well as the scope and nature of the tasks assigned to them. As a rule, this is a small department uniting people who understand the specifics of the work of journalists well and are able to properly perform their functions (Mack 1997:9).

For media representatives, the press service of the government is its official representative. All types of media, including opposition, are interested in cooperation with the press services of the authorities, since they are official sources of state information and through them, the media can access the leaders and officials of the authorities. According to J. Altshul: "Throughout its brief history, the mass media were no more than blind chroniclers of other people's deeds. If the press ever fell into an active role, it was only because it became an agent of various social forces or political movements" (Altshull 1984:277).

When interacting with the media and journalists, the initiative should always come from the press service itself. The authorities, if possible, should broadcast as much information about their activities as possible to the masses. As a result, citizens will receive accurate, complete and comprehensive information about the authority itself, its functions and powers.

A.N. Chumikov describes a number of features of the material that can provoke the professional interest of journalists, sensitively capturing the moods and preferences of the general public. He attributes these features:

a) Exclusive – an exclusive information, its absence from other communicators;

b) Sensation – the presentation of an event as qualitatively different from their own, violating traditional ideas, falling out of the channel of normal development;

c) Intrigue – the creation of an informational context-rebus, whose solution, until a certain time, is unknown or unobvious and is in the hands of the author of the intrigue;

d) Provocation or giving the event an offensive, overly emotional, obviously "offending" someone's opinions or interests of character, creating a call designed for the mandatory subsequent reaction of the target group (Chumikov 2008:48).

The press service prepares sets of materials of different genres that are associated with a certain information reason, or with information, that highlights the activities of the government in a positive manner. These include a press release, a backgrander, a fact sheet, a question-answer sheet, a congratulatory message, a media application, an invitation, an image article, a video interview, a biography, an information letter.

In this paper, the activities of the press service of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan will be analyzed. The choice of this state body is due to the great social

importance, the policy pursued by him. The problem of education affects to some extent almost every family; therefore, there is an increased media attention to the activities of government agencies in this area. On the other hand, the Ministry of Education has to solve typical tasks for all executive bodies in the field of information support of their policies, the formation of positive attitude and trust of citizens.

The importance of the activities of the press service of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan (MES RK) is determined by the importance of forming in the republic's media community a positive image of the ministry, the need to strengthen support, its policies. At the same time, it should be noted that the work on positioning the ministry in the media space has to be conducted in conditions when the state can not directly influence the mass media, it has to compete with other sources of information for attracting the attention of the audiences.

However, in the process of implementing their activities, the press services are faced with various problems. One such problem is the coordination of internal and external communication. To carry out an effective positioning strategy, the press service is important to have a full package of information on the activities of all departments of the ministry, as well as various departments and organizations that are relevant to education and science. Otherwise, there may be situations of discrepancy of information content about the activities of the ministry and its individual units, which leads to the formation of a contradictory image of the ministry itself.

Thus, under the Minister of Education of the Republic of Kazakhstan Bakytzhan Tursynovich Zhumagulov, a strict policy of internal communication was introduced. All departments of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan were to provide the press service with a complete information package, which included not only information on activities, goals, tasks of the department, but also a list of planned activities. The press service had the opportunity to actively connect experts, heads of departments of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan, who were also experts in their fields, to work with the media. The work of the press service was based on a comprehensive demonstration of the activities of the Ministry through the display of the work of its individual units and civil servants. The ministry's slogan was: "If the head of the apparatus can not speak to journalists, then he can not show his work!".

As an indicator of the effectiveness of this strategy, you can quote the data of the rating agency "Rating.kz". In May-June 2012, the Ministry of Education and Science of Kazakhstan took the third place in the list of leading transparent ministries and departments of the Republic of Kazakhstan (Transparency rating of ministries and departments of Kazakhstan).

In 2013, by decree of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan, B.T. Zhumagulov was dismissed, and Asin Bakinovich Sarinzhipov was appointed the new Minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan. In the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan, personnel changes also took place, which affected all departments of the ministry, including the press service. The style of internal communication in the ministry has also changed, now the press service of the MES RK unit began to provide information at its discretion, which affected the activities of the press service. The information coming from the ministry ceased to be coordinated, which did not benefit the formation of a positive image in the media space.

One of the activities of the Ministry's press service is to smooth out the effects of the negative impact of information on the image of the ministry. Such information appears in cases when the media cover problems and scandals arising in the field of education. In order to minimize the impact of scandalous information, the press service of the Ministry of Education is monitoring media content so that it is possible to react in a timely manner to negative judgments in the media about the activities of the ministry. Based on the data received, news digests are compiled, which form the basis for prompt response to provocative, scandalous, negative statements about the activities of the ministry.

Another direction of the press service is information support of the policy pursued by the ministry. The problem is that the Ministry of Education often has to make decisions that can be ambiguously or negatively perceived by society. In order to achieve public support for the decision, the press service develops special information strategies for media coverage of such transformations in the field of education.

For example, the public of Kazakhstan has ambiguously accepted the policy of the MES RK in the field of optimization of higher educational institutions of Kazakhstan. This policy has been launched since 2012, the number of universities as a result of this policy has been reduced from 148 to

126. In the media space, the issue of reducing the ability of young people to obtain higher education, unemployment among teachers and university employees, the reduction of the number of qualified specialists and other.

In order to reduce the negative perception of the reform, efforts of the press service of the Ministry have taken steps aimed at activating the work in the mass media. Conditions were created for speeches in the media by rectors, teachers, experts, students, in which each group disclosed various aspects of the importance of the process of optimizing universities to improve the quality of education. Not only the policy itself was raised for open discussion, but examples were given of the negative impact of low-level universities on the quality of education, as well as on the growth of unemployment, since universities whose activities do not comply with the state standard often produce specialists with low qualifications.

To effectively achieve their goals, executive bodies develop an "agenda" as a list of the most pressing problems. A.A. Degtyarev defines the agenda as "a set of urgent social problems that reflect the needs of society or individual interest groups, to which politicians and administrators are ready and able to respond. The politicians controlling the official agenda are always bound by certain goals and priorities, resources and time and are under pressure from various interest groups and public opinion in general" (Degtyarev 2004:163). According to the American political scientist, J. Anderson, the political agenda "is formed from the demands that the politicians choose themselves, having participated that it is time to react to them or at least create the appearance of such a reaction" (Anderson 2003:187).

For the planned implementation of the strategy for forming a positive image of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan, the press service prepares long-term and short-term media plans, which may vary depending on the circumstances. The press service of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan is preparing:

1. General annual media plan (taking into account all events and events of each department);
2. The plan of the important activities of the MES RK (subject to changes, as the case may be).

An important factor in the effective activity of the press service is the development of new communication technologies, namely, work in the Internet space. Social networks are an effective technology for transmitting information and

receiving feedback. Thanks to the activity of the press service of the MES RK, their accounts were created in the largest and most popular social networks: Vkontakte, Facebook, Youtube, kaztube, kivvi, twitter, etc., and at the official. The ministry's website has links to all accounts of the MES RK.

For example, MES RK in the social network "Vkontakte" (Official account of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan) provides information in two languages (Kazakh and Russian). There are also various photo and video materials. First, the account contains information on various image projects of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan, for example: the robotics championship among schoolchildren "ITU Robocon Games-2016". Great interest among users is caused by information about various innovations in the field of education; there are links to special websites where parents and teachers can post their complaints, comments and proposals for their subsequent consideration by the ministry. Social networking sites create additional opportunities to popularize the achievements of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan in the field of improving education and science; here you can be acquainted with interviews with politicians, the latest news in the field of education and science, etc.

The Press Service of the MES RK conducts daily monitoring of popular blogs on the Internet to determine the most discussed and criticized problems in education and science. As practice shows, any explanatory work with bloggers regarding the problems that have arisen in the sphere of education and science is perceived negatively. Most bloggers see in them, only the efforts of the MES RK justify their mistakes. Therefore, the press service is trying to establish contacts with popular bloggers (leaders of public opinion) in the network. Representatives of the press service go to personal communication with them, since in the network open support of public authorities can be taken negatively.

In the Internet space of the Republic of Kazakhstan, since 2015, the official blog platform of the first leaders of state bodies – "Open Dialogue", which aims to involve citizens of Kazakhstan in the activities of state bodies, functions. This portal also has an official blog of the Minister of Education of the Republic of Kazakhstan (Official blog of the Minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan). The Minister's blog contains not only information on the activities of the Minister of Education of the Republic of Kazakhstan, users can ask questions on topics of interest to them, directly

submit an appeal and send proposals to the Minister. Regarding the reaction of the Minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan to the appeal of citizens, citizens receive answers 1-2 days after the application was submitted.

The press service of the MES RK understands perfectly well that working with the media requires some flexibility, quick reaction and analysis of all media materials. Depending on the attitude of the media, especially editors and journalists, to the field of education and science, the nature of the representation of ministries in the media space is changing. For the press service, the main task is to attract authoritative and well-known journalists to cover the problems of education and science. For this purpose, three main methods are used: a material incentive, a moral stimulus, an information stimulus. For example: holding the "Journalist of the Year" competition by the Ministry, inviting journalists to various festivities with a buffet table in the field of education and science, providing an opportunity to get an exclusive interview with the first person of the ministry or the heads of the apparatus. For this purpose, three main methods are used: a material incentive, a moral stimulus, an information stimulus. For example: holding the "Journalist of the Year" competition by the Ministry, inviting journalists to various festivities with a buffet table in the field of education and science, providing an opportunity to get an exclusive interview with the first person of the ministry or the heads of the apparatus.

Unfortunately, despite all the activities of the press service, the image of the Ministry of Education and Science remains negative. In the scientific literature various interpretations of the image of the state body are presented. Some authors tend to emphasize the integrity of perception (understanding and evaluation), which is formed on the basis of people's memories of various aspects of the organization's activities (Комаровский 2001:97). Others tend to emphasize the image's dependence not only on the object itself, but also on a variety of additional factors. That is why I. Boldyrev points out that "image is not a constant, but a variable, it depends on specific circumstances." (Boldyrev 2011:4) Sometimes the image of the authority is reduced to the representation of the population (Rivera 2012:369). According to I.G. Kasatkin, the image of the executive authorities "is a reflection of his image in the mirror of public opinion, i.e. perception of executive authorities by individuals, the public, external and internal target audiences" (Касаткин 2007:26).

To analyze the image of the Ministry of Education and Science of the RK, the author conducted a frame-

analysis of Kazakhstan's media for 2010-2015. In the scientific literature, the frame is defined as the semantic framework used by a person to understand something and choose the mode of action within the framework of this understanding, as a representation scheme (How people make themselves 2010:20), as a metacommunicative definition of the situation, based on event-driven principles of organization and involvement in events (Batygin 2003:7). There are several methods for analyzing frames. To analyze the media space of Kazakhstan for 2010-2015, we relied on the methodology developed in 2008 by communication science professors Matthes Jörg and Matthew Kohring (Matthes, Kohring 2008:264).

For the frame-analysis of the media space of the Republic of Kazakhstan, the author chose those media that occupied the leading positions in the popularity and confidence rating of the population over the past 5 years: the independent republican newspaper Karavan, the national television channel KTK, and the Internet information portal Tengrinus. And also a professional printed edition of Ana Tili (Mother tongue).

Summarizing the general results of the frame-analysis of media image of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan, author note that the image of the ministry, formed in the media space for the period 2010-2014, is controversial. On the one hand, the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan is represented as, the body that responsibly concerns the development of higher education in the country; strives to improve the quality of university and postgraduate education; supports the aspiration of young people to get higher education; and also supports the independent activity of higher educational institutions in establishing international relations. On the other hand, the stories about negligent attitude to their duties, especially in the sphere of preschool and secondary education, hinder the positive perception of this state body. The impression is that the Ministry of Education is more concerned with observing official standards and norms than the problems of children, youth, teachers and ordinary citizens.

Totally in the independent republican newspaper "Karavan", the national television channel "KTK", the information Internet portal "Tengrinews", the professional printed publication "Ana tili" for the period of 2010 to 2015, 1320 publications and reports were prepared, of which 63.3% were negative character (see Fig. 1).

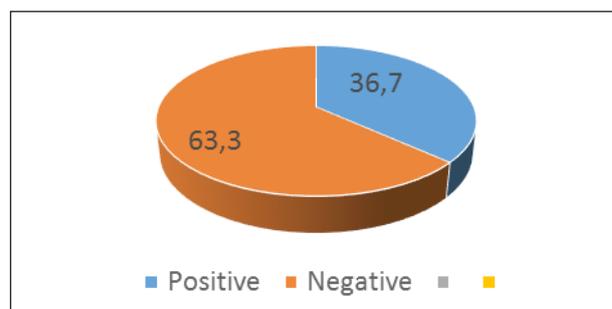


Figure 1 – The percentage of positive and negative publications for 2010-2015.

Conclusion

As it was stated in the article, the press service of the Ministry of the Republic of Kazakhstan plays an important role in shaping the image of the state body. An important factor for the formation of a positive image of the Ministry of Education in the media space, not only the press secretary and press service employees should understand the importance of the role of the media in the formation of a positive image of the authority, but also the head of the ministry, as well as all department heads. However, this is not always feasible in the work of the ministry. Another problem is that the press service of the ministries of education is criticized not only for their own work, but also for the "complex" of accumulated problems in education and science. Since even minor problems of schools and universities are automatically extrapolated to assessments of the activities of ministries, press services have to take into account not only the problem of coverage of the activities of the ministry itself, but also the coverage of issues in education and science that cause mixed reactions in society.

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