Beyond the media. Professional profiles and skills required of Journalism graduates in job postings on employment portals

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Abstract. The digitisation of journalism has changed how newsrooms operate. This study examines the demands made by employers in job advertisements aimed at Journalism graduates on specialised internet portals. To this end, a sample of 619 advertisements published on LinkedIn and InfoJobs was analysed. The postings appeared for six months and were spread over a timeframe of just over a year. Contrary to expectations, the news media hardly ever use these platforms for advertising jobs, as nearly two-thirds of the advertisements come from companies in sectors unrelated to communication, and almost half of the jobs are linked to corporate communication. Even for job postings aimed exclusively at Journalism graduates, the listings examined require skills in content production and professional tasks related to strategy and planning of communication products and services. Such duties include content management, campaigns related to planning and communication, interaction with diverse audiences on social media, media outlets, and institutions, and research and analysis involving evaluation, forecasting, and web analytics. In the results section, the authors propose expanding university Journalism programmes to meet the demands of the labor market.
Keywords. Journalism, job postings, employment portals, professional profiles a nd skills, university education.

[ESP] Más allá de los medios. Perfiles y competencias profesionales demandados a los graduados en Periodismo en las ofertas en portales de empleo

Resumen. La digitalización del periodismo ha modificado las formas de trabajo en las redacciones. En este artículo se estudian las demandas de los empleadores en las ofertas de trabajo dirigidas a los graduados en Periodismo en portales de internet especializados, al analizar una muestra de 619 anuncios publicados en LinkedIn e Infojobs en seis meses distribuidos a lo largo de algo más de un año. Contra lo esperado, los medios periodísticos apenas recurren a estas plataformas para ofertar empleo. Casi dos tercios de los anuncios proceden de empresas de sectores productivos ajenos a la comunicación, y prácticamente la mitad de esos empleos son para realizar actividades de comunicación corporativa. Incluso en las dirigidas exclusivamente a los graduados en Periodismo, en las ofertas analizadas se demandan competencias no solo para producir contenidos, sino también para tareas profesionales vinculadas a estrategia y planificación de productos y servicios de comunicación (gestión de contenidos, planes y campañas de comunicación), interacción con públicos diversos (redes sociales, medios de comunicación, instituciones) e investigación y análisis (evaluación, prospectiva, analítica web). Estos resultados permiten plantear la apertura de los programas universitarios en Periodismo para atender la demanda del mercado laboral.
Palabras clave. Periodismo, ofertas de trabajo, portales de empleo, perfiles y competencias profesionales, formación universitaria.

1. Introduction

Since the end of the last century, the impact of the convergence of digitisation and globalisation has led to a profound transformation in the labour market of developed countries, which has affected nearly every productive sector (Raj-Reichert *et al.*, 2021). Among the consequences, the new configuration of this market is forcing workers to continuously update their skills (knowledge, competencies, abilities, and attitudes) to meet the demands of an economy subject to the unending renewal of technology-based production and new types of work organisation, as well as the resulting professional profiles and employment niches.

It is no coincidence that this transformation of the labour market has emerged in academic, political, and social debates, which have sparked interest and concern regarding employability, a concept defined as "a set of achievements (skills, know-how, and personal attributes) that make people more likely to gain or change employment and be successful in their chosen occupations" (Salvetti *et al.*, 2015, p. 7). Employability implies potential linked to formal education. Thus, the responsibility of ensuring that individuals acquire a "set of skills" needed to meet the demands of the labour market they are seeking to enter, or where they must remain, is transferred to the educational system, and especially higher education (Clarke, 2017).

The job market for journalists has undergone radical changes in the last two decades due to the disruptive impact of digitisation, which has forced them to constantly update their professional skills to meet employer demands (Palomo & Palau-Sampio, 2016). The present study addresses this situation by analysing a sample of job postings (N = 619) aimed at Journalism graduates on the LinkedIn and InfoJobs portals. The research design has made it possible to identify the type of organisation, such as a company, institution, etc., which posts jobs available to these graduates, along with the professional profiles and skills required for these positions. The results section focuses on reassessing certain aspects of Journalism education at the university level in Spain to contribute realistically to the employability of graduates.

2. Theoretical framework

2.1. Digitisation and the job market: the new working environment of journalism

If consider that technological innovation has always been a driving force of change in journalism, the turning point resulting from the digital revolution is qualitatively distinct due to the confluence of technology caused by digitisation. Known as the digital convergence, this merging of technology has set the stage for the multiple types of integration that have transformed journalism over the last quarter century at all levels of operations, including the following: interfusion in the areas of business (multimedia groups), media (digitised information media), editorial departments (multiplatform newsrooms), and even the integration of journalistic languages and formats (multimedia journalism) (Salaverría & García-Avilés, 2008).

The consequences of digitisation for both work-related tasks and the working environment where journalists have been forced to operate has quickly transcended the strict realm of the so-called *online journalism*, which nevertheless acted "as the catalyst for change in the profession as a whole" (Bardoel & Deuze, 2001, p. 7). The introduction of digital technology in newsrooms has enabled a new type of journalism based on combining languages, formats, and platforms. This is carried out by professionals who not only must expand their traditional "niche" competence in print, radio, and television but who also need to acquire new digital skills such as hypertext writing, customising content, fostering audience interaction, and others to assume news production tasks that were previously segregated according to distinct professional profiles and jobs. The multimedia and multitasking journalist idea was proposed at the beginning of journalistic digitisation and is still in use today (Deuze, 2004; Scolari *et al.*, 2008). The concept was intended to highlight the ongoing need for professionals to update their skills, also known as reskilling, which journalists have been forced to do ever since because of the pressure exerted by a digital environment famous for its innovative hypertrophy (García-Avilés, 2021).

However, empirical evidence indicates that the demand by news organisations for digital knowledge and skills was a slow, tentative process until well into the second decade of the 2000s. At this time, it was rigorously implemented. Carpenter (2009) analysed a sample (N = 664) of job ads for journalists in online media, both native and non-native, and found that even as late as 2008, the skills traditionally associated with journalism continued to be the most highly sought-after by employers, including strong writing skills (nearly 70% of the job listings), copy editing, and communication skills (around 40% in the two latter skills). At that time, media outlets were starting to require skills related to digitisation, but much less frequently and consistently in less than 30% of the job postings. Moreover, multiplatform and multimedia writing skills were only a requisite in 12.7% and 6.2% of the jobs, respectively. Using a similar design, Massey (2010) analysed another sample of job ads for journalists to work in newspapers and television (n=216), also with data from 2008. The author revealed that around 35% of the jobs required knowledge of web content production. However, there were still very few vacancies requiring the production of multimedia content (8%), content for mobile devices (6%), or multiplatform news work (3%), and virtually none of the posts required skills related to managing the news section of websites (2.1%), nor designing web pages or websites (1%).

The turning point in the digitisation of journalism occurred with the nearly simultaneous combination of the 2009-2010 financial crisis (Young & Carson, 2018) and the advent of Web 2.0, or the so-called "second digitisation", which accompanied the emergence of social media. The situation spurred news outlets to implement strategies to integrate resources, newsrooms, and content, all enabled by digital and technological convergence. At that time, the change in the highly competitive and innovative US news sector offers some insights into the "accelerated digitisation" of journalism. Wenger and

Owens (2012) analysed the job listings of the 17 largest companies in the sector (N = 735) at the end of 2009 and found that more than 40% of the new jobs in newspapers and nearly 30% of those in television required web and multimedia skills. Although some abilities that would eventually become part of the repertoire of digital skills required of journalists were still occasionally requested —such as the use of content management systems (CMS), knowledge of web analytics, and social media management— this never comprised more than 5% of the job postings analysed. Nevertheless, this trend was already going in another direction in a short period.

Wenger *et al.* (2018) compared job listings aimed at journalists, which were published in 2010 and 2015 by the ten largest US newspaper and television companies (N = 736 and N = 1108, respectively), and concluded that the demand for digital competencies had increased dramatically in just five years. In 2010, web and multimedia skills were required for 33% of the jobs, like 2009, but by 2015 this demand had nearly doubled, reaching 62% of the jobs advertised, the same percentage as traditional writing skills. The same was true for job postings requiring skills in posting content on the web, which rose from 14% to 40% of the postings, and in writing for the web, which increased from 8% to 28%. However, a new set of skills related to the digital environment emerged, which had to be added to the tools used by professional journalists. The demand for knowledge and skills linked to social media increased from 2% of the job posts in 2010 to 49% by 2015; writing for mobile apps rose from 1.5% to 35%; web analytics went from 2% to 16%; and search engine optimisation, which was still in its infancy, climbed from 1% to 4%.

The pressure from companies in this regard was not limited to highly competitive and innovative labour markets. However, it was experienced across the board by professionals in every part of the world. Dawson *et al.* (2021) conducted a study of nearly 4000 job ads for journalists in Australia between 2012 and 2020, in which they analysed the number and importance that employers assigned to one type of skill or another in 2014 and 2018. These authors observed that the demand for skills increased significantly from one year to the next, especially those related to social media, including the use of platforms, community management, and digital content strategy. At the same time, other more traditional areas, such as editing and copywriting, though still the most sought-after, remained at similar levels in both years. Between 2014 and 2015, Palomo and Palau-Sampio (2016) interviewed a dozen consultants and innovation managers in the journalism markets in Spain, the United States and Latin America. At that time, they believed the profiles with the highest demand in the future would be journalists with multimedia skills, but also social media managers, specialists in data journalism and information visualisation, content design, management for mobile devices, audience analytics, and even programming, in order to perform the tasks of "developer journalists" who could collaborate with "more technical professionals" (Palomo & Palau-Sampio, 2016, pp. 191-192).

During this transition, numerous studies identified various profiles and tasks that required professionals to acquire new skills to operate in the digital environment. In addition to the previously established multimedia and multi-skilled journalist, new roles emerged, such as the data-driven journalist, content manager, social media editor, community manager, fact-checker, interactive designer, SEO specialist, content and media analyst, podcaster, and others related to mobile, immersive, and robotic journalism (Marques-Hayasaki *et al.*, 2016; Marta-Lazo *et al.*, 2020; Sánchez-García *et al.*, 2019). The generally accepted view was that journalism should not abandon its foundations, which include a humanistic approach, social awareness, critical thinking, etc., as well as classic skills such as news gathering, access to news sources, writing, editing, interpretive skills, and others (Gómez-Calderón *et al.*, 2017; Sánchez-García *et al.*, 2015). Instead, journalism should adopt "a more technological profile, with skills and abilities to take advantage of the opportunities offered by the technological model", which is characteristic of today's communication ecosystem (López-García *et al.*, 2017, p. 82).

2.2. Re-professionalisation and post-industrial transformation of journalism

Although there is a broad academic consensus regarding the disruptive impact of digitisation, the consequences of practising journalism may not have been fully understood. As the communication ecosystem is built on digital convergence, journalists are required not only to "update their skills" to enable them to operate in this environment but also to foster the "re-professionalisation" of journalism.

Until the intense digitisation of the last decade, journalism was traditionally seen as a professional activity aimed at obtaining and processing information for public dissemination (Salaverría, 2006). However, the new digital ecosystem is changing this situation so that information work now requires not only different tasks but different tasks beyond the mere production of content.

For example, the new profession profile of social media editor or community manager is not merely a career move for journalists, nor does it solely reflect the interest of companies in increasing their impact and profits. Instead, it represents actual journalistic work aimed at creating audiences aligned with the values of professional journalism in the field of social media, which is often unreceptive and even hostile to those values (see the views of the professionals themselves in Sánchez-Gonzales & Méndez-Muros, 2015, p. 159). The re-professionalisation of journalism, which is seen as the need to assume new duties and responsibilities regarding information, appears to be making the profession "more comprehensive" (Bardoel & Deuze, 2001, p. 97). However, this requires journalists not only to have "technological training" in the use of digital tools but also a "broad education in the new information ecosystem" (García-Santamaría & Barranquero-Carretero, 2014).

We have some evidence that the demands of the journalistic job market are driving this re-professionalisation. In a study on "redefining" journalistic expertise in the digital context, Guo and Volz (2019) analysed 669 job listings for journalists in print, broadcast, and digital media in the United States, which was gathered in the second half of 2017. The

authors identified 26 skills that they classified into four categories of expertise as follows: 1) traditional, referring to the routine skills of journalistic work such as writing, editing, researching, shooting/photographing, etc.; 2) innovative, related to the ability to work with multimedia, big data, web design, content strategy, audience analysis, social media publishing, and web development; 3) adaptive, concerning organisational skills, multilingual proficiency, and embracing ethical principles in professional practice; and 4) interactional, referring to teamwork and leadership skills, but also regarding external relations such as marketing and networking.

Overall, the skills most frequently demanded from journalists are traditional and innovative expertise. Six of the ten most sought-after skills were "traditional" competencies, especially writing (for nearly 90% of the jobs) and editing (for more than 75%). However, although the second most in-demand skill was for multimedia work (also for nearly 90% of the jobs), approximately 20% of the job posts had already required other "innovative" skills, such as web design, big data (in around 30% of those offered by the print media) and content strategy (around 25% in digital media and 15% in the press). Nevertheless, the most unexpected finding was the demand for skills related to "interaction" in areas like marketing and networking, demanded by employers in 45.3% and 43.7% of the job postings for journalists, respectively, with similar percentages in the three types of media –print, audiovisual, and digital. Competence related to marketing ranked eighth among the 26 identified skills, and requirements linked to audience engagement, market development, branding, and public relations were coded in this category. These same authors made the following observation:

> Our findings also suggest that advanced audience engagement skills are emerging as a high priority for media employers (…). In this regard, there is a growing demand for print, broadcast, and digital journalists who have expertise in interaction (…), including skills in interpersonal communication, leadership, and market development. (Guo & Volz, 2019, pp. 1309-1310)

Nowadays, the priority given to journalistic expertise related to innovation (such as content strategy, big data analysis, web design, audience analytics, etc.) and interaction with external agents (skills for building audiences, developing markets, creating brands, etc.) indicates that the "information task" now required of journalists is no longer limited to merely producing content. This work now involves various professional processes and activities related to innovation, interaction, and others. Moreover, although these duties can be performed by people other than journalists due to technological integration, this work should be carried out by the journalists themselves to implement them with a clear journalistic purpose in mind. As mentioned above, the "re-professionalisation" we are seeing requires journalists to "update their skills" in digital technology and incorporate this technology into their daily work routines. They need to go beyond simply "producing information", traditionally considered the foundation of professional journalism, and include obtaining, verifying, interpreting, contextualising, writing, and disseminating news content.

The multi-skilled aspect implied by re-professionalisation is not just an option but rather a necessity in a context in which the new dynamics of information in the digital ecosystem are driving a transition to post-industrial journalism (Anderson *et al.*, 2015; Deuze & Witschge, 2018). This implies significant consequences for the journalistic job market and news professionals' career expectations and opportunities. The thesis of the post-industrial transformation of journalism broadly asserts that "journalism is transitioning from a more or less coherent industry to a highly varied and diverse range of practices" (Deuze & Witschge, 2018, p. 166). What is under debate is not the survival, usefulness or even necessity of journalism as a professional activity (Anderson *et al.*, 2015, pp. 34-35) but rather the assumption that it must necessarily be carried out within the framework of a journalistic industry that is not only languishing but financially unsustainable as well (for the case of Spain, see García-Santamaría & Pérez-Serrano, 2024). As Anderson *et al.* (2015, p. 92) argued: "The journalism industry is dead, yet that journalism continues to exist in many places". In other words, these authors say that journalism still exists and is practised in many other places, which is "emerging outside and alongside legacy news organisations" (Deuze & Witschge, 2018, p. 168). The advent of a new dynamic in the digital ecosystem has rendered it feasible to practice journalism in a manner that is not subject to the constraints imposed by corporate control and media discipline. This development can potentially undermine the business-based employment model defined by precariousness and a "culture of job insecurity" (Ekdale *et al.*, 2015). Moreover, it creates opportunities for small businesses independent from large corporations and freelance entrepreneurs (Deuze & Witschge, 2018, p. 174).

The capability of these actors to drive the sector toward new methods, procedures, and novel ways of organising journalistic work should not be underestimated. From this "entrepreneurial" environment fuelled by digitisation, "hybrid work practices" are emerging, which are no longer the exclusive domain of freelance journalists but are even being adopted by traditional news organisations. Such practices include among others, "the integration of the business and editorial sections of news organisations; the ongoing convergence of print, audio-visual, and online news divisions into digital-first and mobile-first journalistic outlets; and the introduction of project-related work styles such as agile development" (Deuze & Witschge, 2018, p. 175). In this context, re-professionalisation aimed at making journalism an integrated, comprehensive, and multipurpose activity in its "work with information" will enable journalists not only to be more prepared to meet the needs already being demanded by news companies, but it will also place them in a better position in the post-industrial scenario of journalistic transformation —in other words, we are talking about journalism carried out beyond news companies.

3. Objectives and methodology

In this paper, we have analysed the characteristics of the labour market in Spain for Journalism graduates based on job postings on employment portals. Using this type of advert as an indicator of labour market demand related to journalism is almost entirely unexplored, even though specialised digital platforms are an effective tool for professional self-promotion (Campos-Freire & Alonso-Ramos, 2015). They are now the most frequently used channel for employers and job seekers in Spain (Infoempleo, 2019). Although it is not the only way to access the job market, evidence shows that these digital platforms are frequently used by young people in Spain (Martínez-Nicolás *et al.*, 2025) and by recent graduates in the field of communication (García-Galera *et al.*, 2023).

For this purpose, a content analysis was conducted on a sample of job ads aimed at Journalism graduates, in which the following research questions were addressed:

RQ1. What types of organisations (companies, institutions, etc.) offer jobs that require a degree in Journalism?

RQ2. What professional profiles are sought in job postings aimed at journalism graduates, considering the job positions offered and the professional area of the communication sector linked to these positions?

RQ3. What professional skills do employers demand from Journalism graduates to be eligible for these jobs?

While examining the sample before closing the coding protocol and data collection, it was found that, contrary to expectations, a high percentage of the job ads aimed at Journalism graduates were also open to candidates with other university degrees, such as Advertising and Public Relations, Audiovisual Communication, Marketing, Business Administration, Economics, Philology, and others. Consequently, the decision was made to obtain this data and include a fourth research question as follows:

RQ4. Are the professional profiles and skills sought by employers different for job postings aimed exclusively at Journalism graduates compared to those open to graduates with other university degrees?

3.1. Research design

A content analysis was designed for a sample of 619 job postings published on LinkedIn and InfoJobs over a year, between mid-September 2022 and the end of October 2023. LinkedIn is a professional social network with an international scope, and it had around one billion registered users worldwide at the beginning of 2024 (18 million are in Spain). Of the total, just over 60% are between 25 and 34 (González-Pimiento, 2024). InfoJobs is a portal that specialises in southern Europe and Latin America labour markets and is Spain's most visited website (Echevarría-Moreno, 2022).

To ensure the sample was representative of established trends in the labour market, job postings were collected over just over one year. This spread out the collection period to avoid the effects of seasonal variations in economic activity, which are lower at certain times of the year (e.g. July and August) and higher at others (e.g. the run-up to the end-of-year festivities). Based on this criterion, four sampling points were established between mid-September 2022 and the end of October 2023, with the collection of job postings taking place during six-week periods, separated by intervals of 11 weeks (approximately 2.5 months). As such, the portals were reviewed between the following dates: from 19 September to 28 October 2022 (when activity resumed after the summer and before the end-of-year reactivation); from 16 January to 26 February 2023 (at the beginning of the new year and before the economic rebound at Easter); from 15 May to 25 June 2023 (before the summer slowdown); and from 11 September to 22 October 2023, which completed nearly an annual cycle. At each sampling point, 151, 133, 157 and 178 job postings were obtained.

To identify the postings, we reviewed the categories that portals specifically devote to job advertisements related to journalism. On LinkedIn, the following journalism categories were examined: general, digital, audiovisual, sports, investigative, travel, fashion, and economic. On InfoJobs, the following categories were reviewed: press editor, sports journalist, political journalist, and news reporter. In addition, the terms "journalism" and "journalist" were introduced into the search engines of both portals, and the advertisements containing them were reviewed. On both portals, only those job listings that specifically requested a degree, either a bachelor's or master's, or university studies in Journalism as a requirement, were collected.

Once duplicates between the portals had been eliminated, a sample of 619 job postings was obtained, which were published in six of the 13 and a half months covered by the sample design (this comprised around 45% of the job ads during the period). The resulting sample was non-probabilistic, as we do not know the sample base, which would be the total number of job postings aimed at Journalism graduates published by both portals in those 13 and a half months. Thus, we adhered to a strategic sampling procedure commonly used in content analysis in communication studies (Igartua-Perosanz, 2006, pp. 212-213).

3.2. Data coding and reliability criteria

The data were recorded using a coding protocol designed to collect information regarding the four variables contained in the research questions: type of employer offering the job, job positions offered, professional area related to that job, and professional skills required by the employer. The protocol was applied by two coders to each of the 619 job postings included in the sample according to the following coding criteria:

Type of organisation offering the job. This is the potential employer and provider of the job vacancy. It was coded to distinguish between the following mutually exclusive categories: media (news companies); communication agencies (advertising or marketing agencies, public relations firms, communication consultancies, etc.); institutions, NGOs, and associations; and companies (from any economic sector, excluding the media and communication agencies).

Professional profile. The concept of professional profile is somewhat vague, so it was analysed by examining two indicators: the job position referred to in

the postings and the professional area linked to the job posting:

Job position. Given the variety and lack of precision in the names given by employers to the positions they offer (usually in English), it was decided to use the literal names and group together into a single category those which, although referred to by different names, had related tasks associated with them. For example, the content creator/manager/director category included jobs referred to in the vacancies as consultant, creator, editor, director, executive, expert, developer, manager, and content writer. Based on this criterion, ten categories were established for the jobs posted, which include the following: account manager, communications specialist/technician/director, community/social media manager, content creator/manager/director, copywriter, journalist, marketing specialist/technician/director, public relations specialist/technician/director, SEO/SEM/ASO specialist, and other (data analyst, designer, technical writer, etc.).

Professional area. The professional area linked to the job posting was inferred from the communicative purpose of the specific tasks required by the employer for a particular job. Based on the proposal by Marta-Lazo *et al.* (2018), the following categories were established: journalistic information, when the job posting identified tasks related to the production of current information, whether general or specialised in a specific sector of activity such as fashion, cybersecurity, health, medicine, etc.; corporate communication, if they were linked to the internal or external communication of the companies offering the jobs; and advertising and marketing, if they were aimed at promoting brands, products, or services, generally for clients of those offering the job.

Professional skills. The coding protocol was developed using an inductive approach. All job postings were reviewed to identify the required skills, which were considered the knowledge and abilities employers were demanding of graduates applying for the position offered. The initial list was narrowed until the coders reached a consensus when a list of 19 skills was established. These were coded in a non-exclusive manner, as it was common for a particular job to require several of the competencies mentioned. The 19 skills identified were grouped into four categories according to their associated professional roles, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Distribution of skills required by each professional role.

Professional role	Skills required
Content production	Graphic design/layout Web design Image/sound editing Audiovisual editing/production Copywriting/text editing
Interaction with audiences	Social media management Relations with institutions/customers Media relations
Research and analysis	Web analytics Data management/processing/visualisation Evaluative research Prospective research
Strategy and planning	Team management Campaign design/management Communication plan design/management Project design/management Content strategy/management Search Engine Optimisation (SEO/SEM/ASO) Event organisation

Source: elaborated by the author.

This classification of competencies is based on the assumption that the knowledge and skills demanded by employers are linked to various kinds of tasks or professional duties, of which four main categories have been identified as follows: producing content (content production); interacting with different audiences (interaction); supporting decision-making through research and analysis (research and analysis); and planning and developing strategies related to communication and communication products (strategy and planning). This classification approach is not unusual in studies regarding the features of the labour market for journalists, which is comparable to that of Guo and Volz (2019), who organise the skills demanded by the media into four types of expertise (traditional, innovative, adaptive, and interactional).

Based on these criteria, the corpus was coded by two researchers. A reliability test was carried out using Scott's *pi* test on 10% of the sample (N = 65), extracted at random, which established an agreed-upon value between coders of 0.95 for the variable entitled type of organisation offering the job; 0.98 for job position; 0.82 for professional area; and 0.86 for the variable professional skills. The foregoing are statistically optimal values for content analysis (Igartua-Perosanz, 2006, p. 221).

4. Results

4.1. Organisations that offer jobs to Journalism graduates

The jobs offered to journalism graduates through publications on internet portals are not exclusively reserved for people who have studied this discipline. However, they are open to graduates of other degrees as well. Of the 619 job postings analysed, only

28.3% (N = 175) were jobs aimed exclusively at Journalism graduates or people with some university studies related to journalism. In more than 70% of the cases (71.7%, N = 444), the job listings were directed at people with either a Journalism degree or another degree, generally in the field of Advertising and Public Relations, and Audiovisual Communication to a lesser extent, as well as commercial and business management, especially in the areas of Marketing and Business Administration.

Media companies rank second (13.1%, N = 81) among employers who search for job candidates on digital portals. Suppose we add those corresponding to agencies in advertising, public relations, marketing, and consulting firms to this percentage. In that case, job ads from organisations in the communication sector comprise only one-third of those analysed (34.5%, N = 212). Nearly two-thirds (58.8%, N = 364) were jobs from companies engaged in other sectors (Graph 1).

Graph 1. Organisations offering jobs to Journalism graduates (%).
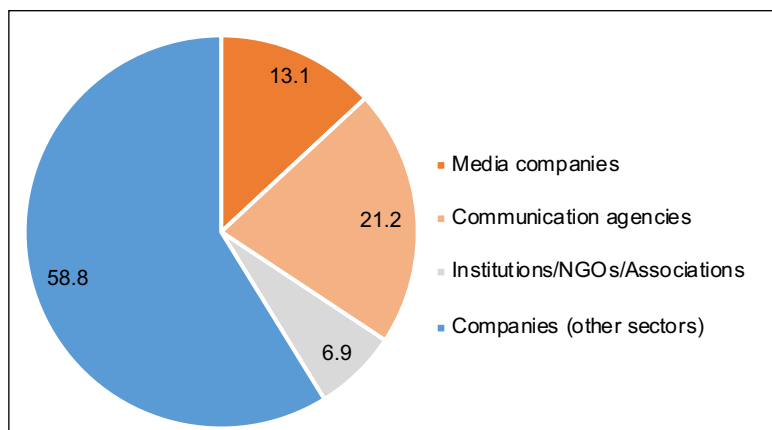
Source: elaborated by the author.

Nevertheless, despite their low percentage among potential employers (13.1%), the media posted just over one-third (34.3%, N = 60) of the job ads targeted exclusively or preferentially at Journalism graduates (Graph 2). In other words, of the total number of jobs offered by media outlets, which comprise

only 13.1% (N = 81) of the potential hiring companies, three out of four positions (74.1%, N = 60) exclusively required Journalism graduates. Thus, at least on paper, these jobs were closed to other university graduates.

Graph 2. Organisations that offer jobs based on the degree required (%).
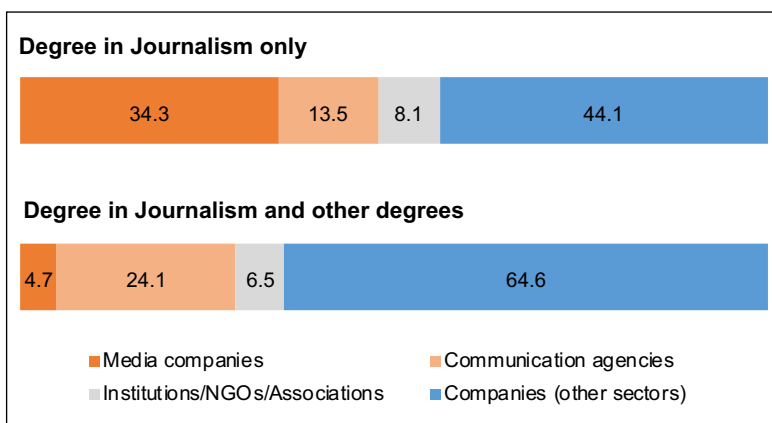
Source: elaborated by the author.

In any case, of the jobs that exclusively require Journalism graduates rather than graduates with other university degrees, nearly half of the postings (44.1%, N = 77) are from companies outside the field of communication. Although the volume of these "exclusive" job ads is relatively low in the sample (28.3%, N = 175), this data suggests that in the current Spanish labour market, the specific demand for Journalism graduates is not limited to media outlets but includes companies in other sectors.

4.2. The professional profiles in job postings aimed at Journalism graduates

The professional profiles employers seek were identified using two empirical indicators: the job position specified in the job ads and the professional area associated with the job posted. A quarter of the job ads analysed were for communication management positions, such as experts, specialists, directors, etc., in companies in various sectors or, to a lesser extent, in institutions, NGOs, and associations (Graph 3). This was followed by a diverse group that account for 10-15% of the postings, among which the most significant, apart from journalists, are content

management experts (15%, N = 93), as well as professionals with expertise in media and social media management (10.7%, N = 66). The sum of these four positions, along with that of marketing manager, accounts for more than 80% of the jobs offered to Journalism graduates.

Graph 3. Positions listed in the job postings (%).

| Position	%
Communication expert/specialist/director	25.5
Marketing expert/specialist/director	17.6
Content creator/manager/director	15.0
Journalist	13.4
Social media/community manager	17.7
Copywriter	6.1
Account manager	4.5
Public relations expert/specialist/director	3.7
SEO/SEM/ASO expert	2.1
Other	1.3

Source: elaborated by the author.

Communication and content management jobs account for just over 40% (N = 251), well above the 13.4% (N = 83) for which a journalist is specifically required. However, it bears mentioning that in nearly one of three job postings for these two positions (35.5%, N = 33, for content management and 29.3%, N = 47, for communication manager), the qualification required is only a degree in Journalism (Graph 4). These percentages are only lower than those corresponding to the journalist job, which is just over 80%.

Graph 4. Degree required according to the job positions (%).
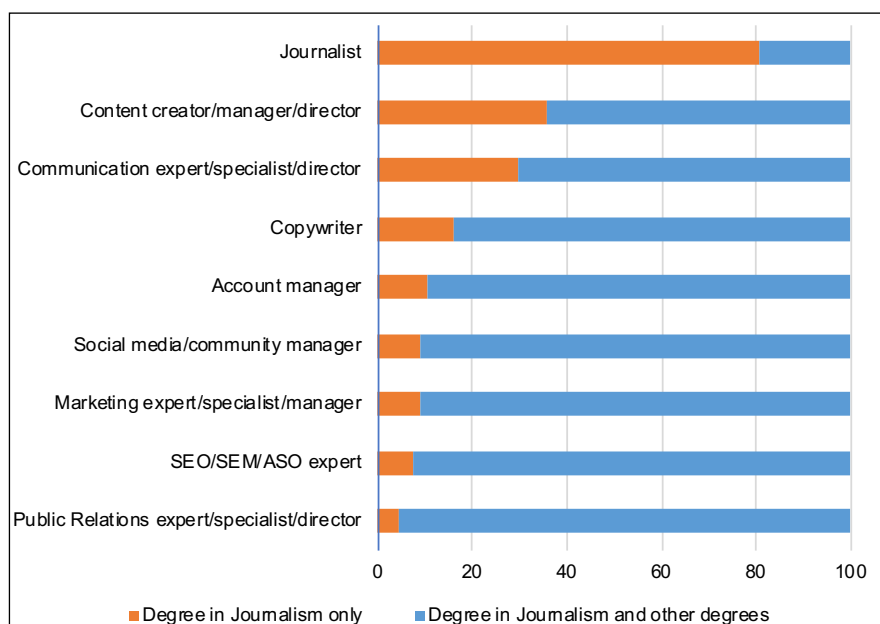
Source: elaborated by the author.

The variable entitled professional area allowed for a more in-depth analysis of the professional profiles sought by employers. The term professional area can be defined as the communicative purpose of the professional tasks that candidates of the job offered should be capable of carrying out. Based on this criterion, three areas were identified: production of journalistic information (general or specialised news), corporate or institutional communication, and finally, advertising and marketing.

Graph 5. Professional areas of the jobs offered (%).
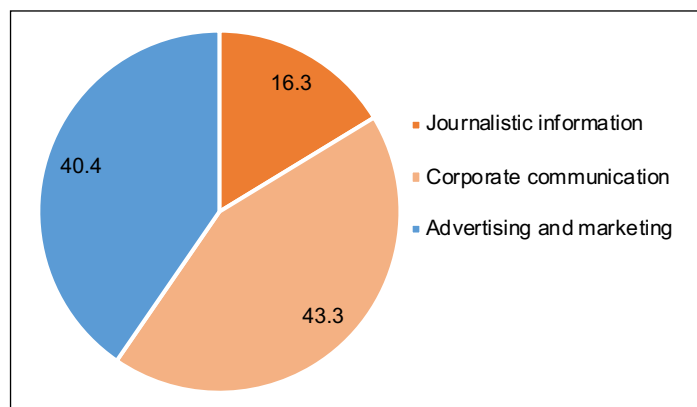
Source: elaborated by the author.

The job ads analysed mainly were related to professional tasks in the fields of corporate communication (43.3%, N = 268), as well as advertising and marketing (40.4%, N = 250) (Graph 5). In line with the modest percentage of media companies as employers (Graph 1), and for specific journalist positions (Graph 3), only 16.3% of the postings (N = 101) were related to news production tasks. However, it is interesting to note that job postings aimed exclusively or primarily at Journalism graduates are distributed evenly among jobs related to the production of journalistic information (41.7%, N = 73) and those involving corporate and institutional communication (48%, N = 84) (Graph 6).

Graph 6. Professional area according to the degree required (%).
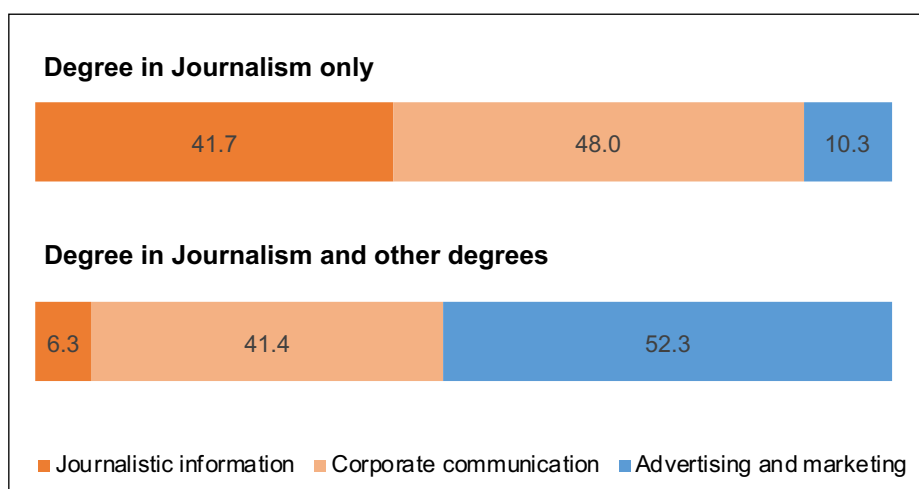
Source: elaborated by the author.

As can be seen, job postings that are open to both Journalism graduates and those with other degrees, such as Advertising and Public Relations, Marketing, etc., are rarely made for jobs related to news production (these cross-disciplinary offers comprise just 6.3%, N = 28, of the job postings analysed), which indicates that this professional area (news production) is a niche job market almost exclusively reserved for Journalism graduates. However, this figure adds further value to the fact that among the job listings aimed exclusively at Journalism graduates, those related to corporate and institutional communication are highly significant at 48%, nearly half of which are exclusive or preferential for these graduates, slightly above even those associated with the production of journalistic information (41.7%).

4.3. Professional skills employers demand from Journalism graduates

The skills required for the job postings were placed in four categories according to the professional duties associated with the competencies: content production, interaction with the public, research and analysis, and strategy and planning (Table 1). The results indicate that employers rely on these graduates mainly to produce content. For the entire sample, skills related to this type of task were required in nearly nine out of ten job ads (85.1%, N = 527). However, in nearly 80% of these postings (77.9%, N = 482), some strategy and planning skills were required, and, in a significant percentage of cases, competence related to public interaction (64.1%, N = 397) and research and analysis (50.4%, N = 312) was also required.

Graph 7. Professional skills demanded based on the degree required (%).
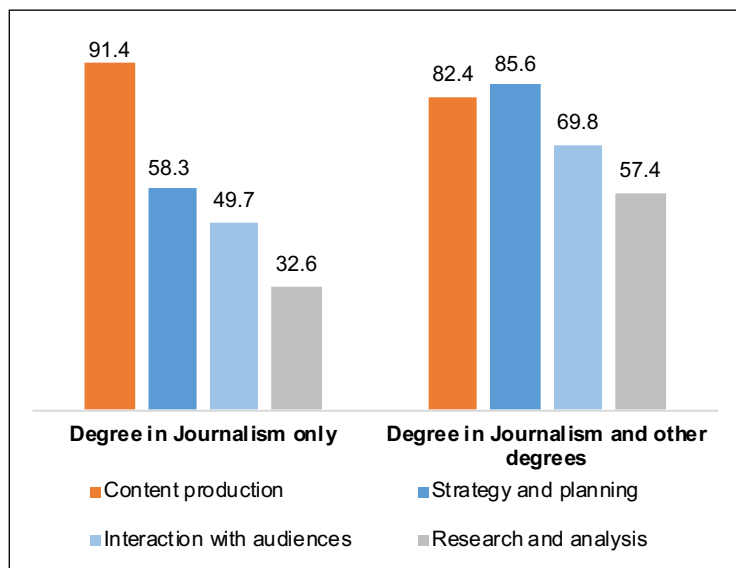
Source: elaborated by the author.

At first glance, these high percentages show the diversity of skills and the resulting professional roles employers demand in the jobs for which Journalism graduates are eligible. However, based on the fact that two-thirds of the job postings are aimed indiscriminately at graduates of various disciplines, the nature of this labour market is mixed, which might lead to the conclusion that many of these skills are unspecific or even alien to the competencies that Journalism graduates are expected to have. Nevertheless, the evidence is not conclusive in this regard. The distribution of the skills requested in the job ads aimed exclusively or preferentially at these graduates (Graph 7) shows that competencies related to content production are predominant. However, the frequency with which skills are required for other professional roles is by no means negligible. In nearly six out of ten postings, a certain level of skill in strategy and planning is required; in half, competence in interacting with audiences is demanded; and in nearly a third, research and analysis are needed. These figures increase significantly in the case of job ads open to graduates of other degrees. However, it should be emphasised that these jobs are equally open to Journalism graduates, whom employers frequently ask to do more than produce content.

Graph 8. Professional skills required in the job postings (%).

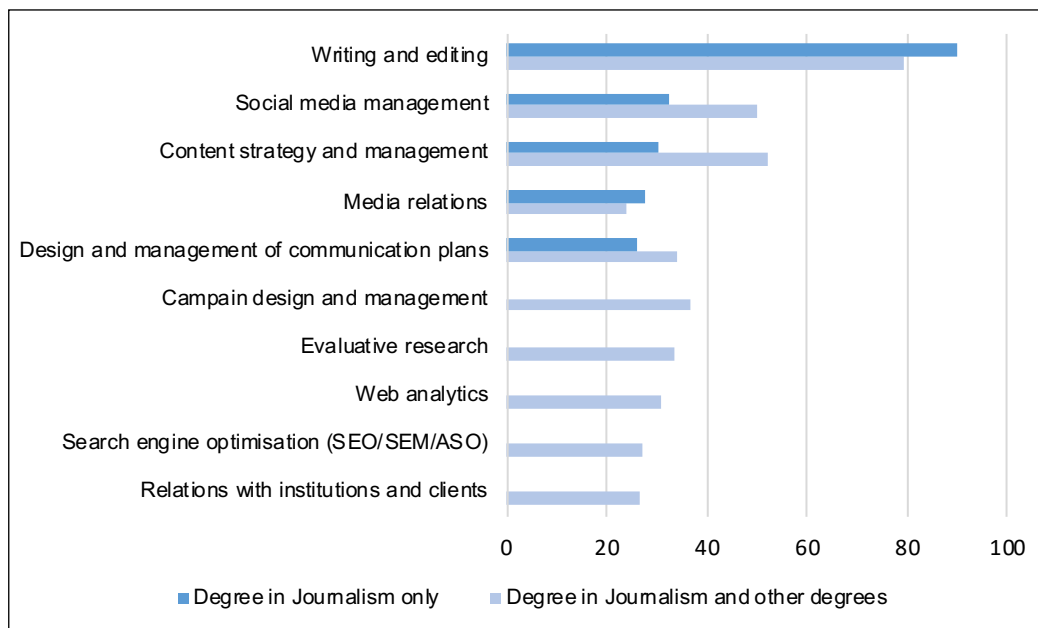Source: elaborated by the author.

If we look at the specific skills required (Graph 8), the competencies demanded in at least 25% of the job postings (one out of four) are related to the four professional roles identified. As expected, employers mainly demand writing and editing skills, which are requested in more than 80% of the job listings (82.4%, N = 510). However, of the eight skills that exceed the 25% threshold, only writing is associated with content production. Three of the most frequently requested skills are related to strategy and planning, which are the following: content strategy and management, included in nearly half of the job ads (45.9%, N = 284); design and management of communication plans and campaigns, both at around one-third of the jobs ads (31.8%, N = 197 and 31.3%, N = 191, respectively); and skills for interacting with audiences are also in high demand, most notably those related to social media management, which

appears in nearly half of the job listings (44.9%, N = 278), and to a lesser extent, media relations skills (25.1%, N = 155). Finally, research and analysis skills are also demanded: these include evaluative research to determine, for example, the impact of disseminated content or the effects of communication and campaign plans, which appear in nearly a third of the postings (28.9%, N = 179), and in web analytics (26.2%, N = 162).

Graph 9. Professional skills demanded according to the degree required (>25% of the job postings).

Source: elaborated by the author.

The same pattern can be seen in job ads aimed exclusively at Journalism graduates (Graph 9). Although the list of skills most often demanded is longer for jobs that are open to other graduates as well, the exclusive or preferential postings for Journalism graduates require not only skills in writing and editing texts (89.7%, N = 157) but also competence in social media management (32.6%, N = 57), content strategy and management (30.3%, N = 53), media relations (27.4%, N = 48), and designing and managing communication plans (26.3%, N = 46). Of these five most in-demand skills, only one is associated with content production (writing and editing). In contrast, the other four are related to professional roles in interacting with audiences, such as social media management and media relations, as well as strategy and planning, which involves managing content and communication plans. In any case, all the others, which include design and management of campaigns, evaluative research, web analytics, search engine optimisation, and relations with institutions and clients, are skills that are frequently demanded jobs that employers offer to Journalism graduates as well.

5. Discussion

In two ways, the labour market related to job postings aimed at Journalism graduates on internet portals is more non-specific than expected. On the one hand, only about one in ten (13.1%) of the job listings are from journalistic media outlets. On the other hand, nearly two-thirds of the potential employers of Journalism graduates (58.8%) are companies from many other sectors. However, their communication needs require people trained in this field of knowledge. In line with this employer profile, there are few positions among the jobs offered where a journalist is specifically requested (13.4%), and only 16.3% of the posts are for tasks related to journalistic information. Most of the jobs for which these graduates can apply are in corporate and institutional communication (43.2% of those offered), as well as advertising and marketing (40.4%). Job postings aimed exclusively or preferentially at Journalism graduates, or in other words, those who specifically require a degree in Journalism, also matched this profile. These postings proceeded from media outlets to a lesser extent (34.3%) than companies in other sectors (44.1%). Moreover, nearly half were jobs for professional corporate and institutional communication tasks (48%), even ahead of those related to journalistic information (41.7%).

These results concur with the few studies carried out in Spain regarding similar corpora. For example, Palomo and Palau-Sampio (2016, p. 193) analysed 326 job ads published on InfoJobs between August and October 2015 and found that only 8.3% (N = 27) came from the media. In their analysis of 156 job ads on LinkedIn and InfoJobs in September 2017, Marta-Lazo *et al.* (2018) found that jobs in the journalism and editing sectors were in the minority at 28%, only slightly higher than those of corporate communications at 25%, but far behind those of marketing and advertising at 47%. The different ways of defining the categories of journalism and editing, which in this study is equivalent to journalistic information, and that of corporate communication, would likely explain the discrepancy between the results obtained by Marta-Lazo *et al.* (2018) and the findings of this paper. However, both indicate the relatively minor impact of job postings on employment portals for tasks related to journalistic information.

Therefore, the news media do not rely on these employment platforms to recruit journalists for their staff. Of course, these media are the natural place for Journalism graduates to work professionally, in the same way that the work related to journalistic information, such as gathering, preparing, disseminating, etc., is an integral part of most of the university education they receive. However, if we accept this premise, we must remember that job postings on digital portals are also available to these graduates to access paid employment in the communication sector. As such, attention must be paid to the skills they need to acquire to respond most effectively to the demands not only of the media but of other potential employers as well.

The evidence provided by this study indicates that the skills most in demand for jobs available to journalism graduates are writing and editing, which appear in more than 80% of job postings. However, in nearly half of the postings requests are made for other skills, including content management, strategy, and social media management. About one-third of employers ask for skills in designing and managing communication plans or campaigns, evaluative research, and web analytics. Even in job ads aimed exclusively or preferentially at Journalism graduates, the demand for skills by hiring companies does not deviate from this pattern. Nearly all these exclusive or preferential job postings demanded competence in producing all types of content. However, more than half also required skills in planning and developing communication strategies and interacting with diverse audiences. Finally, one-third of them required research and data analysis skills for decision-making aimed at communication-related products and services.

In short, employers who use job portals to find people are creating jobs for Journalism graduates, especially in corporate and institutional communication, and asking them to have professional skills beyond traditional or classic skills of gathering, writing, and sharing information. Considering these findings, perhaps the most appropriate attitude is not to blame these employers for "not having a clear idea of the skills that a Journalism graduate should have" (Marta-Lazo *et al.*, 2018, p. 226) but rather to acknowledge that these graduates "cannot limit their job expectations to the media sector" (Palomo & Palau-Sampio, 2016, p. 193). According to Gómez-Calderón *et al.* (2017, p. 197), "the fact that Journalism graduates currently take on jobs and tasks for which the communication industry cannot find qualified personnel means that these people are not working specifically in the journalism profession (...) [consequently] they are not serving the social purpose of information", which may well be the case. Nevertheless, that should not prevent universities from actively seeking to complement these "specific profiles", and the professional skills associated with them, while keeping an eye on the employment opportunities offered by the other labour market. Furthermore, we want to emphasise that this other market is also available to Journalism graduates and jobs in the media.

This open-minded approach does not mean sacrificing the essence of journalism on the altar of employability. Instead, this is a reasonable response to the current conditions of the profession. The skills required by the job postings analysed are neither an effect nor a result of the lack of journalistic specificity in the labour market examined in this study. Instead, they are skills that media outlets are already demanding when they recruit journalists (Dawson *et al.*, 2021; Guo & Volz, 2019; Palomo & Palau-Sampio, 2016; Wenger *et al.*, 2018; Wenger & Owens, 2012). According to Guo and Volz (2019), there is an unexpected demand for what they call interactional expertise in job advertisements placed by print, audiovisual and digital media in the United States, concluding that "the boundary between journalism and marketing is becoming unmistakably blurred as the demand for marketing skills increasingly appears in job postings for journalists" (Guo and Volz 2019, p. 1310). The authors construe these marketing skills broadly, including skills related to social media, audience engagement, market development, and branding. These may indeed be marketing skills, yet journalists can and should acquire them to generate audiences, markets and brands that are strictly linked to the social mission of journalistic information. What we refer to as information work cannot be limited to the production of information content due to its current expansion to other areas, including the following: strategy and content management; communication planning and campaign design; search engine optimisation; social media management for audience and market expansion; web analytics; evaluative and prospective research; and others. These areas expect journalists to undergo re-professionalisation to take on new information-related roles and acquire the skills necessary to perform them optimally.

On the other hand, the employment crisis in the media has broadened the job opportunities for journalists and journalism graduates. Although this might involve non-specific employment niches, journalistic skills are still not only valuable but also held in high esteem by employers. This is especially true in the case of corporate and institutional communication, as this professional area accounts for nearly 45% of the job postings analysed in this study. These job listings are aimed at candidates with a Journalism degree, and the percentage is even higher (48%) for exclusive or preferential job ads directed at these graduates. Micó *et al.* (2012) analysed the employment situation in the media and other communication sectors in Catalonia, Spain, following the 2008 financial crisis. The authors found that most jobs were in press and communication offices. Moreover, regarding Journalism degrees at universities in Spain, they regretfully noted that "the course load related to conventional media (very high) and that related to press and communication offices (very low) is often unbalanced in degree programmes" (Micó *et al.*, 2012, p. 289). According to Pérez-Serrano *et al.* (2015, p. 225), who examined a sample of 1386 offers of curricular internships for Journalism students, "it seems that traditional media are struggling at the moment, and journalists are expanding their horizons to sectors less affected by the economic downturn, mainly corporate communication". Based on more recent data, 24% of the 1341 journalists who participated in the latest survey on the journalism profession in Spain (Asociación de la Prensa de Madrid [APM], 2024)

have worked in corporate communication in companies, institutions, NGOs, and others, which is not far from the 35% who have worked for news outlets. Even more significant is that 83% of those surveyed stated that "the educational curriculum for future journalists should put more emphasis on business communication" (APM, 2024, p. 22).

This situation is not unique to the job market for journalists in Spain. O'Donnell *et al.* (2016) studied the career paths of a sample of Australian journalists laid off from the media (N = 95). The authors not only revealed that nearly 90% of those people found new jobs but that "the main employers were in sectors related to strategic communications and higher education" (O'Donnell *et al.*, 2016, p. 42). Nearly half of the journalists surveyed updated their professional skills to work in the digital environment, including social media management, ensuring viral content, web design, content management systems, search engine optimisation, and web analytics. As the authors point out, these skills "are notable because they combine content production and monetisation, thereby exemplifying and supporting (...) the assertion that journalistic practices and self-perception require adaptation and renewal if journalists are to take advantage of the new opportunities brought about by changes in the news business" (O'Donnell *et al.*, 2016, p. 48). Similar results were obtained by Dawson *et al.* (2021), who explored the evolution of the Australian job market for journalists between 2012 and 2020, concluding that as working conditions in the media deteriorated, journalists sought other employment niches. As a result, "jobs requiring journalistic skills are those increasingly related to careers in social media, generalist communication, and public relations rather than reporting and editing" (Dawson *et al.*, 2021, p. 342).

6. Conclusions

For Journalism graduates to take advantage of the opportunities available on internet portals in this "non-specific" job market, it would be necessary to strengthen their training in skills that will enable them to carry out professional roles beyond content production. On the other hand, the available evidence suggests that the media already demand this expansion of roles, including strategy and planning, interaction with the public, and research and analysis. This situation poses a formidable challenge to university training programs in Journalism. It is not just bolstering the curriculum by including digital technology skills (also known as digital competencies). Instead, we strongly recommend addressing the skills needed to perform these emerging profes-

sional tasks, the achievement of which is now enabled by the convergence of a wide variety of tools involving digital technology (Gómez-Diago & Martínez-Nicolás, 2024).

However, this challenge must be approached cautiously, as Journalism degrees are unambiguous, and news-reporting profiles should not be diminished. The options are diverse, yet they would initially involve strengthening the acquisition of skills other than those associated with the strict production of information content, including multimedia and data journalism, but it would also mean including the following subjects as well: strategy and content planning; communication planning and campaign design; creation and management of virtual communities; web design; market and brand development; event organisation; search engine optimisation; web analytics; and prospective and evaluative research for decision-making. These skills must be taught without losing sight of the journalistic focus, which includes the following: strategic planning of journalistic content; prospecting and appraising to expand markets and journalistic brands; search engine optimisation to promote genuinely journalistic products; and others. At the same time, such training would provide students with the skills needed to eventually work professionally in corporate and institutional communication. Of course, this training would have to be complemented with courses aimed at gaining knowledge regarding the organisation and inner workings of companies, possibly on an optional basis. Another avenue to explore is the strategic promotion of specific double-degree programmes that combine a Journalism degree with one in Advertising, Public Relations, Marketing, Digital Communication, Business Administration, or others. This approach would help remove academic biases, which could impede addressing the challenges posed by the current communications ecosystem of the journalistic profession (Martínez-Nicolás, 2023).

7. Funding and support

8. Authors' contribution

Conceptualization	Ideas; formulation or evolution of overarching research goals and aims.	Authors 1 and 2
Data curation	Management activities to annotate (produce metadata), scrub data and maintain research data (including *software* code, where it is necessary for interpreting the data itself) for initial use and later re-use.	Authors 1 and 2
Formal analysis	Application of statistical, mathematical, computational, or other formal techniques to analyze or synthesize study data.	Authors 1 and 2
Funding acquisition	Acquisition of the financial support for the project leading to this publication.	Author 1

Investigation	Conducting a research and investigation process, specifically performing the experiments, or data/evidence collection.	Authors 1 and 2
Methodology	Development or design of methodology; creation of models.	Authors 1 and 2
Project administration	Management and coordination responsibility for the research activity planning and execution.	Author 1
Resources	Provision of study materials, reagents, materials, patients, laboratory samples, animals, instrumentation, computing resources, or other analysis tools.	Author 2
Software	Programming, *software* development; designing computer programs; implementation of the computer code and supporting algorithms; testing of existing code components.	Authors 1 and 2
Supervision	Oversight and leadership responsibility for the research activity planning and execution, including mentorship external to the core team.	Author 1
Validation	Verification, whether as a part of the activity or separate, of the overall replication/reproducibility of results/experiments and other research outputs.	Authors 1 and 2
Visualization	Preparation, creation and/or presentation of the published work, specifically visualization/data presentation.	Author 1
Writing / original draft	Preparation, creation and/or presentation of the published work, specifically writing the initial draft (including substantive translation).	Author 1
Writing / review & editing	Preparation, creation and/or presentation of the published work by those from the original research group, specifically critical review, commentary or revision –including pre- or post-publication stages.	Authors 1 and 2

9. Statement on the use of artificial intelligence

No form of artificial intelligence has been used in the preparation of this article.

10. References

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