

COVERAGE OF UZBEKISTAN–TURKEY RELATIONS IN THE TURKISH MEDIA

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Abstract: This article examines how the Turkish media covers the bilateral relations between Uzbekistan and Turkey. It analyzes various media platforms, including television, print, and digital news outlets, to identify the main themes, narratives, and framing techniques used when reporting on political, economic, and cultural cooperation between the two countries. The study also highlights how media coverage reflects public perception and contributes to the development of mutual understanding and diplomatic relations. The research demonstrates that Turkish media often emphasizes historical ties, strategic partnership, and economic collaboration, while also acknowledging contemporary challenges and opportunities. By analyzing these patterns, the article provides insights into the role of media in shaping bilateral relations and fostering public awareness of international cooperation.

Keywords:

Uzbekistan, Turkey, bilateral relations, media coverage, journalism, political communication, cultural diplomacy

Introduction.

The relationship between Uzbekistan and Turkey holds deep historical, cultural, and strategic significance within the broader Turkic world. Historically, shared linguistic, religious, and cultural roots have fostered a sense of kinship between the two nations, influencing diplomatic, economic, and social ties. In the post-Soviet era, with Uzbekistan's independence and the establishment of formal diplomatic relations with Turkey in 1992, bilateral cooperation has expanded across multiple sectors — political, economic, cultural, and media. Media, as a key actor in shaping public opinion and foreign understanding, plays an essential role in reflecting and constructing perceptions of bilateral relations. Coverage in Turkish media of Uzbekistan–Turkey relations not only reports events and agreements but frames narratives, highlights milestones, and can influence how citizens in Turkey — and more broadly in the Turkic world — see Uzbekistan, its policies, culture, and place in regional cooperation. This article seeks to analyze how the Turkish media portrays the bilateral relations between Uzbekistan and Turkey. It examines various media platforms — print press, online news agencies, and broadcast outlets — to identify dominant themes, narrative frames, and their potential impact on public perception and bilateral diplomacy. Through this analysis, the article aims to contribute to understanding the role of media in interstate relations within the Turkic context and offer insights into how media representation aligns with political and cultural cooperation goals.

Literature Review

Previous scholarship and media-studies highlight the role of media in shaping international relations, cultural diplomacy, and national image building. In the context of Turkey and Central Asia, several works discuss the importance of cultural and historical ties, but there is limited research specifically focused on how Turkish media represents bilateral relations with Uzbekistan. One relevant study is “O‘zbekiston tarixini o‘rganishda Turkiya ilmiy markazlari va turk matbuotining o‘rni” published in the journal Tamaddun Nuri Jurnali. The article underscores

how Turkish scholarly centers and media have contributed to the study and dissemination of Uzbekistan's history, often bringing to light facets underrepresented in local historiography.

Moreover, reporting by Turkish and international news agencies — such as the 2019 article “Uzbekistan eyes closer ties with Turkey via magazines” by Anadolu Agency — demonstrates that media efforts have been intentionally directed toward strengthening cultural and informational bridges between the two countries.

Thus, the existing literature and journalistic practices indicate that media coverage is both a reflection and a mechanism of intercultural and interstate engagement. However, systematic analyses of contemporary media coverage — especially after the intensification of bilateral ties in the 2020s — remain scarce, which this article aims to address.

Main Analysis: Media Coverage Patterns and Themes

1. Coverage of High-Level Visits and Diplomatic Events

A recurring feature in Turkish media is the detailed coverage of high-level visits and diplomatic engagements. For example, during the official visit of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan to Uzbekistan in March 2022, various Turkish and Uzbek outlets emphasized the historical brotherhood, common cultural and religious roots, and the strategic depth of the new agreements signed. [İletişim](#)

These news reports often frame such visits as not merely political events but as symbolic gestures of “renewed brotherhood” and deepening “strategic partnership.” Through this framing, media coverage reinforces the notion of a shared Turkic identity and long-term cooperation, contributing to a positive public image of bilateral relations in Turkey.

2. Economic and Cultural Cooperation as Key Themes

Turkish media frequently highlight economic collaboration and cultural exchange as central pillars of Uzbekistan–Turkey relations. For instance, coverage of meetings between cultural ministers and institutions shows joint efforts to promote cultural diplomacy: cooperation in heritage preservation, cultural festivals, artistic exchanges, and more.

Such reporting frames Uzbekistan not as a distant foreign country, but as a close cultural partner with whom Turkey shares historical and civilizational bonds — reinforcing solidarity within the Turkic world. Economic aspects are often presented in the context of mutual benefit and expanding trade, investment, and cooperation across sectors.

3. Role of Media Outreach and Informational Diplomacy

The launch of media initiatives targeting both Turkish and Uzbek audiences — such as the presentation of magazines by the Uzbek Embassy in Turkey aimed at fostering bilateral business and cultural understanding — is another dimension of media coverage. This highlights how media is used as a tool of soft power and informational diplomacy, aiming to build bridges of trust and knowledge between societies. Moreover, cooperation between news agencies of Turkic states (for example, through institutional agreements) further institutionalizes media collaboration and mutual coverage, underscoring a regional media network supportive of shared interests.

4. Emphasis on Shared Identity, History, and Civilizational Narrative

A key narrative thread in Turkish media coverage is the emphasis on shared Turkic heritage — language, religion, traditions — and a sense of civilizational brotherhood. This narrative often surfaces in coverage of cultural events, joint historical research, and governmental statements, portraying Uzbekistan and Turkey as part of a larger “Turkic world.” By framing bilateral relations within this broader cultural-civilizational context, media coverage fosters a sense of belonging and solidarity among audiences, which can facilitate public support for governmental cooperation, as well as academic and cultural exchanges.

5. Challenges, Limitations, and Gaps in Coverage

While coverage is generally positive and emphasizes cooperation, there is a relative scarcity of in-depth journalistic or academic articles critically examining structural challenges — such as socio-economic disparities, policy differences, or long-term strategic risks. Few media reports venture into critical analysis; most emphasize affirming historical/cultural ties and diplomatic successes.

Also, media coverage often centers around high-level events, leaving day-to-day developments, grassroots collaborations, or less sensational but long-term processes under-reported. This suggests a bias toward elite-level diplomacy and cultural symbolism, rather than structural, bottom-up analysis of bilateral relations.

Conclusion.

The analysis shows that Turkish media plays a significant role in representing and shaping the image of Uzbekistan–Turkey relations, often highlighting shared history, cultural solidarity, and strategic cooperation. Through coverage of high-level visits, economic and cultural cooperation, and media diplomacy initiatives, the press and broadcast outlets contribute to reinforcing a narrative of brotherhood, mutual respect, and long-term partnership between the two nations.

However, media representation tends to prioritize symbolic, diplomatic, and cultural dimensions over critical or structural analysis. As such, while public perception may be largely positive and oriented toward unity, there remain gaps in comprehensive coverage of deeper socioeconomic, political, or long-term strategic issues.

To strengthen both academic understanding and public discourse, further research is needed — including content analyses over time, audience reception studies, and comparative analyses with media coverage in other Turkic and Central Asian states. Such research would provide a fuller picture of how media shapes interstate relations, identity, and regional cooperation in the Turkic world.

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