

Worldview literacy in complementing Media Education

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Abstract

The aim of this paper is to suggest how media literacy might be developed if worldview literacy is added as a needed complementarity. How do we promote more positive encounters among people of differing perspectives in today's diverse media world where there are disagreements not only about the Ultimate Truth but also about basic facts of news? Worldview literacy education should be an integral part of media literacy training. Beyond understanding how media content is constructed and what purposes it serves, combining media literacy with worldview literacy can support complexity awareness and enable a more effective transformational learning process toward a more just world. In a polarizing society, disinformation, misinformation, and malinformation in the media, as well as populism and hate speech, also target religions and worldviews (Valaskivi et al., 2023). These different literacies together are important for gaining powerful knowledge that means systematically conceptual understanding which enables the student's worldview to expand and to enlarge the mind. Even though human beings are not necessarily peaceful they are still capable of making peace which has been the UNESCO objective of building peace in the minds of men and women.

Keywords: media education; media literacy; worldview literacy; dialogue

Resum. *L'alfabetització en visió del món com a complement de l'educació mediàtica*

L'objectiu d'aquest article és suggerir com es podria desenvolupar l'alfabetització mediàtica si s'hi afegís l'alfabetització en visió del món com a complement necessari. Com podem promoure trobades més positives entre persones amb perspectives diferents en el divers món mediàtic actual, en el qual existeixen desacords no sols sobre la veritat última, sinó

també sobre fets bàsics de les notícies? L'alfabetització en visió del món és necessària com a part de la formació en alfabetització mediàtica. Per exemple, no sols aprendre a veure la complexitat i comprendre-la, sinó també aprendre com es va crear el contingut dels mitjans i quin és el propòsit profund al qual apunta i serveix, i no sols com es pot construir un món més just. L'alfabetització mediàtica també ha d'acompanyar l'alfabetització en visió del món per permetre un procés d'aprenentatge transformacional més eficient. En una societat polaritzada, la desinformació, la informació errònia i la informació maliciosa en els mitjans de comunicació, el populisme i el discurs d'odi també es dirigeixen contra les religions i les visions del món (Valaskivi et al., 2023). Aquestes diferents alfabetitzacions són importants per adquirir un coneixement poderós, és a dir, una comprensió conceptual sistemàtica que permeti ampliar la visió del món de l'estudiant i eixamplar la seva ment. Encara que els éssers humans no són necessàriament pacífics, continuen sent capaçs de construir la pau, la qual cosa ha estat l'objectiu de la UNESCO.

Paraules clau: educació mediàtica; alfabetització mediàtica; alfabetització en visió; diàleg

Resumen. *La alfabetización en visión del mundo como complemento de la educación mediática*

El objetivo de este artículo es sugerir cómo se podría desarrollar la alfabetización mediática si se añadiera la alfabetización en visión del mundo como complemento necesario. ¿Cómo podemos promover encuentros más positivos entre personas con perspectivas diferentes en el diverso mundo mediático actual, en el que existen desacuerdos no solo sobre la verdad última, sino también sobre hechos básicos de las noticias? La alfabetización en visión del mundo es necesaria como parte de la formación en alfabetización mediática. Por ejemplo, no solo aprender a ver la complejidad y comprenderla, sino también aprender cómo se creó el contenido de los medios y cuál es el propósito profundo al que apunta y sirve, y no solo cómo se puede construir un mundo más justo. La alfabetización mediática también debe ir de la mano de la alfabetización en visión del mundo para permitir un proceso de aprendizaje transformacional más eficiente. En una sociedad polarizada, la desinformación, la información errónea y la información maliciosa en los medios de comunicación, el populismo y el discurso de odio también se dirigen contra las religiones y las visiones del mundo (Valaskivi et al., 2023). Estas diferentes alfabetizaciones son importantes para adquirir un conocimiento poderoso, es decir, una comprensión conceptual sistemática que permita ampliar la visión del mundo del estudiante y ensanchar su mente. Aunque los seres humanos no son necesariamente pacíficos, siguen siendo capaces de construir la paz, lo que ha sido el objetivo de la UNESCO.

Palabras clave: educación mediática; alfabetización mediática; alfabetización en visión; diálogo

Several factors make media literacy and worldview literacy very important now. These include the global challenges as climate literacy and planetary limits, security concerns, polarization, digitalization and artificial intelligence, as well as the changing role of the media and changes on the field of religions and other worldviews. Worldview landscape of Western and Northern Europe has changed enormously that is seen a decrease in institutionalized Christianity and increased religious and other worldview diversity (Shaw,

2022). Part of the increased global diversification and interaction, identities have become more hybrid, fluid and complex (Modood, 2019; Shaw, 2023) and religion or other worldview is often an important part of the daily life. (Moulin-Stožek & Schirr, 2017). Religions and other worldviews remain important in individuals' meaning making. A worldview encompasses both religious and secular perspectives, and it can be either organized or personal. Existential questions play a central role in shaping any worldview (van der Kooij et al., 2017). For many, previously salient worldviews have diminished in significance amid the continued secularization of Western societies. Notably, secularization has not eliminated religion but has instead contributed to the emergence of greater religious diversity (Talmont-Kaminski & Shults, 2023).

The media has a huge impact to us shaping our identities, our worldviews and our values. Media is also a strong tool of socialization (Kupiainen & Sintonen, 2009) good and bad. Some scholars have argued that it is under the media's responsibility, that there is the lack of religious literacy among individuals and groups in today's Europe (Dinham, 2017), which is seen in negative attitudes and misconceptions and ways of talking about religion and especially about Islam (Wrammert, 2021; Toft & Broberg, 2018). Also, some other worldviews have been introduced in a media, especially in digital media, incorrectly and in a very narrow way. For example, atheists strongly against religions, rather than relatively moderate or indifferent non-religious people, provide a public voice for all non-religious people, perpetuating the public image of non-religious people as aggressive men of science (Taira, 2014). This confrontation, that is going on between people and their world views, is fuelled by both traditional and social media (Malkki et al., 2021) and a variety of narratives describe the world through different incompatibilities are many times linked to cultures and worldviews (Benjamin et al., 2023).

Throughout the ages, the fear of religious and other worldviews otherness has been present in various religions and societies. New to the situation is the transformation of the media world, which also affects the exchange of opinions on religions and other worldviews. It has brought with it real-time news coverage and greater civil discourse in democratic societies, as well as the supranationalism of the debates. As a result, religious themes are rarely local or even national but tend to have some connection to similar debates in other countries (Linjakumpu et al., 2023).

This article examines how worldview literacy can contribute to media literacy competence and its development in an increasingly religious and other worldview-diverse world. We argue that without considering both media literacy and worldview literacy as interconnected competencies, educational approaches remain insufficient for addressing the complexities of meaning-making and critical engagement in culturally and worldview-diverse societies. This question and argument are framed by a reflection on the role of the media in global education and in cultural diversities at this unique turning point in history, characterized by increasingly uncertain and complex

developments that are changing at an unbelievable rapidity. The role of the media in the world depends on several things that education plays a big part. Media literacy and in a larger scale multiliteracy in education, have a great deal of influence here.

According to the Finnish national core curricula, multiliteracy is defined as the competence to interpret, produce, and make a value judgement across a range of different texts. The aim is to help pupils in understanding different forms of cultural communication and to help in building their personal identity (FNBE, 2014). It is essential to note that multiliteracy is not just a matter of learning something only technically and rationally, because in addition to the technical and content-based thinking of the text, multiliteracy can also include the communal, social and cultural dimension of the text (Grünthal, 2020; Kupiainen & Sintonen, 2009) and it has been also pointed out that multiliteracy is also activity and participation (Sintonen & Kumpulainen, 2017).

Finnish teachers have taken into use the concept of multiliteracy in a positive way (Paksuniemi & Keskitalo, 2019) but despite of this, the teachers have been confused about its large scope (Kupiainen, 2017). It might be good to see how the different aspects of multiliteracy are related and how these sub-multiliteracies complement each other promoting transversal learning, such as media and worldview literacies?

It is known that media needs skills for safe and successful use of media that comes from how individuals experience media and interact with content of media and technology when navigating their environments and incorporate media into their decisions. More attention should be given to the diversity of media cultures and the co-existence of different religions and other worldviews.

The interaction between media and worldviews is a complex and constantly evolving process. The understanding of the interaction between media and worldviews is a key when considering the impact of the media on democracy development and how people navigate the field of worldviews with the influences of the media (Taira, 2020).

1. Creating a better world and future for all

Media literacy aims to develop both critical understanding and active participation in the old and new media to create such competences that would allow the use of modern technology. Different terms were used for media education: “media competence” in Germany, “social competence” in Spain, “media pedagogy” or “media literacy” in the Scandinavian countries. In all cases, this was a continuous process which needed to be developed by practice and education. It was also a multidimensional concept including cognitive, emotional, aesthetic and moral aspects. It could be described as “the ability to communicate competently in all media, print and electronic, as well as to access, analyse and evaluate the powerful images, words and sounds

that make up our contemporary mass media culture. These skills of media literacy are essential for our future as individuals and as members of a democratic society (Varis, 2000).

There has been also a discussion about world media environment and a term called multicivilizational literacy (Varis & Celot, 2024). While the world media is increasingly broadened by new international media actors but is continuously dominated by the Western approach. The demands of independent and critical media challenge both American and European journalistic culture. On another note, military operations and new non-state actors also characterize the content and flow of international information. War propaganda has been known for centuries but the new world order includes also civilizational challenges. In this context, the need for multicultural communication broadens into multicivilizational literacy.

A holistic vision of human communication and the future is needed for the new literacies and communication competences. UNESCO has been promoting the credo of New Humanism which is not only theoretical but also practical approach needed for building global education and media for the global civic society (Perez Tornero & Varis, 2010).

Traditional humanism is challenged by transhumanism that aims to transform the human condition by developing and creating widely available sophisticated technologies to enhance human intellectual, physical, and psychological capacities. Science and technology are becoming the credo of the new order and new 21st century literacies are needed. However, as observed by an East Asian Daisaku Ikeda and Westerner Arnold Toynbee in their dialogue already in 1976, “today people are compelled to serve intellectual knowledge and technological skill, which are in turn controlled by politics and economies”. Instead, education should emphasize the inherent dignity and independence of learning (Ikeda & Toynbee, 1976).

UNESCO envisions education that supports everyone’s inclusion and cooperation in overcoming abject problems. Education should be transformative (UNESCO, 2021). Central to transformative learning is the critical review of past thinking and operating models and the development of critical thinking (Freire, 2005). The goal of transformative learning is to crystallize creating a better world and future for all. This is also strongly related to Media Education.

Media and information literacy, communication and digital skills: the ability to effectively search, access, critically evaluate, ethically produce, use and disseminate information and knowledge through various channels and technologies. It also implies to be resilient, to be able to detect and to combat disinformation and misinformation, hate speech, all forms of violence, including gender-based violence, harmful content and online abuse and exploitation, understanding one’s rights and responsibilities on- and off-line and engaging in digital environments in a safe, effective, discerning and respectful way that enhances digital security and protects privacy. (UNESCO, 2023)

2. Media literacy to meet topical challenges

Through media literacy people learn how to access, analyse, evaluate, create, and act using all forms of communication to be empowered to be critical thinkers and makers at the intrapersonal and social levels, effective communicators, and active citizens (NAMLE, 2024). It has been a goal already that teaching media literacy should be seen as part of a more fundamental rethinking of how we teach about culture and communication in a world increasingly sated by commercial media (Buckingham, 2011). If the users are empowered and intrinsically motivated to think critically about the sources and traces of other sources, they are not to be easily manipulated or coerced based on data they meet (Weintraub Austin & Domgaard, 2024). Media literacy is seen as developing a worldview grounded in continuous inquiry and once that is open to regular exploration (Butler, 2019). It is embracing a critical way of looking of the world and evaluation and questioning systems of power, that is the task of especially critical media literacy (Share & Gambino, 2022), that assists to take media in a more informed way and consider alternative ways of thinking about the media they use (Yousman, 2016) in order to draw attention to its larger context and to think beyond the content of dominant mainstream media choices (Butler, 2019).

Critical media literacy has emerged to engage in criticism of ideology, and includes also analyses of gender, ethnicity, socio-economic background, sexuality and other forms of identity and encourage analysis of the prevailing ideology and questioning of the means of production (Kellner & Share, 2007) and challenging media messages that reproduce oppression and discrimination (Share & Gambino, 2022). Criticality also refers to an action orientated culture meaning that people are encouraged to take action to make a difference in their communities.

Media Literacy Theory of Change is there to bring agency. It has conceptualized media literacy not as an outcome but as a process, recognizing that individuals can reach diverse conclusions based on their interpretations of messages in accordance with constructivist approaches to media literacy education (Sperry et al., 2022). Media analysis is realized through the decoding of messages, in which case their creation is co-construction. The meaning of the message therefore becomes dynamic in a sense that meaning includes both an understanding of what the source of the message is trying to communicate and how the perspective of the receiver of the message shapes their interpretation of it (Weintraub Austin & Domgaard, 2024). It is a dialogical process for social and environmental justice (Share & Gambino, 2022).

3. Religious and Worldview literacies offer participation in dialogue and personal formation

It has been claimed that one of the essential effects of mediatization is that main elements of social or cultural activity take media form and when it is a

question of religion, it means a move from religious institutions to media institutions as the prime mediators of religion in society. It follows that religions are increasingly visible in public discourse (Lövheim & Axner, 2014). Herbert (2012) argues that religion has re-emerged in public spheres in new ways in contemporary societies, particularly due to changes in media and public discourse. According to the former research in the Nordic countries religion today is incessantly present in the news (Wrammert, 2024).

It is not the same how religions are interpreted in the media, for example, to take a stand on the role and position of religions in society. In some cases, religions and their place in society are distorted unintentionally and in others deliberately. Religions are set in a field of discursive struggles, with a wide range of opposing and competing intentions, ways of understanding, and political goals. Religions and other worldviews are not a neutral dimension of social existence but involve and channel many social tensions and conflicts (Linjakumpu et al., 2023) and can also play the role of Faith-based Diplomacy (Leirvik, 2014).

Media shapes views of religions and the media and popular culture in media affect religion and religious practice. Also, today's mass media environment has grown into a constantly more important resource and site for learning religious and other worldview ideas and building the religious and other worldview identities (Hoover, 2006). To be media literate person is to be also a religious literate.

Religion is increasingly seen not only as a field for public discussion but also for public learning (Lähnemann, 2017). There have been a pioneering group of scholars that have argued a long time for the need for interreligious dialogue and religious literacy for learning (Beverluis, 2000; Braybrooke, 1998; Patel et al., 2018). However it did not happen until after the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, that a broader sense of urgency about religious literacy began to take more place (Lähnemann, 2017; Seiple & Hoover, 2022). Religious literacy is argued to constitute a key civic competence that fosters understanding, dialogue, and social cohesion, and its development should be strengthened both within the education system and across wider societal practices (Linjakumpu et al., 2023).

Religious literacy consists of knowledge of religions and the ability to understand the specific nature of religious language; the moral imagination that helps to find the constructive purpose of the text and to open the many hidden dimensions of its symbols and theoretical analytical skills, including knowledge of the rules of dialogue, which can be used to prevent insults and build a climate of trust. One needed dimension is also about ethical readiness and commitment to understand the motives and thinking of the other. For example, to manage and implement the rules of dialogue, a person must have social capabilities, including empathy, sensitivity and an ethical basis, to act with respect towards another (Heinonen, 2010).

Religious literacy is seen as a matter of civic responsibility (Heinonen, 2010; Seiple & Hoover, 2022) and a civic attempt rather than a religious

one, even a seeking to support a strong multi-faith society that includes people from all faith traditions and none, in a context that is largely suspicious and concerned about religion and belief. It is therefore a stretchy, fluid concept and context-dependent meaning that it is formulated and applied differently depending on what surroundings and situations it occurs (Dinham & Francis, 2015). Thus, it is suggested to contextualize the field where religious literacy is used. People, situations and environments vary.

Religious and other worldview literacy needs a multi-level and multi-directional understanding of the situation and place, as well as relationships with oneself and others as it is related to relationships. Therefore, discretion and flexibility are important qualities (Seiple & Hoover, 2022) and understanding the complexity among religions meaning that differences must not be isolated from other relevant differences such as gender, socioeconomic background and culture so that we take into account of the complex differences and complex attitudes as a challenge (Leirvik, 2014). Could media literacy methods and experiences be guiding here?

4. Why worldview literacy instead of religious literacy?

Some terms such as interfaith dialogue and religious literacy have rooted into the discourse more and more, although there have already emerged new terms since the field of religions and other world views are in big change and there has been this request to find current, more inclusive terms. Western societies have been marked by increasing secularization, which is reflected not only in the functioning of society but also in individual's everyday life, behaviour and beliefs. However, it has been pointed out that if this development continues, the status of religion changes even more. For example, among young people in Finland, non-religiousness is more common and normal than religiosity (Ketola & Salomäki, 2024). Therefore, the term worldview literacy is replacing the religious literacy being used in the more diverse context. It has also been argued that everybody owns a worldview (Stenmark, 2021).

A worldview gives a person understanding of their place in the world and the nature of reality. It is a way of life that everyone develops to a greater or lesser degree of complexity as they go through life. The media in its various forms, the people we connect with, and the communities we belong to all influence our perceptions of the world in turn (Valk, 2017).

Worldview literacy is understood as a practical in which interpretation and application are intertwined, worldview literacy impresses interdependence substantive, disciplinary and personal knowledge in a process of critical, reflexive interpretation inseparable from skill development and personal formation (Shaw, 2022). It is the personal formation and development that is in change that makes the worldview literacy important as a tool for gaining Powerful knowledge. It is in Powerful knowledge, that will teach students to make decisions and become empowered and competent to act in a way that

impacts on supporting their lives in a positive way (Müller & Young, 2019; Shaw, 2023). Powerful knowledge gives a closer look at the truth of the world we live in and what it is to be human. It is the knowledge that people become and not just something that people know (Deng, 2018) in meaning that it does not only give tools to observe how religions and other worldviews are reflected in the burning questions of the day, but to promote diversity of thinking and mutual co-operation. A person is guided to think what it means to have their own worldview in praxis and how to live constructively with others, in everyday life that media is a part of.

Worldview literacy is understood as a transformational process, where in relation a person is undergoing transformation through a reflexive encounter with the subject and in relation to the public sphere because it is the process of commitment. Worldview literacy as a dialogical and educational practice makes the student better understand the diversity and dynamism of world views, as well as themselves as its social actors in plurality (Shaw, 2022) inheriting instructions from Paolo Freire's thinking of reflection and action upon the world to transform it (Share & Gambino, 2022).

The secret is in a process of engagement where interpretability, reflexivity and transformative encounter take place. Worldviews are understood as being in a constant process of change through human interaction. (Shaw, 2023). And the process where this can happen is dialogue (Rautionmaa, 2010; Patel et al., 2018). Interfaith and inter-worldview dialogue is a practical tool and goal within the worldview literacy is gained and practiced. It is not only about learning content but also about cultivating skills and dispositions through encounters, with personal storytelling playing a key role in fostering respectful relationships (Rautionmaa, 2017).

It is necessary to develop an appreciative understanding of other traditions, where "appreciative" denotes both a general orientation and substantive knowledge. Such an orientation seeks what is beautiful, admirable, and life-affirming, rather than focusing primarily on deficits or problems. It resists deriving its understanding of other religions mainly from media representations, recognizing that these offer only a partial account. This orientation supports the development of a sensitivity to religious diversity (Patel, 2016).

Some scholars welcome these relational aspects in focusing on the development of skills and qualities in the person and talk about expanded imagination (Heinonen, 2010). This knowledge creates a new language for engaging in political, moral, and other kinds of debates (Young, 2008). People can go beyond their specific experiences and imagine alternatives and new possibilities (Young & Müller, 2016).

We argue that media literacy could learn from religious and other worldview literacy and vice versa. They have lots in common and there are elements in both to learn from, about and within. These literacies are also interconnected, and they also complement each other. For example, a teacher in a partially integrated worldview education might raise examples from the media in using media literacy to show the importance of religious and other

worldview literacies and need for dialogue or some topics found in media are thematic content and dialogical boost in a process of inter-worldview dialogue (Rautionmaa et al., forthcoming).

5. Empathy in needed to go beyond criticism

Interfaith Studies promote the disposition of reflexivity, empathy and humility with the critical inquiry. Humility is very relevant in recognizing that our perspective or knowledge is limited and empathy brings on the possibility to imagine oneself in the shoes of others that help to understand others more fully like their background and development of interpretations. This is an important step to awaken to one's tendency to assume that one owns the overall view of truth that would be ultimate. Empathy assists to reason from other than our own starting points, assumptions and thoughts (Hickey & Suárez, 2018) that is needed to complement criticality.

Not everything that passes on critical thinking is equally wished for as they did not lead to more positive encounters. Skills for critical thinking are not so much needed when creating a culture of fruitful encounter. It is more a matter of forming authentic subjects that are attentive, intelligent, reasonable, responsible and loving (Manning, 2018), which refers the Powerful Knowledge.

Dialogue requires, promotes and stands also for those virtues. This means that interfaith and inter-worldview dialogue among people of differing perspectives is very needed in cooperation with media education. An important way to learn is to learn in encounters in listening and sharing with the open mind. This is what the power of dialogue is based on, and this is also the basis on which worldview literacy gains. People are witnessing each other's lives, and they become as Martin Buber has said the caretakers of each other's stories and new possibilities emerge. Storytelling challenges seeing from someone else's point of views and to think and to act together (Rautionmaa & Kallioniemi, 2017). Dialogue is about thinking together. Less is brought up by thinking alone (Isaacs, 2001). In dialogue, people learn to notice how multi-point of view is needed when creating a common minimum ethos to work for the common good (Rautionmaa, 2010).

In media literacy and media education we may have had too much bias in the modern industrial societies with their cognitive/technical approach while traditional societies often emphasize moral/practical rationality and learning.

Mythological ambiguities don't necessarily contradict but complement theological certitudes and scientific scepticism. Through its own experiences and sufferings, every generation must relearn and regenerate the moral learning of all previous generations (Tehrani, 1990), that can be learned if people are world view literate.

Already a hundred years ago John Dewey wrote that it is in communication that society is born and nurtured. It is through communication that we make our shared experience meaningful. It is no wonder, then, that Dewey

would conclude *The Public and Its Problems* with this provocative statement: Democracy “will have its consummation when free social inquiry is indissolubly wedded to the art of full and moving communication” (Crick, 2005). Therefore, communication and education are inseparable. Media communication means sharing. At best, we want to be close to others, share their presence and, with modern virtual technology, also the telepresence, feeling of being present in some distant physical location, or at least being in communication through distances in time and space.

The conclusions of the eminent peace educator Elise M. Boulding from the late 1980s are still valid for the objectives of world view and media education. She noted that despite the biological underpinnings of human behaviour the humans are not predestined to violence. Some significant parts of today’s media act as a distorting mirror making humans think we are more violent than we really are. We need better mental maps of the world and a more complete description of the great diversity of actors in the world scene. Human beings cannot work for goals they cannot even imagine. We need a major exploration of positive images of the future from different cultural traditions in each region (Boulding, 1988), that world view literate person is capable to notice.

What is required is an education that not only highlights the need for structural change in society and the world, but also a request for individuals to change (Reardon, 2015). Critical thinking is not enough; compassion, among other things, is needed (UNESCO, 2023), where the connection with others is embedded. Compassion brings a meaningfulness that gives hope amidst restlessness. Compassion is also a way to live in a more interdependent society and world.

Research has shown that focusing on supposed differences deepens stereotypes and harms the pursuit of social cohesion and equality, which in turn increases otherness and exclusion (Powell & Menendian, 2016). Appreciative encounters practiced in inter-world view dialogue and gaining world view literacy, emphasize positive opportunities rather than negative ones. This is a needed transformative element that could be added also more to Media Education.

From a community perspective people are encouraged to look together for dreams and strengths. A shared understanding of a positive foundation helps build the future based on the things that they are already working well and are worth strengthening. It is in these types of approaches that people can be connected with one another and acknowledge their potential role in changing the systems for better. The theory of collaborative change takes away the paradigm of winning or losing in favour of coordinated actions (Cooperrider & Whitney, 2011).

In this article, worldview literacy and media literacy are examined from the perspective of both literacies and in terms of how these two approaches complement one another in the field of education. Worldview literacy introduces a new dimension to media literacy by opening the rich and diverse

world of religions and other worldviews – a domain whose significance, for example in politics and communication and people's way of lives, is increasingly evident and more diverse.

This article highlights the interdependence between media literacy and worldview literacy, suggesting that a comprehensive understanding of media messages and representations requires the ability to critically interpret the underlying worldviews, values, and belief systems. Moreover, worldview literacy both requires and fosters critical compassion that is also needed in media literacy to create a more just world. Compassion generates meaning and hope amid experiences of restlessness and uncertainty. This can also be understood as an ethical orientation that enables responsible and connected ways of living in an increasingly interdependent world. The practice of compassion strengthens the capacity to engage in worldview dialogue and vice versa and to encounter others with respect regardless of their beliefs, to engage in mutual learning, and to cultivate a shared minimal understanding and ethos within diversity. This promotes action oriented towards the common good, which, from this perspective, enhances media literacy as a more active and critical capacity. Together with worldview literacy, media literacy further encompasses the ability to better evaluate what is ethically and socially significant, participate responsibly in media, and ensure the ethical production of content.

The development of critical compassion through the joint cultivation of media literacy and worldview literacy supports the ability to recognize and critically interpret the values, messages, and assumptions embedded in various forms of communication and worldviews. It encourages responses that are critical, compassionate, constructive, and oriented toward transformative social action. Through these interrelated competencies, individuals and communities can enhance social cohesion and promote peaceful coexistence in a complex global media and worldview environment.

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TikTok como plataforma de comunicación científica: técnicas y estilos que utilizan en esta red social los medios de comunicación tradicionales de España y Chile

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Resumen

Dado el creciente interés en las ciencias y la relevancia de las redes sociales como plataformas de comunicación, esta investigación analiza si los medios tradicionales han adaptado sus contenidos a las particularidades de TikTok. El estudio explora cómo los medios de comunicación tradicionales (en inglés, *legacy media*) de España y Chile utilizan esta red para realizar divulgación científica, y aporta evidencia comparativa sobre la integración de la ciencia en plataformas emergentes, con lo que contribuye al debate sobre su adaptación al ecosistema digital. Se seleccionaron tres perfiles de medios de comunicación tradicionales en el TikTok de cada país, considerando su popularidad y frecuencia de publicación. Se realizó un análisis de contenido de 9.003 publicaciones del año 2023 y se identificaron 326 relacionadas con la ciencia. La evaluación se basó en recomendaciones de expertos sobre el uso de la plataforma y se categorizó el nivel de cumplimiento de dichas directrices. Los resultados revelan que, en España, más del 70% de las publicaciones científicas son réplicas de contenido emitido previamente en televisión o en prensa,

sin adaptación significativa al formato ni al lenguaje de TikTok, mientras que en Chile este porcentaje es sensiblemente menor. De forma contraria a lo esperado, las publicaciones que reproducen contenidos tradicionales generan mayores niveles de compromiso que las piezas originales. Las producciones inéditas fueron escasas, al igual que el uso del humor y el entretenimiento, elementos recomendados por expertos. La investigación evidencia un aprovechamiento limitado de las herramientas interactivas de TikTok y plantea repensar las estrategias de adaptación, considerando que la réplica de formatos tradicionales, aunque menos innovadora, puede favorecer la interacción con audiencias jóvenes.

Palabras clave: comunicación científica; medios de comunicación tradicionales; medios de comunicación; periodismo digital; redes sociales; TikTok

Resum. *TikTok com a plataforma de comunicació científica: tècniques i estils que utilitzen en aquesta xarxa social els mitjans de comunicació tradicionals d'Espanya i Xile*

Atès el creixent interès en les ciències i la rellevància de les xarxes socials com a plataformes de comunicació, aquesta recerca analitza si els mitjans tradicionals han adaptat els seus continguts a les particularitats de TikTok. L'estudi explora com els mitjans de comunicació tradicionals (en anglès, *legacy media*) d'Espanya i Xile utilitzen aquesta xarxa per realitzar divulgació científica, i aporta evidència comparativa sobre la integració de la ciència en plataformes emergents, amb la qual cosa contribueix al debat sobre la seva adaptació a l'ecosistema digital. Es van seleccionar tres perfils de mitjans de comunicació tradicionals en el TikTok de cada país, considerant la seva popularitat i freqüència de publicació. Es va fer una anàlisi de contingut de 9.003 publicacions de l'any 2023 i se'n van identificar 326 relacionades amb la ciència. L'avaluació es va basar en recomanacions d'experts sobre l'ús de la plataforma i es va categoritzar el nivell de compliment d'aquestes directrius. Els resultats revelen que, a Espanya, més del 70% de les publicacions científiques són rèpliques de contingut emès prèviament a la televisió o a la premsa, sense adaptació significativa al format ni al llenguatge de TikTok, mentre que a Xile aquest percentatge és sensiblement menor. Contràriament al que s'esperava, les publicacions que reproduïen continguts tradicionals generen nivells més alts de compromís que les peces originals. Les produccions inédites van ser escasses, igual que l'ús de l'humor i l'entreteniment, elements recomanats per experts. La recerca evidencia un aprofitament limitat de les eines interactives de TikTok i planteja repensar les estratègies d'adaptació, considerant que la rèplica de formats tradicionals, tot i que menys innovadora, pot afavorir la interacció amb audiències joves.

Paraules clau: comunicació científica; mitjans de comunicació tradicionals; mitjans de comunicació; periodisme digital; xarxes socials; TikTok

Abstract. *TikTok as a platform for scientific communication: Techniques and styles used on this social network by legacy media in Spain and Chile*

Amid the growing public interest in science and the increasing importance of social media as a communication platform, this study examines whether traditional media have adapted their content to the distinctive features of TikTok. It explores how legacy media outlets from Spain and Chile use the platform for science communication and provides comparative evidence on how scientific content is integrated into emerging digital environments, contributing to the broader debate on the adaptation of science to the digital ecosystem. Three legacy media TikTok accounts from each country were selected based on their popularity and posting frequency. A content analysis of 9,003 videos published in 2023 iden-

tified 326 posts related to science. The evaluation followed expert-based recommendations for effective TikTok use, assessing the degree to which each publication complied with these guidelines. Results show that in Spain, over 70% of science-related videos were replicas of content previously broadcast on television or published in the press, with little adaptation to TikTok's native format and language, while the percentage was notably lower in Chile. Contrary to expectations, replicated content generated higher levels of engagement than original productions. Original videos were scarce, as was the use of humour and entertainment, elements widely recommended by experts. The findings reveal a limited use of TikTok's interactive features and suggest the need to rethink adaptation strategies, acknowledging that reproducing traditional formats, though less innovative, may still foster engagement among younger audiences.

Keywords: science communication; legacy media; media; digital journalism; social networks; TikTok

1. Introducción

Desde sus orígenes, el periodismo científico nace con la misión de que los comunicadores puedan valorar, comprender y explicar todo lo que está pasando a su alrededor, para que, de esta forma y por medio de la información y el aprendizaje constante, se pueda enseñar a las audiencias mediante todas sus dimensiones artísticas, lúdicas y entretenidas (Calvo-Hernando, 2002). El papel que tiene la profesión es fundamental a la hora de contribuir a formar un juicio crítico en el público frente al desarrollo científico y tecnológico (Olvera-Lobo y López-Pérez, 2015) y adquiere un valor social muy importante, puesto que puede promover oportunidades de aprendizaje y enseñanza por diferentes vías de comunicación.

Históricamente, el periodismo científico iberoamericano ha debido enfrentar las barreras de acceso y espacio de los medios, lo que ha limitado su difusión (Eizmendi-Iraola y Peña-Fernández, 2021; Lobato-Martínez et al., 2022; Massarani et al., 2005; Mena-Young y Aguilera Moyano, 2019). Sin embargo, en el último lustro, el periodismo científico se ha posicionado muchas veces en la escena mediática actual, en especial por su rol educativo y de validación sobre «qué era lo verdadero y qué no» durante la pandemia por COVID-19 (Martin-Neira et al., 2023b). Desde entonces, los medios han optado por dar cada vez más espacio a temas como el calentamiento global, las crisis medioambientales, las revoluciones tecnológicas o los últimos avances en la salud.

Pero, por más que exista un aumento en la cobertura, la perspectiva general es que las audiencias no consumen información noticiosa, en especial la que emerge desde los medios de comunicación tradicionales —la televisión, la radio o los periódicos (Mede, 2022)—, en los cuales se ha configurado una crisis de seguidores sin precedentes. Desinformación, baja confianza de los públicos, ataques por parte de grupos de poder y una gran incertidumbre en el negocio, en la que se incluyen recortes de personal y disminución de ingresos (Newman et al., 2024), son parte de las razones que han llevado

a que las audiencias disminuyan y que estas eviten cada vez más el consumo informativo.

Para poder sobrevivir, muchos de estos medios han debido adaptar sus contenidos al mundo digital, sin embargo, esta mutación no ha sido fácil y ha afectado a las prácticas tradicionales de las salas de prensa (García-Avilés et al., 2022). A pesar de los resquemores y las dificultades, este tipo de plataformas tienen la necesidad de aprovechar los nuevos entornos y las redes sociales para comunicar sus contenidos, para así aumentar el escaso vínculo que están manteniendo las audiencias con los medios de comunicación (Mue-ller-Herbst et al., 2020).

Teniendo en cuenta el contexto de la comunicación tradicional adaptada al contexto digital, el sostenido interés por informaciones científicas y las diversas coyunturas actuales que captan la atención del público, las oportunidades que pueden ofrecer las redes sociales como plataformas de divulgación para los medios de comunicación tradicionales son bien recibidas (Hendrickx y Vázquez-Herrero, 2024) y se erigen como una alternativa de fácil acceso, inmediata, multimedia y masiva (Sánchez González et al., 2022). Una muestra clara de esto es el crecimiento exponencial de usuarios de todas las edades en la plataforma TikTok, red que cumple esas características (Newman et al., 2024).

1.1. Difundiendo ciencia en TikTok

Esta red social comenzó a aumentar exponencialmente sus seguidores tras el comienzo de la pandemia de COVID-19. Su estilo desenfadado, dinámico, pero a la vez muy positivo (Micaletto-Belda et al., 2024), no hizo más que calzar perfectamente en las necesidades de las audiencias, cada vez más deseosas de involucrarse como usuarias productoras de contenidos (De-Casas-Moreno et al., 2024). Es así como TikTok se ha convertido en una de las principales vías de acceso que tienen los jóvenes a nivel global para consumir noticias (Newman et al., 2024).

En pro de cautivar a estas nuevas audiencias, los periodistas y los medios de comunicación tradicionales se ven obligados a manejar adecuadamente estas aplicaciones y a aprovechar todos los beneficios asociados a la transmisión de mensajes y a la interacción con el usuario (Negreira-Rey et al., 2022). Quienes están insertos en el mundo de la comunicación de la ciencia, y en su rol para acercar este tipo de contenidos a las grandes audiencias, han visto en TikTok una herramienta útil para lograr estos objetivos, en especial los que tienen relación con el hecho de informar adecuadamente a la ciudadanía para que pueda tomar decisiones, así como enfrentar las desinformaciones del sistema mediático actual (Aguilar Mera et al., 2023; Muñoz-Gallego et al., 2024).

Sin embargo, estudios recientes evidencian que muchos divulgadores científicos no han sabido aprovechar plenamente los recursos audiovisuales que ofrece TikTok para fomentar el compromiso de los usuarios. Muchas

veces se mantiene un estilo sobrio, sin infografías animadas o actuaciones, conservadores en escenografía, sin mayor producción o fomento de la interacción de los públicos, además de no incluir los elementos gráficos que potencia esta red, como *stickers*, archivos GIF, fondos en croma o un vínculo positivo con el humor y los memes (De-Casas-Moreno et al., 2024; Martin-Neira et al., 2023b; Velarde-Camaqui et al., 2024).

Dicho compromiso de las noticias en redes sociales se puede entender como la disposición positiva que puede mostrar un usuario hacia un tema, tomando como referencia dimensiones afectivas o conductuales e interactuando activamente mediante comentarios, «me gusta» o la acción de compartir (Guo y Sun, 2024; Trunfio y Rossi, 2021), por lo que, más que nunca, resulta necesario poderlas conocer y manejar, en especial en un mundo cada vez más digitalizado y con un consumo informativo científico mediante estas aplicaciones (Mede et al., 2025).

Ante ello, resulta fundamental explorar más sobre el uso de la red TikTok y las estrategias de comunicación que se utilizan en ella. La investigación se enmarca en conocer cómo se está usando para la comunicación de la ciencia, en especial por los informativos generalistas de los medios de comunicación que han tenido que arribar a esta plataforma social para acercarse a públicos cada vez más distantes de las formas habituales de consumo noticioso. A su vez, conociendo que hoy en día existen estrategias sugeridas por expertos en comunicación para aspirar a lograr un diálogo efectivo con las audiencias, resulta interesante saber cómo ha sido su aplicación y si estos perfiles siguen dichas recomendaciones (Martin-Neira et al., 2023a), que tienen relación directa con la interacción con la comunidad, el uso de técnicas y el estilo del vídeo, además de qué contenido ofrecer en el mensaje transmitido en TikTok.

Esta investigación podrá poner en valor el uso que están dando los medios de comunicación a TikTok. En el pasado (Martin-Neira et al., 2023b) se pudo explorar cómo los noticieros de televisión estaban utilizando esa plataforma, y muchos de esos informativos iberoamericanos solo tendían a replicar la información que transmitían en la pantalla grande, sin adaptarlas al lenguaje de la red social. Han pasado dos años de ese estudio y resulta interesante valorar los niveles de adaptación por parte de los canales televisivos, así como otros medios tradicionales, sobre el uso de esta red social y conocer cómo se han ido incorporando los elementos que expertos en el tema han sugerido como aspectos esenciales para que TikTok sea una red con mucho ritmo, creativa y dinámica (Micaletto-Belda et al., 2024), y que ha sido convertida en una de las aplicaciones con un mayor aumento de seguidores y de consumo noticioso de la actualidad (Newman et al., 2024). Estos aspectos pueden permitir generar nuevas estrategias de publicación, así como ver las características audiovisuales que más se usan al desarrollar este tipo de contenido.

El objetivo general del presente trabajo es conocer cómo los perfiles asociados a los medios de comunicación tradicionales de España y Chile utilizan

la red social TikTok para acercar sus contenidos científicos a la audiencia. El estudio busca identificar hasta qué punto estos medios han adaptado sus rutinas periodísticas y narrativas a las lógicas participativas y audiovisuales propias de la plataforma, contribuyendo a comprender el papel que desempeñan los medios tradicionales en la comunicación científica digital y en la construcción de nuevos modelos de divulgación en redes sociales.

Para ello, se ha resuelto responder las siguientes preguntas de investigación:

1. ¿Las recomendaciones desarrolladas por especialistas en periodismo para la comunicación de la ciencia han sido incorporadas en las publicaciones de dichos medios informativos?
2. ¿Cuál es el contenido que predomina en estas publicaciones, el que es original al lenguaje de TikTok o el que es una réplica de los medios de comunicación tradicionales?
3. ¿Cuáles son las diferencias y las semejanzas a la hora de publicar el contenido, tanto para los medios españoles como chilenos?

2. Metodología

Tomando como referencia las recomendaciones básicas que destacados especialistas del área de la comunicación, del periodismo científico y de las redes sociales propusieron a la hora de desarrollar mensajes con enfoque científico en TikTok (Martín-Neira et al., 2023a), además de la opinión de expertos en el área de la comunicación científica (Fährnich, 2021), se hizo una identificación de los principales medios de comunicación tradicionales de España y Chile, para luego escoger a los tres perfiles de TikTok más seguidos de España y los tres más seguidos de Chile (figura 1), amparándose en cuatro aspectos:

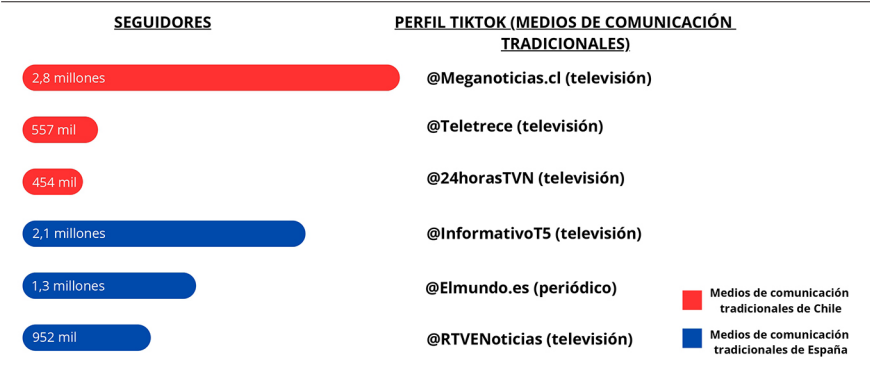
1. La cantidad de seguidores del perfil, de acuerdo con los datos extraídos el 2 de mayo del 2024.
2. Que, a la fecha de inicio del análisis, el perfil se encuentre activo y publicando las informaciones con un intervalo máximo de una semana.
3. Que sean plataformas de noticias de corte generalista, con alcance nacional y que no tengan su génesis en un medio digital.
4. Que su contenido sea en idioma español.

Se escogen medios de España y Chile debido a las similitudes que existen en cuanto a la concentración y a la influencia mediática de ambos países, sus vínculos políticos, culturales y sociopolíticos (Guerra, 2019; Humanes et al., 2017). Además, el considerar dos países hispanohablantes, con características lingüísticas parecidas y que permiten hacer una comparación más directa en el plano idiomático, más allá de las diferencias que puedan existir

en cuanto al contexto cultural, favorece la elección de medios de dichas naciones.

Por otra parte, resulta relevante analizar los medios de comunicación tradicionales y no los que se podrían considerar nativos digitales, puesto que, hasta el día de hoy, los medios tradicionales siguen siendo vistos como mediadores en el nexo entre la ciencia y la sociedad, además de poseer marcas consolidadas y que generan confianza para el público y son relevantes al momento de marcar las agendas y las pautas noticiosas diarias (Cheng y Li, 2024; Gaba y Bennett, 2024; Mede, 2022).

Figura 1. Descripción de perfiles de TikTok seleccionados



Fuente: elaboración propia.

Las recomendaciones previamente nombradas y que toman como base de análisis a la comunidad de usuarios, a las técnicas y al estilo usado en la publicación, además del contenido que se propone difundir, fueron estructuradas en una hoja de verificación (figura 2) para determinar si el cumplimiento de esas recomendaciones es nulo, bajo, medio o alto, de acuerdo con los indicadores de uso de elementos audiovisuales en TikTok (Martin-Neira et al., 2023b), además del criterio de los autores de este trabajo, especialistas en el área de la comunicación de la ciencia y las redes sociales.

Para ello se revisaron todas las publicaciones que realizaron los perfiles en el año 2023, se filtraron los contenidos científicos de cada medio y se evaluó en cada una de ellas la aplicación de estas recomendaciones. En el proceso de búsqueda y registro de la información, se utilizó la técnica de análisis de contenido, para así sistematizar y explicar elementos comunicativos (Andréu Abela, 2000). De esta forma se puede señalar que se trata de una técnica que permite analizar mensajes y variables cuantificables (Wimmer y Dominick, 2011) y, a partir de la información recabada, formular deducciones válidas y aplicables a un contexto determinado (Krippendorff, 1990). La extracción de los datos se obtuvo a través de la plataforma ExportComments, herramienta especializada para la gestión masiva de datos en redes sociales.

Figura 2. Hoja de verificación de análisis de contenido científico de perfiles de TikTok

Identificación de la publicación • Perfil. • Fecha. • Enlace. • De qué se trata.	Estilo del mensaje (tono) Informativo; en base a opiniones, ideas y/o hechos; emocional; polémico; instructivo; humorístico.
Características y compromiso de la publicación • Número de «me gusta». • Número de comentarios. • Duración del video.	Cumple con recomendaciones para interactuar con la comunidad • Responde o interactúa con los seguidores. • Evita los tecnicismos y usa el lenguaje propio de TikTok.
Niveles de adaptación informativa y de contenido de la publicación El contenido en TikTok es una réplica exacta de lo que apareció en el soporte original (televisión, radio, periódico).	Cumple con recomendaciones técnicas y estilo de video • Videos con edición ágil, cortes rápidos y elementos visuales. • Videos breves y que tengan un impacto inicial. • Utiliza un protagonista en los videos.
Contenido predominante • Ciencias naturales o ciencias de la Tierra. • Astronomía. • Cambio climático. • Ciencias sociales o humanidades. • Ciencias médicas. • Tecnología o ingeniería. • Otros.	Cumple con recomendaciones de contenido del mensaje • Incluye píldoras científicas informativas y breves. • Acerca la ciencia por medio de elementos propios de la vida cotidiana. • Incluye contenido con rasgos próximos al entretenimiento y humor. • Intenta ser creativo con las imágenes y la locución. • Se muestra el lado B, “el cómo se hacen las cosas”, el paso a paso. • Ofrece espacio para videos con experimentación y recomendaciones al usuario.
Actores predominantes involucrados en el video (presencial o como referencia) Científicos/as o médicos/as, organizaciones de ciencia, periodistas o medios de comunicación, ciudadanos, centros/museos científicos, organizaciones gubernamentales.	

Fuente: elaboración propia en base a Fähnrich (2021), Martín-Neira et al. (2023a) y Martín-Neira et al. (2023b).

Para efectos de esta investigación, por *publicaciones científicas* se entendieron las entradas individuales con una mayoría de contenido que abordaba y explicaba temáticas sanitarias, de ciencia (ambientales, de la Tierra, físicas y biológicas), de humanidades y tecnología, que se basaban en la generación de conocimiento de este mismo espacio. Además, solo se consideraron aquellas publicaciones que entregaban información adicional con fuentes vivas o documentales, tales como declaraciones de expertos, datos provenientes de investigaciones o referencias a instituciones científicas, y se excluyeron aquellas piezas que presentaban únicamente imágenes de apoyo sin mayor edición o locución o cuyo objetivo principal era viral o publicitario y patrocinado. Se excluyeron del análisis aquellas publicaciones cuyo contenido, aunque pudiera incluir ciertos aspectos científicos, tuviera como objetivo principal informar sobre temas de actualidad o contingencia. Esta distinción es crucial para

asegurar que el objeto de estudio se centre en la divulgación de la ciencia, entendida como la comunicación y la explicación de conceptos científicos al público en general (Sánchez-Mora y Macías-Nestor, 2018), en lugar de la simple transmisión de información relacionada con eventos recientes o noticias, y las publicaciones científicas que tenían algún problema de audio o imagen producto de los derechos de autor y no se pudieron analizar de forma íntegra.

3. Resultados

Se revisaron un total de 9.003 entradas de todos los perfiles seleccionados, correspondientes a todas las publicaciones realizadas durante el año 2023. De estas, se identificaron 326 que cumplían con los indicadores y los criterios de una publicación científica en TikTok. Todas ellas fueron analizadas de acuerdo con la distribución detallada en la figura 3 de este trabajo.

Cabe destacar que, para efectos de esta investigación, los resultados que a continuación se presentan fueron agrupados por países, con el fin de comparar el uso de la red TikTok por parte de los medios de comunicación tradicionales de España y Chile.

En cuanto al análisis de «me gusta», comentarios y duración de los vídeos, se puede apreciar que, en ambos países, sobre el 50% de las publicaciones superan los 1.000 «me gusta» en cada una. Sin embargo, los comentarios realizados por la audiencia son más bien reducidos, ya que más del 40% de las publicaciones de ambos países no supera los 30 comentarios. La duración de

Figura 3. Cantidad total de publicaciones registradas y analizadas en TikTok

PERFIL DE USUARIO	TOTAL DE PUBLICACIONES (ENERO-DICIEMBRE 2023)	PUBLICACIONES SOBRE LOS TEMAS PROPUESTOS (% ANALIZADO SOBRE EL TOTAL DE LA MUESTRA)
MEGANOTICIAS.CL (CHILE)	n = 1.958	n = 87 (4,44%)
TELETRECE (CHILE)	n = 1.047	n = 44 (4,2%)
24HORASTVN (CHILE)	n = 1.487	n = 15 (1,01%)
INFORMATIVOST5 (ESPAÑA)	n = 2.119	n = 87 (4,1%)
ELMUNDO.ES (ESPAÑA)	n = 999	n = 48 (4,8%)
RTVE NOTICIAS (ESPAÑA)	n = 1.393	n = 44 (3,15%)
Total	n = 9.003	n = 326 (3,62%)

Fuente: elaboración propia.

los vídeos es bastante estándar entre ambas muestras, aunque cabe destacar que en España no existen vídeos que superen los dos minutos de duración, mientras que en Chile el 24% de los vídeos registrados excede esa duración. En la tabla 1 se resumen los datos obtenidos en cada publicación, según los descriptores analizados.

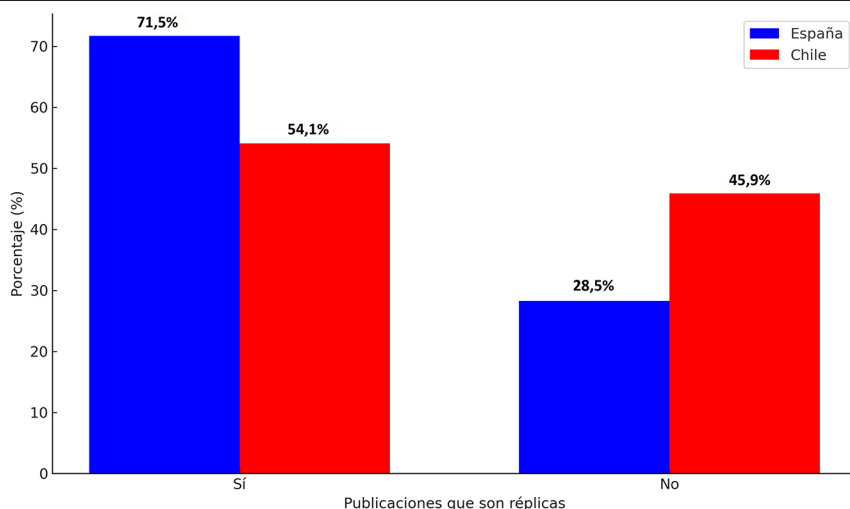
Tabla 1. Cantidad total de publicaciones registradas y analizadas en TikTok

Descriptor	Detalle	Porcentaje (número de publicaciones)	
		España (n = 180)	Chile (n = 146)
«Me gusta»	0 a 10	0	0,7% (n = 1)
	11 a 30	0	1,4% (n = 2)
	31 a 50	1,7% (n = 3)	6,8% (n = 10)
	51 a 100	1,1% (n = 2)	8,2% (n = 12)
	101 a 200	3,9% (n = 7)	8,2% (n = 12)
	201 a 300	8,3% (n = 15)	4,1% (n = 6)
	301 a 400	3,9% (n = 7)	4,8% (n = 7)
	401 a 500	3,3% (n = 6)	2,1% (n = 3)
	501 a 1.000	10% (n = 18)	6,8% (n = 10)
	1.001 a 5.000	21,7% (n = 39)	27,4% (n = 40)
	5.001 a 10.000	12,2% (n = 22)	10,3% (n = 15)
	10.001 y +	33,3% (n = 60)	19,2% (n = 28)
Comentarios	0 a 10	31,1% (n = 56)	40,4% (n = 59)
	11 a 30	11,7% (n = 21)	15,1% (n = 22)
	31 a 50	10% (n = 18)	8,2% (n = 12)
	51 a 100	11,1% (n = 20)	11,6% (n = 17)
	101 a 200	9,4% (n = 17)	8,2% (n = 12)
	201 a 300	6,1% (n = 11)	4,1% (n = 6)
	301 a 400	3,9% (n = 7)	1,4% (n = 2)
	401 a 500	1,7% (n = 3)	0,7% (n = 1)
Duración	501 y +	15% (n = 27)	10,3% (n = 15)
	00:01 a 00:30	16,7% (n = 30)	1,4% (n = 2)
	00:31 a 01:00	41,7% (n = 75)	25,3% (n = 37)
	01:01 a 01:30	36,7% (n = 66)	36,3% (n = 53)
	01:31 a 02:00	5% (n = 9)	13% (n = 19)
	02:01 a 03:00	0	17,8% (n = 26)
	03:01 y +	0	6,2% (n = 9)

Fuente: elaboración propia.

Uno de los objetivos de esta investigación es determinar si la mayoría de los perfiles analizados desarrollan contenido original o si, en su defecto, sus publicaciones son réplicas de una nota televisiva o de un artículo de prensa. Al comparar los resultados por países (figura 4), podemos determinar que, en los perfiles analizados de España, el 71,7% son réplicas, es decir, el contenido emitido en televisión se reproduce en TikTok con la misma estructura y una mínima edición. En Chile la situación es un poco más pareja, sin embargo, el contenido de réplica también es el más predominante.

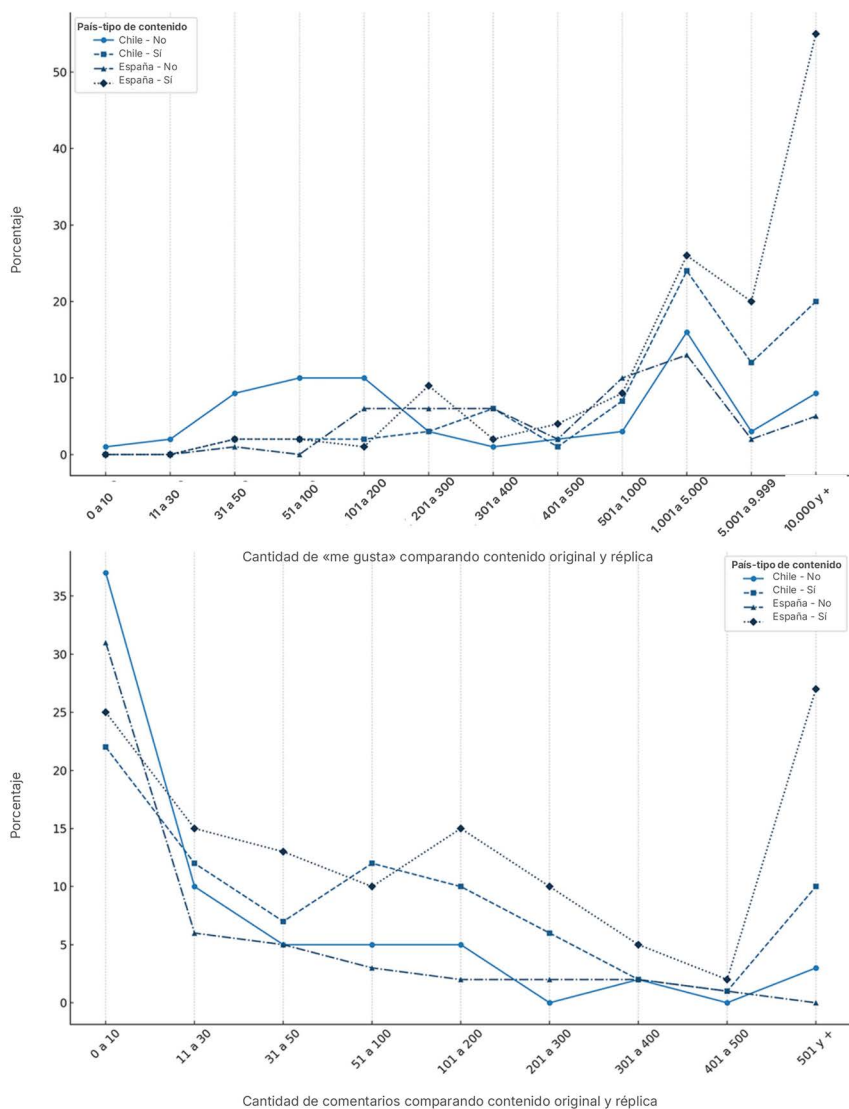
Figura 4. Detalle por país de la cantidad de publicaciones que son réplicas



Fuente: elaboración propia.

Teniendo en cuenta este resultado, al correlacionar el número de «me gusta» con el de comentarios por países, evaluando si existe una mayor cantidad de ellos en las publicaciones originales, se puede detectar que las publicaciones que son réplica de los medios de comunicación tradicionales obtienen una mayor cantidad de interacciones. Esa tendencia es similar tanto en los perfiles de los medios chilenos como de los españoles. Los valores se muestran expresados en frecuencia y se realiza un gráfico correlacional de puntos (figura 5).

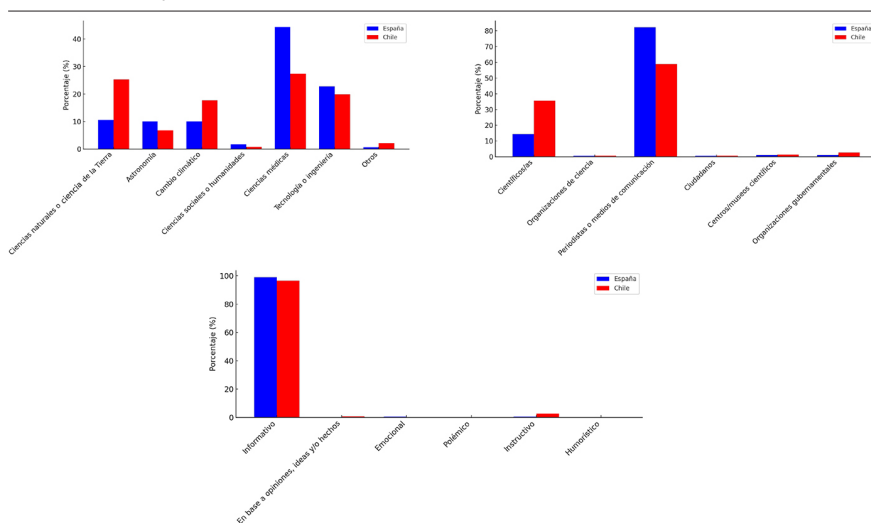
Figura 5. Comparación de las publicaciones originales (no) o réplicas (sí) entre Chile y España, en relación con la cantidad de «me gusta» y de comentarios



Fuente: elaboración propia.

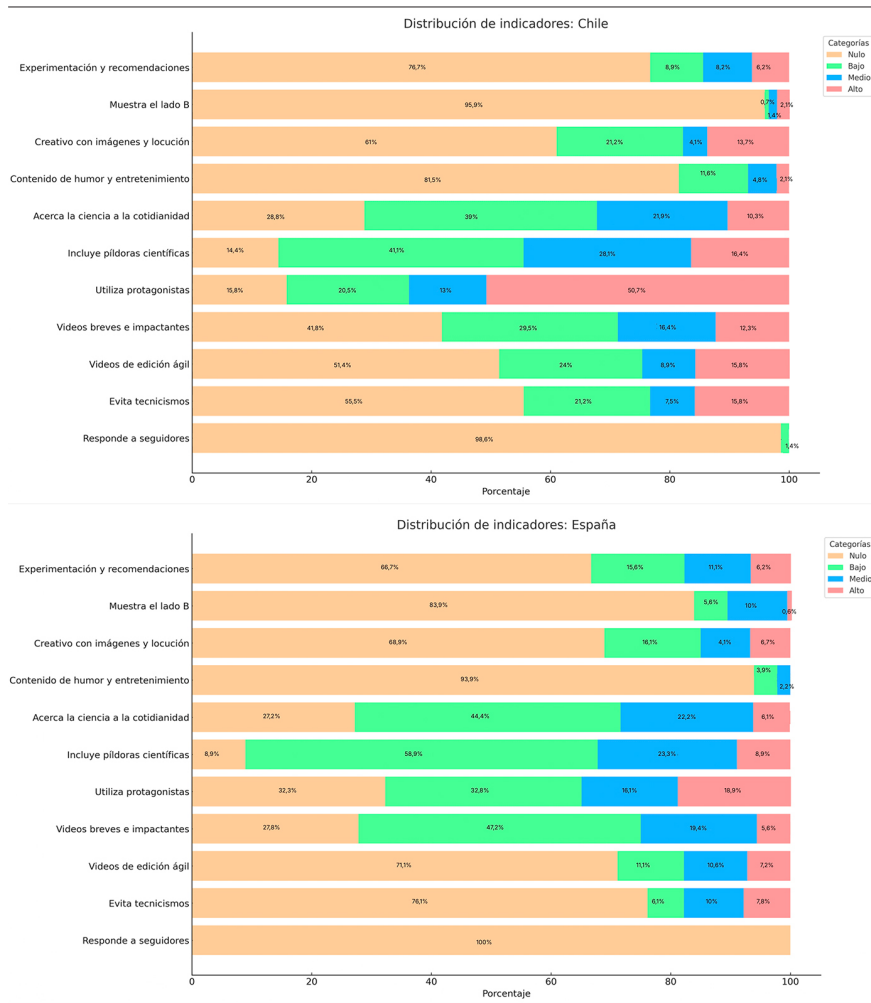
La figura 6 muestra la comparación del contenido predominante, los actores involucrados y el estilo del mensaje de cada vídeo en España y Chile. En ambos casos, los vídeos asociados a las ciencias médicas son los contenidos más producidos por los medios de comunicación. En cuanto a los protagonistas de la información, son los propios periodistas y los medios los que transmiten el mensaje científico. Finalmente, las publicaciones con estilo informativo son las más frecuentes entre los medios de comunicación tradicionales en TikTok.

Figura 6. Detalle comparativo por país del contenido predominante, actores involucrados y estilo del mensaje



Fuente: elaboración propia.

Uno de los objetivos principales de esta investigación es poder evaluar si las recomendaciones realizadas por especialistas del área de la comunicación y de las redes sociales, con relación a cómo publicar contenidos científicos en TikTok, están siendo utilizadas por estos perfiles de medios de comunicación tradicionales. Los resultados (figura 7) dan muestra de que las publicaciones con creatividad, así como las que incluyen aspectos asociados a la experimentación o al entretenimiento, son escasas en ambos países. Además, la interacción con los seguidores por medio de respuestas o diálogos es prácticamente nula en los dos casos. En contrapartida, utilizar protagonistas, acercar la ciencia por medio de la cotidianidad e incluir píldoras científicas son los aspectos que más se usan en este tipo de vídeos de TikTok.

Figura 7. Indicadores de los grados de uso de elementos sugeridos para videos en TikTok comparando los perfiles de Chile y España

Fuente: elaboración propia.

4. Discusión y conclusiones

Los medios tradicionales de comunicación experimentan una crisis, no solo respecto a la credibilidad que puedan tener los contenidos que emiten, sino también a la capacidad de captar a nuevas audiencias, cada vez más efímeras y con el control de «lo que quieren ver y cuando lo quieren ver» (García Rivero et al., 2022; Livingstone, 2009). Son dichos públicos los que hoy deciden cuál es el soporte con mayor éxito a la hora de consumir noticias, y los años

dorados en los que la televisión, la prensa escrita y la radio eran las plataformas de mayor atracción para los públicos han ido quedando atrás.

No obstante, la aparición de las redes sociales y la remediación que surgió en ellas (Toivanen et al., 2022) ha permitido que los medios de comunicación tradicionales tengan una nueva oportunidad para volver a captar el interés de estos públicos, ofrecer nuevas alternativas de consumo y aprovechar las bondades tecnológicas que brinda la sociedad digital actual, en especial aprovechando las capacidades multimedia y los altos niveles de alcance e interacción de las redes sociales (Arcilla Calderón et al., 2021; Trillo-Domínguez y Alberich-Pascual, 2020).

Por este motivo, estudios como los que se presentan aquí resultan interesantes para conocer en qué estado se encuentra esta adaptación mediática y cuáles son las estrategias que utilizan estos medios históricos a la hora de abordar una plataforma como TikTok, una de las redes sociales más utilizadas en la actualidad (López et al., 2024; Zozaya-Durazo et al., 2024) y con unas características visuales y de interacción que llaman la atención del público, en su mayoría, joven y ajeno a las plataformas tradicionales de comunicación.

Los resultados de este estudio dan cuenta de que los medios televisivos son los medios de comunicación tradicionales que se han adaptado de mejor forma a esta red social. Su contenido audiovisual le permite llegar rápidamente a las pantallas móviles, con lo que no solo logran penetrar en cantidad de medios, sino también en la audiencia que los sigue, y así ofrecer este producto tradicional a nuevos formatos de comunicación e interacción (Chobanyan y Nikolskaya, 2021; García-Avilés, 2020; Goyanes et al., 2021).

En esta comparación entre países la diferencia en el porcentaje de contenidos también adquiere relevancia. Dicha disparidad podría explicarse por factores estructurales y culturales en las rutinas productivas de los medios, pero también por dinámicas y contenidos priorizados. En el caso de España, la mayor centralización de las redacciones, la fuerte dependencia de los contenidos televisivos, además de los focos más abiertos a temáticas de sociedad —en las que se incluyen la ciencia y la salud— pueden favorecer la reutilización de piezas informativas, mientras que en Chile la prioridad la tienen los temas policiales y judiciales, lo que, además de la extensión de la duración de las notas, puede impulsar una mayor proporción de publicaciones científicas originales adaptadas al formato de TikTok, debido a que no existe mucho espacio en los noticieros centrales (CNTV Estudios, 2025; Sotelo González et al., 2025).

No obstante, y respondiendo a una de las preguntas de investigación de este estudio, no se ha observado una adaptación significativa del contenido de estos medios tradicionales a la plataforma de TikTok. Las noticias de ciencia analizadas que se han difundido por medio de esta aplicación carecen de originalidad, puesto que replican el contenido que se emitió inicialmente en el soporte original. Las cifras muestran que más del 70% de las publicaciones de los medios de comunicación tradicionales en España no poseen aspectos

propios de TikTok y se limitan a practicar un periodismo replicante, datos que se asemejan a los encontrados en investigaciones previas sobre el mismo tema (Hendrickx y Vázquez-Herrero, 2024; Martín-Neira et al., 2023b).

Cabe remarcar que esta tendencia se refuerza, ya que las indicaciones que realizaron destacados especialistas de comunicación para usar adecuadamente TikTok como plataforma de divulgación (Martín-Neira et al., 2023a) no están siendo aplicadas. La mayoría de estas indicaciones se implementan de manera limitada o, en algunos casos, no se aplican. No hay interacción con los seguidores y el contenido es significativamente plano, sin aplicar elementos relativos al humor o al entretenimiento. Estas características, observadas por diversos autores (Martín Ramallal y Micaletto Belda, 2021; Martín-Neira et al., 2023b; Vázquez González, 2021), pueden favorecer una comunicación efectiva en este tipo de aplicaciones, lo que invita a poder experimentar con esos consejos e incluirlas en la relación con los seguidores.

Además, un aspecto interesante que revela esta investigación es que los contenidos que promueven mayor interacción con las audiencias son las publicaciones replicadas. Es decir, las publicaciones cuya edición se limita únicamente a adaptar el vídeo a un formato vertical son las que reciben los más altos índices de comentarios y «me gusta». Surge entonces una pregunta crucial: ¿qué objetivo tienen los medios al usar estas redes? Si es el de obtener «me gusta» y comentarios, lo más probable es que una réplica de la noticia original sea suficiente para satisfacer esa necesidad. Todo esto confirma y responde a la pregunta de investigación que busca dilucidar cuál es el contenido que predomina en estas publicaciones, y la mayoría de las entradas analizadas constituyen una réplica de lo que ya se había publicado en los medios de comunicación tradicionales. Por lo mismo, no se puede dar por absoluto que el seguir las recomendaciones de los expertos o las visiones académicas ante el uso de TikTok sean garantía de una mayor interacción con las audiencias.

Si se realiza una mirada específica a los contenidos que publican ambos países, en el análisis realizado se revela que las ciencias médicas son la temática predominante. No solo la pandemia por COVID-19 impulsó a los medios a publicar mayor cantidad de información sanitaria, sino que aspectos asociados a la belleza, a la nutrición o a la salud mental también son tópicos que se suelen difundir en el plano digital (González-García et al., 2020; Martín-Neira et al., 2023c; Schäfer et al., 2018).

Siguiendo con la exploración de los contenidos, a pesar de que la percepción general es que TikTok es una plataforma orientada al entretenimiento y al humor (Barta et al., 2023; Molina-Fuster y Díaz-Lucena, 2024), la investigación realizada demostró que los contenidos informativos predominan por encima de lo humorístico. Esto viene a reforzar que, más allá de que la gente pueda tener adhesión a publicaciones mucho menos rígidas (González-López et al., 2024; Heiss y Matthes, 2021), se privilegia el tono periodístico y que no abusa del humor. Sumado a ello, los periodistas son la referencia principal de los vídeos, suele reconocerse una fuente informativa científica y solo repro-

ducen el contenido ellos mismos o lo hacen parafraseando a un científico, a una revista o a un centro de investigación.

Se puede concluir que las recomendaciones de los especialistas en el área de comunicación no se están siguiendo y se privilegia un contenido que es réplica del soporte original, lo que va en contra de generar publicaciones inéditas para cada plataforma y donde puedan incluirse aspectos propios del lenguaje de TikTok. Algunos de los patrones observados (como la escasa adaptación al lenguaje de la aplicación o la preferencia por formatos replicados) no son exclusivos de la comunicación científica, sino reflejo de estrategias generales de los medios de comunicación tradicionales en entornos digitales. No obstante, la prevalencia de contenidos médicos y la falta de recursos narrativos que faciliten la comprensión sí son rasgos propios de la divulgación científica, que exige claridad y contextualización (Calvo-Hernando, 2002; Fähnrich, 2021; Martin-Neira et al., 2025; Olvera-Lobo y López-Pérez, 2015; Sánchez-Mora y Macías-Néstor, 2018).

También es interesante poner de manifiesto que no existe una lógica de compromiso entre la forma de presentar el contenido y la «recompensa» de «me gusta» y comentarios que puedan recibir. Se aprecia que las publicaciones más virales no necesariamente tienen una elaboración mayor y suelen ser contenidos que ya fueron publicados en su soporte original. Eso obliga a reflexionar hacia dónde se deben orientar los esfuerzos periodísticos en esta red, ya que, si se logran altos niveles de alcance con un contenido reciclado, ello puede llevar a cambiar las estrategias de los equipos de difusión y manejo de redes sociales en cada entidad. En conjunto, estos hallazgos contribuyen a comprender el papel que desempeñan los medios tradicionales en la comunicación científica digital y ofrecen una base comparativa para analizar su adaptación a entornos audiovisuales participativos.

Además, cabe preguntarse sobre las razones que explican que los medios prioricen contenidos replicantes ante un formato más original. ¿Habrán razones económicas que justifiquen eso, ya sea por la falta del recurso humano en la industria mediática tradicional? ¿O por la escasa especialización del periodista en el campo de la ciencia, no pudiendo tener las habilidades para poder traducir adecuadamente el lenguaje técnico a un contenido más lúdico y audiovisual? ¿O esto reflejará una estrategia explícita por parte de los medios de comunicación tradicionales, al tener conciencia de que el contenido de réplica genera una mayor interacción con sus audiencias?

Esto también permite reflexionar sobre el rol de los medios frente a la divulgación de contenido científico: hay que aspirar a generar un contenido diferencial, profundo y que a la vez sea dinámico, atractivo para las audiencias y que siga ciertos lenguajes o características propias de una red social como TikTok, sin dejar esta tarea a ciertos influentes digitales, que muchas veces entregan contenido sin contrastar, en especial en el plano científico, y alcanzan altos niveles de compromiso (Altay et al., 2025; Fähnrich et al., 2023).

En el futuro, se debe seguir observando la evolución de la red social TikTok como herramienta de difusión y divulgación científica, en especial para

conocer cómo está siendo utilizada por los medios digitales y tradicionales. Además, es importante evaluar la validez de las estrategias que plantean especialistas del área de comunicación sobre el uso de la plataforma, en especial viendo que el contenido analizado en esta investigación que tiene mayor compromiso es precisamente el que no aplica estas recomendaciones. Sería interesante realizar futuras investigaciones que midan si la interacción con la audiencia aumenta efectivamente al emplear las herramientas interactivas que TikTok ofrece.

Por último, y si bien la cantidad de medios analizados, así como la variedad de países en la muestra podrían considerarse una limitación, creemos que el estudio que aquí se presenta es una novedosa aproximación para valorar el tipo de contenido que se difunde en esta red social y el espacio que está teniendo la información científica en estos medios tradicionales.

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Impacto de la inteligencia artificial y digitalización en los perfiles periodísticos

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Resumen

Los cambios tecnológicos actuales exigen una reconfiguración de los perfiles periodísticos profesionales. La presente investigación analiza cómo están cambiando estos perfiles en las redacciones de la prensa española en un entorno caracterizado por la digitalización y el avance de tecnologías impulsadas por la inteligencia artificial. Se emplea una metodología cualitativa basada en entrevistas semiestructuradas enviadas por correo a diez responsables de medios representativos de distintos ámbitos (prensa digital, radio y medios nativos digitales), que se complementa con un análisis exploratorio de ofertas laborales para periodistas con perfil tecnológico en InfoJobs y LinkedIn durante varios meses de 2025. El objetivo es explorar cómo la IA está modificando los perfiles profesionales, las competencias requeridas, los procesos de trabajo, la relación con las audiencias y la percepción ética respecto a su uso. Los resultados indican que, aunque la implementación de herramientas de IA en las redacciones es todavía limitada, existe un consenso general sobre su potencial para optimizar tareas mecánicas y mejorar el análisis de datos. Sin embargo, se detectan carencias en formación específica y en marcos éticos claros. La mayoría de los medios no ha incorporado perfiles técnicos ni nuevas figuras editoriales vinculadas a la IA, aunque se valora positivamente la futura incorporación de perfiles híbridos. El uso de la IA para facilitar o automatizar la interacción con las audiencias está en una fase inicial y aún no ha sido implementado en la mayoría de los casos. Las personas entrevistadas coinciden en que la IA puede ser una oportunidad para fortalecer el periodismo de calidad si se usa como herramienta de apoyo, no como sustituto. En conclusión, el impacto de la IA en el periodismo español está en sus

primeras etapas, con una incorporación desigual y sin una estrategia sistemática de integración profesional, formativa y ética en la mayoría de los medios analizados.

Palabras clave: inteligencia artificial; periodismo digital; medios digitales; perfiles profesionales; redacciones híbridas

Resum. *Impacte de la intel·ligència artificial i digitalització en els perfils periodístics*

Els canvis tecnològics actuals exigeixen una reconfiguració dels perfils periodístics professionals. Aquesta recerca analitza com estan canviant aquests perfils en les redaccions de la premsa espanyola en un entorn caracteritzat per la digitalització i l'avanç de tecnologies impulsades per la intel·ligència artificial. S'empra una metodologia qualitativa basada en entrevistes semiestructurades enviades per correu a deu responsables de mitjans representatius de diferents àmbits (premsa digital, ràdio i mitjans nadius digitals), que es complementa amb una anàlisi exploratòria d'ofertes laborals per a periodistes amb perfil tecnològic a InfoJobs i LinkedIn durant diversos mesos de 2025. L'objectiu és explorar com la IA està modificant els perfils professionals, les competències requerides, els processos de treball, la relació amb les audiències i la percepció ètica respecte del seu ús. Els resultats indiquen que, encara que la implementació d'eines d'IA a les redaccions encara és limitada, existeix un consens general sobre el seu potencial per optimitzar tasques mecàniques i millorar l'anàlisi de dades. No obstant això, es detecten mancances en formació específica i en marcs ètics clars. La majoria dels mitjans no han incorporat perfils tècnics ni noves figures editorials vinculades a la IA, encara que es valora positivament la futura incorporació de perfils híbrids. L'ús de la IA per facilitar o automatitzar la interacció amb les audiències està en una fase inicial i encara no ha estat implementat en la majoria dels casos. Les persones entrevistades coincideixen que la IA pot ser una oportunitat per enfortir el periodisme de qualitat si s'usa com a eina de suport, no com a substitut. En conclusió, l'impacte de la IA en el periodisme espanyol està en les seves primeres etapes, amb una incorporació desigual i sense una estratègia sistemàtica d'integració professional, formativa i ètica en la majoria dels mitjans analitzats.

Paraules clau: intel·ligència artificial; periodisme digital; mitjans digitals; perfils professionals; redaccions híbrides

Abstract. *The impact of artificial intelligence and digitalization on journalistic roles*

Current technological changes demand a reconfiguration of professional roles in journalism. This research analyses how professional roles in Spanish newsrooms are changing in an environment marked by digitalization and the advance of technologies powered by artificial intelligence. A qualitative methodology is employed, based on semi-structured interviews sent by email to 10 managers from representative media outlets across various sectors (digital press, radio, and digital-native media). This is complemented by an exploratory analysis of job postings for journalists with a technological profile on InfoJobs and LinkedIn over several months in 2025. The objective was to explore how AI is transforming professional roles, skills required, work processes, audience engagement and ethical perceptions regarding its use. The results indicate that although the implementation of AI tools in newsrooms is still limited, there is broad consensus about their potential to optimize repetitive tasks and enhance data analysis. However, there are notable gaps in specific training and in the development of clear ethical guidelines. Most media outlets have not yet incorporated technical roles or new editorial positions related to AI, although the future inclusion of hybrid profiles is viewed positively. The use of AI to facilitate or automate audience interaction is still in its early stages and has not yet been implemented in most cases. Inter-

viewees agree that AI could present an opportunity to strengthen quality journalism if used as a support tool, not as a substitute. In conclusion, the impact of AI on Spanish journalism is in its early stages, with uneven adoption and a lack of systematic strategies for professional, educational and ethical integration in most of the media analysed.

Keywords: artificial intelligence; digital journalism; digital media; professional profiles; hybrid newsrooms

1. Introducción

La transición digital ha obligado a los periodistas a adaptar sus rutinas y habilidades a redacciones integradas y multiplataforma, centradas en un periodismo hipertextual, multimedia e interactivo.

Las transformaciones digitales, surgidas en un contexto de profesionalización estable (Deuze y Witschge, 2018), han generado nuevos roles y competencias en las redacciones, incorporando a profesionales de programación, ingeniería y áreas afines. Esto ha dado lugar a modelos multidisciplinarios que han impactado en la práctica periodística, la organización y la relación con la audiencia (Pavlik, 2000; Waschková, 2023). Aunque estas transformaciones han ejercido efectos positivos y negativos (Hayes, 2021), han consolidado perfiles nuevos, como los editores de redes sociales, los gestores de audiencias, los productores multimedia, los especialistas en SEO, los periodistas de datos y los verificadores de contenido.

La reestructuración de los medios tradicionales a raíz de la digitalización (Perreault y Ferrucci, 2020) ha amplificado voces no periodísticas en la producción y difusión de información (Hase et al., 2022), lo que ha transformado la relación con las audiencias (Uth et al., 2025) y ha dado impulso a los medios alternativos frente a los tradicionales (Ihlebaek y Figenschou, 2024). Esto ha permitido la aparición de nuevos actores digitales, muchas veces desde la periferia (Hanusch y Löhmann, 2022), que, aunque no cuestionan el núcleo del periodismo (Maars y Hanusch, 2022), sí desafían la autoridad de los medios y de los periodistas establecidos (Schapals, 2022).

En los últimos años, la relación entre periodismo y redes sociales se ha vuelto más compleja (Mondéjar y García-Avilés, 2025), lo que ha generado una interacción entre actores centrales y periféricos que adoptan mutuamente técnicas y características (Schapals, 2022). Este escenario plantea la necesidad de analizar el rol de los «intrusos» (Eldridge II, 2019); la integración de actores periféricos (Hermida y Young, 2019); la innovación en formatos y narrativas (Lopezosa et al., 2021; Sixto García y López García, 2025), y los fundamentos del periodismo digital, ya consolidados en el sector (Perreault y Ferrucci, 2020).

La transformación digital del periodismo es un proceso continuo que impulsa cambios y la renovación de perfiles profesionales, a los que se les exigen competencias actualizadas (Vivar Zurita, 2011). El periodismo digital no es solo tecnología, sino también un campo donde el periodismo da sentido a la tecnología (Zelizer, 2019), enfrentando el desafío de integrar periodistas

con habilidades multimedia, expertos en participación y editores de audiencias y redes sociales.

Desde finales de la primera década del milenio, las necesidades profesionales y la convergencia digital han impulsado una renovación constante e intensa de perfiles (López García y Pereira Fariña, 2010). Esa convergencia, en el contexto de un proceso en desarrollo (Deuze, 2009) que provoca la reestructuración de las prácticas periodísticas (Jamil, 2020), ha convertido a los periodistas en técnicos más polivalentes y con renovados perfiles (Scolari et al., 2008), con muy diferentes papeles (Domingo, 2006), pero señalando el punto de partida, por la rápida y sistemática incorporación a las redacciones (Wallace, 2013), de una nueva etapa para los perfiles profesionales en función de las nuevas demandas de trabajo de los medios y la evolución de la transformación digital. Los perfiles con conocimiento de software y del entorno de la sociedad red, en especial desde la emergencia de la web social (López-García et al., 2016), marcaron, en buena medida, las tendencias de nuevos perfiles durante las dos primeras décadas de la digitalización, a la sombra de la alta tecnología.

En el ecosistema mediático híbrido actual, que mezcla lógicas tradicionales y nuevas formas de circulación (Chadwick, 2013), los perfiles profesionales difuminan las fronteras entre periodismo, relaciones públicas y marketing (Bernhard y Russmann, 2023). Aunque el periodismo se adapta constantemente, mantiene sus fundamentos esenciales (Deuze, 2017) en medio de «límites difusos» y un «desdibujamiento de fronteras» (Loosen, 2014), apoyándose en nuevas formas de trabajo impulsadas por plataformas sociales (Bastin y Bert-Erboul, 2024).

Los esfuerzos por preservar los valores periodísticos mediante paradigmas colaborativos y mayor relación con la audiencia (Hamm, 2022) han llevado a adaptar contenidos a las redes sociales (Hendrickx y Vázquez-Herrero, 2024). La capacidad de los periodistas para ajustarse a la lógica audiovisual y cultural de estas plataformas (Negreira-Rey et al., 2022) ha renovado perfiles, rutinas y normas en contextos cambiantes (Degen et al., 2024). Además, la integración de la inteligencia artificial en las redacciones redefine actualmente rutinas, perfiles y productos periodísticos (Gutiérrez-Caneda et al., 2023). Por otra parte, la llegada de la alta tecnología al sector exige también nuevas rutinas y perfiles actualizados (Negreira-Rey et al., 2023; Ceballos, 2022).

Profesionales, empresarios y audiencias coinciden en que un periodismo de calidad depende de integrar tecnología, economía y principios profesionales (Lazo et al., 2020). La introducción de la inteligencia artificial en las redacciones, que puede transformar la producción de noticias (Shi y Sun, 2024), subraya la necesidad de formar periodistas en alfabetización algorítmica y el uso ético de estas herramientas, dando paso a perfiles menos operativos y más cognitivos (Túñez López et al., 2021; Cools y Kiakopoulos, 2024).

En los últimos cinco años, la alta tecnología, especialmente la inteligencia artificial generativa, ha impactado en la formación periodística (Wenger et al., 2025). Los expertos coinciden en que esta tecnología transformará per-

files y roles profesionales en el sector (Sánchez Esparza et al., 2024) y requerirá investigaciones intersectoriales para entender y afrontar estos cambios (Guzman y Lewis, 2024). Los perfiles necesarios varían según la idiosincrasia cultural y nacional, por lo que las facultades de comunicación deben adaptarse a ella (Parrat Fernández et al., 2024). La incorporación de IA en la enseñanza redefine roles académicos (Barros et al., 2023) y promueve la formación de periodistas capacitados en su manejo, tanto en grados como en másteres especializados (Lopezosa et al., 2023).

A comienzos de esta década, la formación en alta tecnología aplicada a la comunicación en España era limitada, especialmente en inteligencia artificial (Ufarte Ruiz et al., 2020). En los últimos años ha habido un avance moderado y actualmente universidades, organizaciones y fundaciones están ampliando la oferta para atender la demanda creciente de perfiles en IA aplicada al periodismo (Ufarte Ruiz et al., 2024). No obstante, siguen existiendo debates sobre cómo abordar el uso de la IA en el periodismo, lo que condiciona la definición de estos perfiles.

2. Metodología

2.1. *Objetivos y metodología*

Esta investigación analiza la transformación de los perfiles profesionales en las redacciones periodísticas españolas en un contexto de digitalización e inteligencia artificial.

Se establecen cuatro objetivos específicos:

- OE1: identificar nuevos perfiles surgidos por el impacto de la digitalización y la automatización.
- OE2: analizar cómo la IA ha transformado las rutinas productivas.
- OE3: comprender los cambios organizativos en las redacciones.
- OE4: explorar la percepción de responsables sobre el equilibrio entre perfiles tradicionales y tecnológicos.

Se plantean las siguientes hipótesis:

- H1: la digitalización impulsa nuevos perfiles tecnológicos (datos, analítica, desarrollo, automatización).
- H2: la IA altera las rutinas de producción, especialmente en documentación, verificación y edición.
- H3: la reorganización genera convivencia y tensiones entre perfiles tradicionales y tecnológicos.

Para analizar el impacto de la inteligencia artificial en la configuración de nuevos roles en los medios, se adoptó una metodología cualitativa de carácter exploratorio, adecuada para fenómenos emergentes. La técnica principal fue

la entrevista semiestructurada por correo electrónico, validada en estudios de comunicación por su capacidad de profundización y comparabilidad (Kvale, 1996). Esta modalidad permitió emitir respuestas reflexivas y asíncronas (Murray y Sixsmith, 1998).

La muestra (tabla 1) incluye diez entrevistas realizadas entre enero y mayo de 2025 a directivos de medios españoles diversos en ámbito, tipo y financiación. Todos ocupan cargos estratégicos, lo que permite tener una visión cualificada sobre la transformación interna de sus organizaciones. A diferencia de otros estudios, esta investigación se enfoca en la reorganización y la redefinición de roles profesionales.

Tabla 1. Identificación y perfil profesional de los participantes en el estudio

Nombre	Cargo	Medio de comunicación
Alfonso Álvarez Riveiro	Director	<i>El Progreso</i>
Ander Iñaki Oliden Guerra	Director adjunto	<i>elDiario.es</i>
Fernando Varela Bibián	Redactor jefe	<i>infoLibre.es</i>
Xosé Andrés Vázquez Hermida	Redactor	<i>El País</i>
Josep Lluís Micó	Director	<i>Regió7</i>
Manuel Rico Prada	Director	<i>Público</i>
Ricardo Rodríguez Ruiz	Director de Contenidos	Radio Galicia – Cadena SER
Xosé Pereira Fariña	Director de Innovación y Negocio	CRTVG (ahora CSAG)
Xurxo Salgado Tejido	Director	<i>Galicia Confidencial</i>
Yuri Carrazoni Mier	Subdirector	<i>Nós Diario</i>

Fuente: elaboración propia.

Las entrevistas se diseñaron en base a tres ejes temáticos principales (tabla 2): los cambios en la composición y los roles dentro de las redacciones; la incorporación de tecnologías digitales e inteligencia artificial en los procesos de producción periodística, y el impacto organizativo de estas transformaciones, incluyendo retos y oportunidades detectadas.

El análisis de los datos se llevó a cabo mediante un proceso de codificación temática, lo que permitió identificar patrones discursivos y construir categorías emergentes a partir del testimonio de los participantes. Esta metodología facilita una aproximación inductiva y flexible, especialmente útil para investigaciones que buscan mapear fenómenos en fase de consolidación.

Los datos de las entrevistas fueron transcritos y codificados para identificar patrones y diferencias. Además, se realizó un análisis exploratorio de ofertas laborales para periodistas con perfil tecnológico en InfoJobs y LinkedIn durante varios meses de 2025 (enero-junio), seleccionando aquellas que mencionaban inteligencia artificial. Las ofertas se clasificaron según competencias y perfiles, siguiendo métodos usados en estudios previos sobre el mercado laboral periodístico (Perreault y Ferrucci, 2020).

El análisis de ofertas laborales se realizó con palabras clave específicas relacionadas con IA y periodismo, clasificando las ofertas según perfil, competencias técnicas y especialización. Se aplicó la codificación cuantita-

Tabla 2. Bloques temáticos y ejemplos de preguntas de la entrevista semiestructurada

Bloque temático	Objetivo	Ejemplos de preguntas
Transformación de perfiles profesionales	Identificar cómo ha cambiado la composición de los equipos en las redacciones y qué nuevos perfiles se han incorporado a ellas.	¿Qué perfiles profesionales han ganado relevancia en su medio en los últimos años? ¿Han desaparecido o han evolucionado funciones tradicionales? ¿Se han creado nuevos puestos ligados a la tecnología o a los datos?
Incorporación de tecnología en procesos periodísticos	Analizar el grado de adopción de herramientas digitales e inteligencia artificial en las rutinas productivas.	¿Qué herramientas digitales o de inteligencia artificial utilizan habitualmente en la elaboración de contenidos? ¿Qué procesos se han automatizado o modificado? ¿Se ha formado a la plantilla para utilizar estas tecnologías?
Impacto organizativo y desafíos	Explorar los efectos de estos cambios en la estructura, la cultura organizativa y la dinámica de trabajo.	¿Cómo ha afectado la digitalización a la organización interna de la redacción? ¿Qué resistencias o barreras han identificado? ¿Cómo se toman actualmente las decisiones editoriales? ¿Qué retos y oportunidades visualizan en el corto plazo?

Fuente: elaboración propia.

tiva siguiendo metodologías previas (Neuendorf, 2017). Aunque el número de ofertas fue limitado ($n = 12$) y no permite generalizaciones, el análisis revela indicios de transformación en los perfiles laborales. Esta aproximación es exploratoria, con limitaciones metodológicas, y complementa los datos cualitativos.

3. Resultados

3.1. Incorporación de nuevos perfiles: estructuras centralizadas y contención de recursos

Los resultados revelan que el 60% de los medios ha incorporado nuevos perfiles profesionales en los últimos años, fundamentalmente vinculados a la transformación digital. Estas incorporaciones se concentran en áreas como el desarrollo web, los análisis de audiencias, el posicionamiento SEO, la gestión de redes sociales, la inteligencia artificial (IA) y los sistemas informáticos. El 30% de los medios analizados (*elDiario.es*, *El Progreso* y *Galicia Confidencial*) ha incorporado activamente nuevos perfiles tecnológicos (desarrolladores, expertos en SEO, IA, redes sociales). Otro 30% (*El País*, CRTVG y Radio

Galicia – Cadena SER) se ha centrado en roles específicos como distribución digital y coordinación de redes. En cambio, *infoLibre*, *Público*, *Región7* y *Nós Diario* no han añadido perfiles nuevos, por restricciones presupuestarias o por redistribución interna y externalización.

Los resultados evidencian una polarización en los procesos de modernización de las plantillas. Mientras algunos medios avanzan hacia una reconversión profesional especializada, en sintonía con las exigencias del ecosistema digital, otros mantienen estructuras organizativas más tradicionales, asignando nuevas tareas al personal existente.

Los perfiles de editor de redes sociales (un 90%), editor SEO (un 80%) y editor de audiencias (un 80%) son los más comunes (tabla 3), lo que evidencia la prioridad que las redacciones otorgan al posicionamiento en buscadores, la gestión de comunidades en línea y el análisis de métricas de consumo. En contraste, perfiles como editor de compromiso (un 20%), participación (un 30%) y crecimiento (un 20%) son menos frecuentes, lo que sugiere que, aunque emergentes, aún no están plenamente integrados en todas las redacciones.

Tabla 3. Relación de nuevos perfiles profesionales en las redacciones

Perfil	GC Diario	Nós Diario	El Pro- greso	elDiario.es	info Libre.es	El País	Región7	Público	Radio Galicia – Cadena SER	CRTVG
Editor SEO	✓	X	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Editor Redes Sociales	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Editor Audiencias	✓	X	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Editor Compromiso	X	X	X	X	X	X	✓	X	✓	X
Editor Participación	X	X	X	X	X	✓	✓	X	✓	X
Editor Crecimiento	X	X	X	X	X	X	✓	X	✓	X

Fuente: elaboración propia.

3.1.1. Roles innovadores vinculados a la inteligencia artificial: especialización incipiente y adopción funcional

Medios como *elDiario.es*, *El Progreso* y *Galicia Confidencial* han integrado activamente perfiles tecnológicos y especializados, incluyendo desarrolladores, ingenieros informáticos, expertos en SEO, análisis de audiencias, inteligencia artificial y redes sociales. Esta estrategia responde a la internalización de funciones antes externalizadas y a la necesidad de adaptarse a los desafíos digitales.

Por el contrario, medios como *infoLibre*, *Público* y *Nós Diario* no han incorporado nuevos perfiles, ya sea por limitaciones económicas o por optar por redistribuir las tareas especializadas entre el personal existente.

Otros medios, como *El País*, Radio Galicia – Cadena SER y CSAG (antigua CRTVG en el momento de realizar las entrevistas), han apostado por la incorporación de profesionales centrados en distribución digital, innovación y medición de audiencias.

Las entrevistas reflejan una transformación digital heterogénea: mientras algunos medios apuestan por la contratación de nuevos perfiles, otros adaptan internamente sus recursos o enfrentan restricciones presupuestarias.

3.2. Competencias profesionales prioritarias

Las entrevistas revelan consenso sobre la importancia de competencias tecnológicas y digitales, junto con habilidades periodísticas tradicionales y una visión crítica del ecosistema mediático.

Se destaca la importancia del dominio de herramientas digitales. Alfonso Álvarez Riveiro, director de *El Progreso*, enfatiza que «las habilidades digitales son fundamentales» y que el personal debe saber «editar en la web». Xosé Pereira Fariña, director de Innovación y Negocio de la CRTVG, valora competencias en medición de audiencias, producción digital y conocimientos sociológicos. Yuri Carrazoni, subdirector de *Nós Diario*, menciona el manejo de redes sociales, redacción SEO y nociones básicas de IA. Xurxo Salgado, director de *Galicia Confidencial*, resalta la comunicación transmedia, la gestión de datos y una buena agenda de fuentes. Xosé Andrés Vázquez, redactor de *El País*, destaca la capacidad de crear contenido multimedia y habilidades tecnológicas, sin olvidar las destrezas clásicas del periodismo. Manuel Rico, director de *Público*, afirma que, pese a la importancia tecnológica, la clave sigue siendo ofrecer información veraz y relevante.

Algunos entrevistados destacan también la dimensión ética y crítica en los nuevos perfiles. Ricardo Ruiz (Radio Galicia – Cadena SER) subraya la importancia de valorar el rol democrático del periodismo e instruirse en formatos emergentes como audio y pódcast. Fernando Varela (*infoLibre*) enfatiza la necesidad de comprender la lógica de las plataformas y la IA, especialmente para enfrentar la desinformación.

Josep Lluís Micó (*Regió7*) apunta que, aunque el perfil tecnológico es común en jóvenes graduados, lo fundamental es que sean «buenos periodistas», capaces de acceder a fuentes y narrar con solvencia, y que las carencias técnicas puedan superarse con formación interna.

El análisis de ofertas laborales (tabla 4) muestra que la demanda de competencias en IA se extiende más allá del periodismo, incluyendo áreas como el marketing digital, los análisis de datos, la comunicación corporativa y la ciberseguridad. La variedad de contratos y de modalidades laborales refleja un mercado profesional cada vez más flexible y diverso.

Las ofertas laborales muestran un amplio rango de experiencia: algunas requieren trayectoria, mientras que otras, sobre todo las de trabajadores autónomos, no exigen experiencia formal, lo que evidencia una apertura a nuevos perfiles con habilidades en inteligencia artificial.

Tabla 4. Resumen de ofertas laborales con referencias explícitas al uso de inteligencia artificial en España (enero-julio de 2025)

ID	Puesto	Empresa	Modalidad	Tipo de contrato	Experiencia requerida	Uso de IA destacado	Idiomas	Fuente
1	Coordinador/a Comunicación y Marketing	Immunotec Research España, SL	Híbrida	Indefinido	4-5 años en marketing y comunicación	Uso avanzado de herramientas IA (Canva, DeepI)	Alemán, francés e inglés	InfoJobs
2	AI Content Moderator	Risk Inc	Remoto	Indefinido	Plus en iGaming	Revisión y edición de artículos generados por IA	Inglés	LinkedIn
3	Periodista Freelance	Outlier	Remoto	Freelance	No especificado	Evaluación y clasificación de textos generados por IA	Español (LATAM) e inglés avanzado	LinkedIn
5	Redactor de contenidos de IA bilingüe	Data Annotation	Remoto	Por obra	No especificado	Creación y comparación de diálogos para chatbots IA	Español e inglés	LinkedIn
6	Editorial Content Writer	NTT DATA Europe & Latam	Sevilla	Por obra	2 años en redacción editorial	Uso de herramientas IA para optimización editorial	Español e inglés	LinkedIn
7	Analista de datos	Silvan & Miracle	Híbrida	No especificado	No especificado	Uso de modelos de código abierto y análisis con IA	Castellano, inglés y euskera	LinkedIn
8	AI Writing Evaluator	Outlier	Remoto	Freelance	Sin experiencia requerida	Evaluación y clasificación de textos IA	Español (México)	LinkedIn
9	Especialista en Marketing Digital & Automatización con IA	European Quality Assurance	Híbrida	Indefinido	No especificado	Marketing digital con IA, automatización y análisis	No especificado	InfoJobs
10	Especialista en Marketing Digital	Tecon Soluciones Informáticas	Remoto	Indefinido	+10 años	IA generativa, automatización y análisis predictivo	Español e inglés	InfoJobs
11	Product Manager – Cybersecurity Solutions	Fractalia Remote Systems, SL	Presencial	Indefinido	3 años mínimo	IA para optimización y marketing en ciberseguridad	Inglés avanzado	InfoJobs
13	Freelance Journalist - AI Tutor - AI Trainer	Braintrust	Remoto	No especificado	Capacidad para trabajo complejo	Generación y evaluación de prompts para IA	Inglés avanzado	LinkedIn

Fuente: elaboración propia.

Entre las competencias más valoradas están el manejo de herramientas de generación de contenido asistido por IA (como DeepL o modelos *open source*), la optimización de *prompts* para sistemas conversacionales y la automatización de procesos de marketing y gestión de datos. También se destaca la capacidad crítica para evaluar textos generados por IA, subrayando la necesidad de realizar una supervisión humana para mantener la ética informativa. El dominio de varios idiomas refleja el alcance global y multilingüe de la IA en el periodismo.

Las funciones asociadas a la IA abarcan desde la generación de contenidos hasta las áreas estratégicas, como análisis predictivo, automatización de marketing y ciberseguridad.

Este análisis exploratorio pone de manifiesto una clara tendencia hacia la integración de la inteligencia artificial como factor transformador en el mercado laboral, aunque aún incipiente y con una muestra limitada, lo que abre nuevas líneas de investigación sobre el impacto de estas tecnologías en la redefinición de los perfiles y las competencias profesionales.

En conclusión, se espera que los nuevos profesionales combinen dominio de herramientas digitales avanzadas y entornos tecnológicos complejos, sin perder las competencias clásicas del periodismo.

3.3. Formación y marcos éticos

La incorporación de herramientas de inteligencia artificial ha generado respuestas dispares entre los medios en cuanto a formación. Las entrevistas revelan una adopción desigual, desde programas estructurados hasta la ausencia total de capacitación.

Medios como *elDiario.es*, *El Progreso*, Radio Galicia – Cadena SER, CRTVG y *Región7* han implementado formación específica. En *elDiario.es* abordaron el uso de los *prompts* y los riesgos de la IA. *El Progreso* ofrece cursos con apoyo externo y la Cadena SER aplica formación continua. Desde la CRTVG se organizan cursos «a la carta», mientras que en *Región7* combinan la formación interna y la grupal.

Hay medios como *Galicie Confidencial* que no ofrecen formación interna en IA, pero se facilita el acceso a capacitaciones externas. En *infoLibre*, *El País*, *Público* y *Nós Diario* no han desarrollado formación específica, ya sea por falta de recursos o porque están en fases iniciales.

En cuanto a regulación, *elDiario.es* cuenta con una declaración de principios incluida en su estatuto. *El País* dispone de un protocolo inicial, mientras que en la Cadena SER y *Región7* estas cuestiones se contemplan como política institucional.

Aunque la mayoría de los medios entrevistados reconoce la necesidad de establecer normativas internas sobre el uso de la inteligencia artificial, solo un 40% ha comenzado a implementarlas formalmente. Algunos, como *Galicie Confidencial*, *Nós Diario* y *El Progreso*, mantienen posturas claras, aunque sin documentos específicos. En otros casos, como *infoLibre*, CRTVG y *Público*, se reconoce la urgencia de establecer una regulación, pero aún no se ha avan-

zado en su desarrollo. Este panorama refleja una fase de transición, en la que la conciencia sobre los riesgos y los potenciales de la IA supera el ritmo de institucionalización de políticas internas.

3.4. Usos actuales de la IA en redacciones

El uso de inteligencia artificial en los medios analizados se encuentra en una fase inicial y desigual, centrado en tareas básicas más que en la generación de contenidos. Seis de los diez medios (un 60%) han comenzado a implementar herramientas de IA de forma parcial, mientras que cuatro (un 40%) no las utilizan o las restringen.

La IA se emplea principalmente en tareas de apoyo como transcripción, traducción o análisis de datos. Medios como *elDiario.es*, *El Progreso*, *Galicia Confidencial*, *Región7*, CRTVG y *Nós Diario* relatan usos específicos para cronologías, subtitulación o resúmenes.

En contraste, *infoLibre*, *El País*, *Público* y Cadena SER no las han implementado todavía. En algunos casos, como *El País*, no hay planes de hacerlo, y en otros, como la Cadena SER, su uso está expresamente prohibido para la generación de contenidos.

El uso de inteligencia artificial en las redacciones se limita, por lo tanto, a realizar funciones complementarias y operativas, sin renunciar a la supervisión humana y sin una automatización plena de la producción informativa. Esta situación sugiere un enfoque cauteloso por parte de los medios, que exploran las ventajas de la IA para aliviar cargas de trabajo sin comprometer los principios éticos ni la calidad del contenido periodístico.

3.5. Uso de la IA en la relación con la audiencia

El uso de inteligencia artificial para interactuar con la audiencia es aún limitado entre los medios analizados. Solo *elDiario.es* y *El País* (un 20%) han implementado herramientas específicas: un chatbot para dudas frecuentes en el primer caso y un asistente conversacional para suscriptores premium en el segundo. El resto de los medios no ha adoptado estas tecnologías o las aplica solo en acciones puntuales. *Región7*, por ejemplo, evita bots, priorizando el trato humano, aunque emplea filtros para moderar redes. *Galicia Confidencial*, CRTVG y *Nós Diario* no descartan su uso futuro, condicionado a mejoras tecnológicas.

Aunque la IA avanza en tareas de producción, su aplicación en la relación con la audiencia sigue siendo marginal. Los medios priorizan el control editorial y la experimentación interna, adoptando una postura cautelosa. No obstante, siete de los diez entrevistados (un 70%) consideran necesaria la incorporación de nuevos perfiles especializados, tanto técnicos como editoriales, como destacan *elDiario.es* y CRTVG, para integrar la IA de forma efectiva.

Entre los nuevos perfiles destacan desarrolladores de producto editorial, gestores tecnológicos, expertos en segmentación de audiencias y editores con com-

petencias digitales. Medios como *Nós Diario* y *Galicia Confidencial* subrayan la necesidad de contar con profesionales con una visión crítica de la IA, más allá del enfoque técnico. En cambio, en *infoLibre*, *Regió7* o Cadena SER no se ve aún necesaria la creación de nuevos roles, apostando por formar al personal actual. Este panorama refleja una fase de adaptación desigual, aunque con consenso en que el avance de la IA exigirá nuevas competencias en las redacciones.

3.6. Percepción general del impacto de la IA en los medios de comunicación

Los resultados revelan los desafíos y las oportunidades que, a juicio de los entrevistados, presenta la inteligencia artificial (ver la tabla 5). La mayoría coincide en que la IA facilita la automatización de tareas rutinarias como transcripciones, búsquedas, esquematización de datos y detección de errores, liberando recursos para labores periodísticas de mayor valor (*elDiario.es*, *Público*, *Galicia Confidencial* y *Nós Diario*). Además, se valora su aporte en el análisis masivo de información, visualización de datos y seguimiento de audiencias, lo que fortalece la investigación periodística.

Tabla 5. Desafíos y oportunidades del uso de la IA en los medios españoles

Medio	Desafíos principales	Oportunidades principales
<i>elDiario.es</i>	Impacto de contenido generado exclusivamente por IA; influencia de herramientas como ChatGPT en audiencias.	Descargar a la redacción de tareas simples y repetitivas para enfocarse en periodismo de mayor valor.
<i>El Progreso de Lugo</i>	Uso responsable y cauteloso de la IA.	Detectar errores humanos, mejorar precisión en el trabajo.
<i>Infolibre</i>	Reducción de tareas mecánicas.	Ayudar a redactores en localización y análisis de información compleja.
<i>El País</i>	Riesgo de reemplazo del periodista y homogeneización de contenidos.	Mejorar el acceso a la información y al conocimiento.
<i>Regió7</i>	Abandono acrítico a la herramienta.	Ahorrar tareas tediosas y mecánicas.
<i>Público</i>	Posible sustitución de puestos de bajo valor añadido.	Simplificar tareas mecánicas y agilizar en investigaciones.
Radio Galicia - Cadena SER	Preservación del rol fundamental del periodista frente a la automatización.	Automatizar procesos técnicos y publicidad.
CRTVG	Organización interna y falta de inversión tecnológica.	Facilitar producción y consumo de información.
<i>Galicia Confidencial</i>	Adaptación tecnológica.	Agilizar y mejorar el trabajo diario de la redacción, detectar enfoques de interés.
<i>Nós Diario</i>	Formación básica sobre IA para todo el equipo.	Automatizar y simplificar procesos simples, análisis y seguimiento de audiencias.

Fuente: elaboración propia

En cuanto a los desafíos, se subraya la necesidad de formar al personal y de realizar una inversión tecnológica sostenida (CRTVG y *Nós Diario*), así como la preocupación por el uso irresponsable de estas herramientas, lo que podría derivar en una pérdida de control sobre los procesos informativos (*Regió7* y *El Progreso*). También emergen inquietudes como el riesgo de sustituir al periodista en nombre de la eficiencia o de homogeneizar los contenidos y los formatos (*El País* y Cadena SER), lo que puede afectar a la diversidad editorial y a la calidad del periodismo.

Las redacciones presentan distintos niveles de convivencia entre periodistas y técnicos. En *elDiario.es* y Radio Galicia – Cadena SER, la integración es fluida gracias a perfiles con formación periodística que facilitan la comunicación. En medios como *El Progreso* y *Galicia Confidencial*, la relación es positiva pero limitada por diferencias formativas. En cambio, en *infoLibre* y *Nós Diario* no hay colaboración, y en *Regió7* o *Público* se detectan obstáculos culturales y comunicativos.

4. Discusión y conclusiones

Esta investigación analizó la transformación de los perfiles profesionales en las redacciones periodísticas en España, en el contexto de la digitalización y la inteligencia artificial (IA). Los resultados permiten realizar un análisis detallado de los cambios organizativos en el ecosistema mediático actual.

Respecto al objetivo específico 1 (OE1), que buscaba identificar nuevos perfiles emergentes, se confirma parcialmente la hipótesis 1 (H1). Varios medios han incorporado perfiles tecnológicos vinculados a desarrollo web, analítica de audiencias, SEO y automatización. Sin embargo, esta transformación no es uniforme: algunos medios avanzan hacia una reconversión estructural; mientras otros, por limitaciones presupuestarias o estratégicas, externalizan o redistribuyen estas funciones internamente. Esto indica una transición organizativa lenta, donde coexisten innovación y estructuras tradicionales.

Respecto al objetivo específico 2 (OE2), que analizaba cómo la IA transformaba las rutinas productivas, se valida parcialmente la hipótesis 2 (H2). La IA se usa principalmente en tareas operativas como transcripción, corrección, traducción y resúmenes, pero su impacto en la creatividad periodística es limitado. La adopción está en una fase inicial, enfocada en eficiencia más que en transformación profunda, lo que genera retos en formación, supervisión y ética.

Sobre el objetivo específico 3 (OE3), centrado en analizar los cambios organizativos, se confirma parcialmente la hipótesis 3 (H3). La convivencia entre perfiles tradicionales y tecnológicos existe, pero no siempre es fluida. Algunas redacciones muestran colaboración efectiva mediante figuras puente, mientras que otras enfrentan tensiones por diferencias culturales y falta de formación transversal. La integración plena exige adaptar no solo funciones, sino también la cultura organizativa.

El objetivo específico 4 (OE4) revela un consenso sobre la necesidad de trabajar con perfiles híbridos que combinen competencias digitales avanzadas con valores clásicos del periodismo, como la veracidad y el espíritu crítico. Se destaca la importancia de una formación multidisciplinaria para adaptarse a entornos tecnológicos sin perder el criterio editorial ni la función social.

Los resultados muestran una transformación incipiente, con adopción tecnológica desigual, reorganización laboral parcial y nuevos perfiles emergentes. Aunque la IA ofrece oportunidades para aliviar tareas operativas y mejorar el análisis de datos, persisten desafíos en capacitación, regulación e integración cultural.

La transformación digital depende más de la capacidad estratégica para implementar políticas que del avance tecnológico en sí. Se propone avanzar con estudios cuantitativos que contrasten estas percepciones cualitativas, para medir mejor la transformación profesional y apoyar políticas y estrategias responsables de innovación.

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Ideology, inequality, and the media. A comparative analysis of the housing crisis in the Irish and Spanish digital media

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Abstract

This comparative research study shows the influence of the ideological alignment of the media of the digital ecosystem concerning economic inequality and, specifically, the housing crisis. It focuses on two countries in the European Union that represent different models: Ireland, where a higher percentage of the population chooses to live in single-family homes, and Spain, whose population, on the other hand, lives more in apartments. They are also representatives of two different media systems: the liberal and the polarized-democratic one. The article explains how digital media shapes the agenda regarding the housing crisis at a time when this vector is discussed throughout Europe as one of the main manifestations of inequality. A content analysis has been carried out on a representative sample of news directly related to the housing crisis in the main Irish and Spanish digital media over three months. The results show greater diversity in the agenda of the Irish media, where there is an emergence of extreme right positions, not yet present in the institutions of the Republic of Eire, while the Spanish media show a more homogeneous agenda. Considering the housing crisis as an effect, and not one of the causes, of inequality leads to diverse positions. The main differences are found in the proposed legal and policymaking solutions in the case of the most left-leaning media.

Keywords: inequality; housing crisis; digital journalism; digital media; polarized-pluralistic media system; liberal media system

Resum. *Ideologia, desigualtat i mitjans de comunicació. Una anàlisi comparativa de la crisi de l'habitatge al mitjans digitals d'Irlanda i Espanya*

Aquesta recerca, comparativa, mostra la influència de l'alineament ideològic dels mitjans de comunicació de l'ecosistema digital respecte de la desigualtat econòmica i, en concret, de la crisi de l'habitatge. Se centra en dos països de la Unió Europea que representen models diferents: Irlanda, on més percentatge de població tria habitar habitatges unifamiliars, i Espanya, la població de la qual, en canvi, viu més en apartaments. Són també representants de dos sistemes mediàtics diferents: el liberal i el democràtic-polaritzat. L'article explica com els mitjans digitals construeixen l'agenda sobre la crisi de l'habitatge en un moment en què a tot Europa es discuteix aquest vector com una de les manifestacions principals de la desigualtat. S'ha dut a terme una anàlisi de contingut sobre una mostra representativa de notícies directament relacionades amb la crisi de l'habitatge als principals mitjans digitals irlandesos i espanyols durant un període de tres mesos. Els resultats mostren més diversitat a l'agenda dels mitjans irlandesos, on es constata una emergència de posicions d'extrema dreta, encara no presents a les institucions de la República d'Irlanda, mentre que els mitjans espanyols mostren una agenda més homogènia. Considerar la crisi de l'habitatge un efecte i no pas una de les causes de la desigualtat porta a posicions diverses. Les diferències principals es troben en les solucions proposades, legals i polítiques en el cas dels mitjans més escorats a l'esquerra.

Paraules clau: desigualtat; crisi de l'habitatge; periodisme digital; mitjans digitals; sistema mediàtic polaritzat-pluralista; sistema mediàtic liberal

Resumen. *Ideología, desigualdad y medios de comunicación. Un análisis comparativo de la crisis de la vivienda en los medios digitales de Irlanda y España*

Esta investigación, comparativa, muestra la influencia del alineamiento ideológico de los medios de comunicación del ecosistema digital respecto a la desigualdad económica y, en concreto, a la crisis de la vivienda. Se centra en dos países de la Unión Europea que representan modelos diferentes: Irlanda, donde más porcentaje de población elige habitar viviendas unifamiliares, y España, cuya población, en cambio, vive más en apartamentos. Son también representantes de dos sistemas mediáticos diferentes: el liberal y el democrático-polarizado. El artículo explica cómo los medios digitales construyen la agenda acerca de la crisis de la vivienda en un momento en que en toda Europa se discute ese vector como una de las principales manifestaciones de la desigualdad. Se ha llevado a cabo un análisis de contenido sobre una muestra representativa de noticias directamente relacionadas con la crisis de la vivienda en los principales medios digitales irlandeses y españoles durante un periodo de tres meses. Los resultados muestran una mayor diversidad en la agenda de los medios irlandeses, donde se constata una emergencia de posiciones de extrema derecha, aún no presentes en las instituciones de la República de Irlanda, mientras que los medios españoles muestran una agenda más homogénea. Considerar la crisis de la vivienda un efecto y no una de las causas de la desigualdad lleva a posiciones diversas. Las principales diferencias se encuentran en las soluciones propuestas, legales y políticas en el caso de los medios más escorados a la izquierda.

Palabras clave: desigualdad; crisis de la vivienda; periodismo digital; medios digitales; sistema mediático polarizado-pluralista; sistema mediático liberal

1. Introduction

Housing is one of the most sensitive topics in our societies, especially in the European Union (Asensio et al., 2024). There, different models appear across the member states: from the most inclined, or forced, to live in apartments, to countries where the population prefers, or can afford, to live in unifamilial houses and suburbs. The treatment that the media do on this sensitive topic, the housing crisis related to inequality of many types -wealth, income, and opportunities, to mention a few- has an evident influence on the perception of the problem and its solutions by the population and by the institutions, and reflect a position by the media themselves, and the ideology they represent, or the frames related to specific ideological alignment that, through such a sensitive topic, could show.

Many scholars have highlighted the importance of guaranteeing fair access to housing to everyone; for instance, Carmen Trilla (2014) said, "Housing is one of the pillars supporting the welfare state in Europe". It is a significant concern for the European population. In some countries, namely Spain, it is also a constitutional right, while in others, like Ireland, politicians have indicated their intention to submit it to a referendum for the people to decide whether it should be included in the Constitution. The relevance of this topic in Spain is further heightened by the approval and enactment of the *Right to Housing Act* in May 2023, which also justifies the election of the sample period (the last months of that same year). This legislation aims to actualise the social right enshrined in Article 47 of the Spanish Constitution, responding to the escalating inequalities in housing access, particularly evident in Spain's major cities.

The problem of housing access has become increasingly important in recent years. This issue is considered one more consequence of inequality. The increased centrality of this problem has also led to increased media attention. Therefore, in this case, the public agenda influences the media agenda, which is not a typical occurrence (McCombs & Shaw, 1972).

It seems about right to focus on two so different countries. Both countries show an acceptable rate of inequality levels, as measured by the Gini coefficient, the Palma ratio, and the Lorenz curve. Spain's Gini coefficient was 34.3 in 2023, ranking 105 in the world. It was 32.9 in 2020, so inequality is growing. Ireland's Gini coefficient was 30.6 in 2023, ranking 135. It was 28.2 in 2020. The highest levels of inequality are near to 50 out of 100. Inequality is growing in both countries. The Palma ratio for Spain was 1.25 and 1.01 for Ireland in 2020, with 0.71 being the lowest level of inequality and 2.8 being the worst. The last measurement of the Lorenz curve done by the World Bank was 29.2 for Ireland, and 34.9 for Spain. While in the Irish case the curve usually decreases, it is growing somewhat in the Spanish case (OECD, 2023).

Specifically, regarding housing, 53 per cent of the European population lives in a flat, and 46 per cent in a house. The most significant percentage of

the population living in houses belongs, precisely, to Ireland, 92 per cent of its inhabitants. Ireland rates high in under-occupation of homes, 62.9 per cent. At the same time, Ireland registered one of the highest European levels of rental increment, +63 per cent, and it is the country in which the prices are highest in general terms, 77 per cent above the European average in 2020, with people spending on average 20 per cent of their income in housing (Eurofound, 2023). An official report, *Ireland's well-being framework*,¹ recognised that 'housing remains the greatest source of inequality'. Back in 2020, more than 300,000 Irish people were pushed into poverty risk because of the rising housing rent, so the country has a remarkable problem with homelessness (Eurofound, 2023: 55).

On the other hand, Spain is one of the European countries where people favour living in an apartment; 62 percent of Spaniards follow this option (Eurostat, 2024). Both countries are at a similar level regarding the percentage of young people still living with their parents, mainly because they cannot afford to rent a house or flat (see, for the Irish case, Gusciute et al., 2022). Both countries also share one of the highest rates of homeownership. In the Spanish case, most of them have mortgages, which could leave them unable to cover the cost of living if inflation rises dramatically (Eurofound, 2023). Spanish landlords are six times less at risk of falling into poverty than tenants. Spain is a country where elderly people own their own homes, while young people find it more difficult to buy or rent.

For this reason, given the extreme diversity of living models and the different media systems, we propose a comparative study. This distinction provides a unique lens for exploring how varying media landscapes might frame and address social issues. These two countries, despite significant differences in scale, population, and media systems, both face critical challenges related to housing accessibility. Notably, Madrid and Dublin are recognised as having some of the most expensive housing rates in Europe.

Our research is informed by scholarly discussions on the ideal of equitable communication access, echoing questions posed by W. Lance Bennett and Marianne Kneuer, who, following Habermas, ask whether "the ideal of equality of communication access is realistic" (Lance Bennett & Kneuer, 2023). Simultaneously, we acknowledge the imperative for rational discourse within democratic frameworks.

2. State of the art

The topic of inequality and the media has been treated in the two countries we aim to compare. Henry Silke defended a PhD dissertation in 2015, focusing on the political and ideological implications of informing about the economic crisis (Silke, 2015). Julian Mercille examined how the Irish media

1. <<https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/b2e0f-understanding-life-in-ireland-the-well-being-framework-2023/>>

intervened to some extent in the housing problem (Mercille, 2014). The role of the economy in media coverage was discussed, for the Irish case, by Breen et al. (2019), and, for the Spanish case, by Arrese (2021) and Arrese and Vara-Miquel (2018 and 2023). Therefore, inequality is defined as the disparity whereby some people have access to specific standards of living and others do not (Ray, 1998: 170). This inequality is founded on differences between people in terms of income, wealth, and opportunities (Therborn, 2013), linked to gender, education, social class, or place of birth (Pérez-Mayo, 2019). Finally, the issue is studied both from a macro perspective, when analysing differences between nations or countries, and from a micro perspective, when studying variations in quality of life standards among citizens of the same community (McKay, 2002).

There is a lack of studies focused on the news framing of housing as a social problem. An analysis of media coverage of the housing problem and its relationship to inequality and the racial gap in the US during the Great Recession, which began in 2008 (Woodford & Clawson, 2024), has been carried out from the perspectives of episodic and thematic frames. The analysis of this issue associated with the racial gap in the United States has also been explored in other studies (Báez & Castañeda, 2014). From the Irish and Spanish context, research studies on housing-related issues using framing theory have been focused on more particular aspects, such as news sentiment covering the degradation of the Dublin neighbourhood of Fatima Mansions (Conway et al., 2012) or, in Spain, the analysis of the discourse of the *Plataforma de Afectados por la Hipoteca*² – PAH – in the media and in social networks (Barranco & Parcevisa, 2020; Ramon-Pinat, 2022).

While numerous scholars have highlighted the significance of the housing crisis in exacerbating inequality, the specific ways in which the media have addressed this issue remain underexplored. Although recent studies have examined the broader relationship between inequality and media (Trappel, 2019; Grisold & Preston, 2020; Schifferes & Knowles, 2023; Kurtulmus & Kandiyali, 2023, to mention some), relatively few have focused on this particular aspect of social and economic inequity. Only relatively recently has the scholarly community centred their efforts on the specific question of new media, inequalities, and the impact on democracies (Scott Matthews et al., 2023). So, hence our modest contribution.

3. Theoretical framework

3.1. *Comparing Irish and Spanish media systems: liberal model vs polarized pluralist model*

According to the classical division by Hallin and Mancini (2004), the media systems in Ireland and Spain differ significantly. One of them, Ireland, rep-

2. Platform of people affected by mortgages.

resents the liberal one; and the other, Spain, is a clear representative of the polarized media system. At the same time, media systems grow within a determined social, economic, and political environment. For instance, Ireland is one of the few European countries in which the far-right parties have no representation in the parliament, but they have in the media, instead.

The Mediterranean or Polarised Pluralist Model (Hallin & Mancini, 2004) is characterised by the existence, on the one hand, of an elite-oriented press with low circulation, where audiovisual and digital media have a greater impact. It is a press that is very focused on political life, with a high proportion of comments. In addition, there is a struggle between a profession that is less well developed than in other European countries and a state that usually plays a vital role as owner, regulator, or funder of the media (p. 73). In the Spanish case, considerable interference has been observed in the national and regional public media, which are the primary sources of news for a large proportion of the population (Fernández-Viso & Fernández-Alonso, 2024). Furthermore, the audience is conscious of the existing polarization of the media system, so that citizens perceive only a few media that are neutral or are not characterized as right-wing or left-wing. This polarization is transposed to audiences as their ideological orientation is a variable with the capacity to influence the credibility of the media (Masip et al., 2020).

In the North Atlantic or Liberal Model (Hallin & Mancini, 2004), commercial newspapers dominate, political parallelism is rare and internal pluralism predominates, with the critical exception of the highly partisan British press. Professionalisation of journalism is relatively strong. Journalistic autonomy is more likely to be constrained by commercial pressures than by political instrumentalization, although the latter is more common in Britain. News-oriented journalism predominates, with a stronger tradition of commentary in Britain. The role of the state is limited, though more so in the United States than in Ireland and Canada, where concern for national culture has given the state an important role, and in Britain, where both public broadcasting and the regulation of commercial broadcasting have been very strong (p. 75).

3.2. News diversity in the hybrid media system

Although the existence of two national media systems, which different models also define, could suggest the existence of a specific and differentiated media agenda; Hallin and Mancini (2004) integrate, into their theory, the concept of de-differentiation, proposed by Habermas and Bourdieu, opposed to the vision of an autonomous public opinion, and based on the domination of political and economic powers (p. 81). The first consequence of this dynamic is a certain homogenization of media system models, towards a liberal model, due to exogenous factors – associated with the global dominance of the United States and the emergence of a global journalistic culture – and endogenous factors – related to processes of technological and business mod-

ernisation of media systems and societies (Hallin & Mancini, 2004). Moreover, the technological factor, with the advent of the Internet, has also contributed to the emergence of a hybrid media system worldwide, where the traditional media actors, i.e., media and journalists, have to compete and coexist with new actors (Chadwick, 2013).

However, the multiplicity of dimensions used to study diversity and the lack of normativity in its conceptualization can explain the existence of discrepancies in the findings (Joris et al., 2020). In this way, Hendrickx et al. (2020), through a meta-analysis of the literature related to news diversity, found five types: ownership diversity, associated with the business model in the media market; brand diversity, related to the variety of brands in the media conglomerates involved; production diversity, connected to journalists, production processes and changes in journalistic routines; content diversity, related to the news products, topics and frames; and consumption diversity, linked to the degree of diversity consumed and perceived by the audiences in a specific market.

Regarding production diversity, several studies have observed how, in different media systems, diversity arises in the perspectives and sources used (Humprecht & Buchel, 2013; Masini et al., 2018), as well as other specificities associated with the regional or national geographic context of news stories (Quandt, 2008). However, the findings on content diversity are more ambiguous. Studies have found content homogenization when focusing only on news topics (Boczkowski & De Santos, 2007³; Odriozola-Chéné & Llorca-Abad, 2014; Shoemaker et al., 2012). On the other hand, when studies analyse content diversity from the sentiment/tone – negative, neutral, positive – or framing approach, it remains despite the homogenization processes developed in the different media systems (Beckers et al., 2019; Benson & Wood, 2015; De Vries et al., 2022⁴).

3.3. Framing housing as a social problem

“To frame is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation” (Entman, 1993: 52). Therefore, the media provide a framework for the audience to interpret news by promoting the salience of some values and characteristics of the topics over others (Druckman, 2001). This process is influenced by the persuasive efforts of social actors concerned with the topic (Petrova, 2008). However, their coverage of an issue is also

3. Boczkowski and De Santos (2007) define content homogenization “as the degree to which different media focus on the same stories during certain formative cycles” (p. 169).

4. De Vries et al. (2022) define “external news diversity as the extent to which, in a given period of time, different news outlets (1) report on different topics (2), and when they report on the same topics, to what extent they use a similar tone or sentiment”.

closely influenced by the self-interests of the media corporations; in other words, the framing process depends on each editorial line (Miller & Riechert, 2001), because framing is a strategy for producing influence, or political capital, and also involves choosing the right path for delivering information to policymakers (Gandy, 2015).

Although the concept of framing has a well-established definition, it has been operationalised from different approaches. A first taxonomy distinguishes between episodic and thematic frames. “The episodic frame depicts public issues in terms of concrete instances or specific events (...). The thematic news frame, by contrast, places the public issues in some general or abstract context” (Iyengar, 1990). Furthermore, Semetko and Valkenburg (2000) use Entman’s definition of framing and the frames used in previous research to establish five generic frames applicable to any topic: Conflict, Human interest, Attribution of responsibility, Morality, and Economic consequences. On the other hand, De Vreese (2005) describes issue-specific frames, which are relevant only to specific topics or events (p. 54). Finally, Guo et al. (2012), based on the concept of “domestication of news”,⁵ establish the taxonomy of domestic frames based on domestic factors driven by the news media in different countries to use different framing strategies – culture, ideology, political positions, and media systems. As a result, news media in other countries can use distinctive frames to cover similar or identical topics (p. 1926).

4. Methods

4.1. *Research design*

The research question that leads this paper is how the Irish and Spanish media interpret the housing crisis and, thus, economic inequality. Therefore, the main goal is to know how news related to inequality and the housing problem is covered in the Irish and Spanish online media agendas, and to determine how news stories about inequality and the housing problem are covered in the Irish and Spanish online media agendas. This main goal leads to two specific objectives. The first one is to establish the main differences in the construction of this agenda in Ireland versus Spain. The second specific objective is to deepen the incidence of media ideology when framing this problem. These specific objectives will, in turn, show the degree of diversity in news content on this topic, which transcends national frontiers.

The main method used is content analysis, previously employed in some other articles on the media coverage of economic inequality as well (Knowles et al., 2024; McGovern et al., 2023; Odriozola-Chéné & Pérez-Arozamena, 2024). We are closer to the specific techniques used by Odriozola-Chéné and

5. News domestication is defined as the process of adapting international news to suit national audiences (Clausen, 2004; Lee et al., 2002).

Pérez-Arozamena, who concentrated on the Spanish case, but have incorporated into our model some of the most salient contributions by the first authors, namely focusing on the causes and solutions of inequality as categories of analysis, and on the income inequality framing by media, as the second authors propose. The main concepts related to (in)equality also aligned with those proposed in the aforementioned references.

4.2. Unit of analysis, population and sampling

The units of analysis are configured using a multistage sampling design (Levy & Lemeshow, 2013), with non-probability sampling in the first stage to define the period of analysis and the selected media, and stratified probability sampling by media once the population has been defined.

The media we selected were a combination of legacy media's digital versions and digital-born media. The media selection, intentional as well, was instead based on several comparable rankings. For both countries, we used figures from the Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism's Digital News Report (Newman et al., 2023) and the Scimago Media Ranking for Spanish media (n.d.a) and Irish media (s.f.b). For the Spanish media, we used also GfK Dam's rankings (Dircomfidencial, 2023) since it is the official measurer of online news consumption, and also AIMC and OJD's numbers. Some additional considerations were carefully balanced to design the final list of online media. Business models, nature (legacy media vs digital-native media), and ideology were two of those. A more nuanced description of the real ideological mechanisms shown by the different Spanish and Irish media though this topic is one of the ultimate goals of this paper, as in McGovern et al. (2023) ("How the frame is actualised, and ideologically linked"), and how the political alignment of media has an impact on the coverage of sensitive topics like the one we are dealing with in this paper (Bosi et al., 2020). In order to make the initial selection of media operational, we have assumed the self alignment of media themselves, when there is, or of the most relevant literature on the field (for the Spanish media landscape, see Bosi et al., 2020; Humanes & Valera-Ordaz, 2023, and for the Irish case, Phelan, 2014, and Breen et al., 2019). While it is considered that the Spanish media landscape is a much more partisan and polarized one, and as María Luis Humanes and Lidia Valero-Ordaz explain, Spanish readers expose themselves selectively and with continuity to the media according to their political preferences in a "structural inclination" (Humanes & Valero-Ordaz, 2023), in Ireland, traditionally, it has been considered that, as Eurotopics say, "in accordance with the Anglo-Saxon liberal media model, political parties in Ireland have little influence on the press [and] links with commercial interests are traditionally stronger" (<<https://www.eurotopics.net/en/149410/ireland-media-concentrated-in-a-few-hands>>). It is consistent with the classical differentiation established by Daniel Hallin and Paolo Mancini (2004, concepts revised in 2017). Nevertheless, in both cases, we have followed the reports about the media of Ireland

and Spain, and the corresponding chapters for Ireland (Murrell, 2023) and Spain (Vara et al., 2023) of the *Digital News Report* of the Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism, Oxford University.

Some media have developed a paywalled, subscription model, but some others are free.

Table 1. Digital media selected and characteristics

Spanish media				Irish media			
Media	Nature	Ideology	Business	Media	Nature	Ideology	Business
<i>20minutos.es</i>	Native	Center-left	Free	<i>irishtimes.com</i>	Legacy	Center-left	Subscription
<i>elpais.com</i>	Legacy	Center-left	Subscription	<i>independent.ie</i>	Legacy	Liberal	Subscription
<i>elespanol.com</i>	Native	Liberal	Subscription	<i>irishexaminer.com</i>	Legacy	Conservative	Subscription
<i>elmundo.es</i>	Legacy	Liberal-conservative	Subscription	<i>thesun.ie</i>	Legacy	Conservative	Subscription
<i>lavanguardia.com</i>	Legacy	Liberal-conservative	Subscription	<i>thejournal.ie</i>	Native	Liberal	Free
<i>elconfidencial.com</i>	Native	Liberal	Subscription	<i>theliberal.ie</i>	Native	Liberal	Free
<i>eldiario.es</i>	Native	Left	Subscription	<i>dublinlive.ie</i>	Native	Center-left	Subscription
<i>okdiario.com</i>	Native	Far-right	Free	<i>gript.ie</i>	Native	Far-right	Free

Source: Prepared by the authors.

The population results from the whole set of news published by the selected media from September to November 2023, just a trimester. It is an evident limitation of this study, and a motive for further research, since it would benefit from a longitudinal study. However, due to the exploratory nature of the research, we do think that this could suffice to provide an initial insight into this topic and the methods used to examine it, as well as some results leading to at least some initial evidence on the issue.

Housing is a central issue on the European public agenda. Between 2015 and 2023, the average increase in housing prices in the European Union stood at 48%, with both Spain and Ireland above the European average, despite their different approaches to housing (European Parliament, 2024, October 17). Thus, unlike Spain, the Irish Constitution does not explicitly enshrine the right to housing. Consequently, various social organizations and advocacy groups, such as Threshold (2022, September 5) and Home for Good (2020, January 22), argue that the constitutional right to housing should be recognized as a fundamental human right. These groups, among others, advocate for a referendum on this issue, a movement that attracted significant media attention in 2023. Further underscoring this push for constitutional change, a public consultation process on the possible enshrinement of the right to housing in the Irish Constitution took place from March to May 2023. However, to date, no such referendum has been held in Ireland, although the initiative sparked some debate in the media.

Thus, once the population is defined through intentional non-probabilistic sampling, a stratified probabilistic sampling is then developed. The sam-

ple was selected according to an advanced search in Google according to the terms “housing/vivienda” + “inequality/desigualdad”. In order to determine the final sample units, each of the newspaper articles is reviewed manually to ensure that there is a relationship between inequality and housing and not simply a coincidence of the two terms without any connection. Subsequently, through a stratified sampling by media according to the total number of news items published, the final sample was configured into two groups, then, one composed of news items published by the Irish media and another one published by the Spanish ones, since one of the goals of this research study was to compare the media agenda of both countries.

Table 2. Spanish media sample and Irish media sample

Spanish media sample			Irish media sample		
Medium	Population	Sample	Medium	Population	Sample
<i>20minutos.es</i>	33	21	<i>irishtimes.com</i>	71	39
<i>elpais.com</i>	42	28	<i>independent.ie</i>	50	28
<i>elespanol.com</i>	14	8	<i>irishtexaminer.com</i>	47	23
<i>elmundo.es</i>	14	9	<i>thesun.ie</i>	14	5
<i>lavanguardia.com</i>	28	17	<i>thejournal.ie</i>	34	18
<i>elconfidencial.com</i>	20	13	<i>theliberal.ie</i>	5	3
<i>eldiario.es</i>	31	19	<i>dublinlive.ie</i>	21	12
<i>okdiario.com</i>	10	5	<i>gript.ie</i>	42	21
TOTAL	192	120	TOTAL	284	149

Source: Prepared by the author.

4.3. Variables, data collection and data analysis

The analysis of housing and inequality has been carried out from the perspective of the issue-specific frames (De Vreese, 2005). In this case, four dimensions have been constructed: definition of inequality, related gaps/breaches, general remedies and specific remedies mentioned. The first two dimensions result from the definition of the concept of inequality outlined in the state of the art and in previous research, while the two dimensions focused on the analysis of specific remedies to the housing problem emerge inductively through the process of approaching the case study.

First, the definition of inequality is performed using five variables: relation of inequality with the housing problem – cause, consequence, both, neither – ($\alpha=0.686$)⁶; level of inequality – macro, micro, both or neither – ($\alpha=0.922$); identification of income inequality ($\alpha=0.768$); identification of wealth inequality ($\alpha=0.797$); identification of inequality of opportunities in education, health and research ($\alpha=0.777$). Secondly, regarding the gaps, this

6. To ensure the reliability of the content analysis, coder agreement was calculated across all analysis variables using 10% of the total sample. The agreement measure used is Krippendorff's alpha (Krippendorff, 2004).

study examines the presence or absence of mentions of the following gaps in the news: gender ($\alpha=1$); race or immigration ($\alpha=1$); social class ($\alpha=0.797$); and age ($\alpha=0.633$). Thirdly, the presence or absence of a series of general remedies to the housing problem are analysed: predistribution ($\alpha=0.649$); redistribution and tax justice ($\alpha=0.777$); legal remedies ($\alpha=0.695$); and policy making ($\alpha=0.695$). Finally, the research measures the presence or absence of specific remedies: subsidies ($\alpha=0.649$); public sector housing ($\alpha=0.633$); private sector housing ($\alpha=1$); fair lending and limitations of rent prices ($\alpha=0.777$); scattered-site housing ($\alpha=1$), and property tax ($\alpha=1$).

Secondly, to study the degree of content diversity, two variables are developed: the media's country ($\alpha=1$) – Ireland or Spain – and the media's ideology⁷ ($\alpha=1$) – left-wing or right-wing.

Then, the results of the news analysis were collected by the two coders in a database for later analysis using statistical programs that allowed to meet the objectives through inferential analysis.

5. Results

To understand how the association between inequality and the housing problem is framed in the Spanish and Irish online media, it is first necessary to know how inequality is defined overall. Thus, when inequality is mentioned, it is conceptualised as a cause of the housing access problem, 84.8 per cent. Regarding the level of inequality, the micro perspective dominates (81.4 per cent), which means it is defined by differences between individuals rather than between groups. Furthermore, this inequality refers mainly to income inequality, 84 per cent, and, to a lesser extent, to wealth inequality, 24.9 per cent. The presence of inequality of opportunity is far lower, at 7.4 per cent.

Moreover, there is a series of gaps associated with inequality. For news focused on the housing problem, the most common social class gap is the one between 71.4 per cent. The generational gap, 25.9 per cent, is also important, and it is higher than the racial gap, 14.1 per cent, and the gender gap, 8.2 per cent. It should be highlighted how an average of 1.19 of those gaps are usually presented in the news.

Finally, regarding the solution of housing access, there are general remedies and specific remedies. General remedies include mentions of redistribution and tax justice, 56.5 per cent; legal remedies, 19.3 per cent; policy-making, 17.1 per cent; and predistribution, 8.9 per cent. The average number of general remedies mentioned in the news is 1.02. In the specific measures, the most mentioned are those connected to the public sector housing, 33.5 per cent, and to the private sector housing, 19.3 per cent. Other measures related to tax

7. Media ideology has been simplified into a dual categorization based on the specific ideologies mentioned in Table 1. Thus, media defined as conservative, liberal/conservative, liberal and far-right have been defined as right-wing. Media defined as center-left and left have been categorized as left-wing.

property, 14.1 per cent; subsidies, 13 per cent; scattered-site housing, 10.8 per cent; and fair lending and limitation rents, 9.3 per cent, are less frequently mentioned. In this case, 1.00 specific measure is mentioned on average.

Table 3. Global framing of inequality and the housing problem

Definition of Inequality mentioned as... inequality		Cause	Consequence	Neither	
		84.8%	4.1%	11.2%	
	Level of inequality	Macro	Micro	Both	Not applicable
		4.8%	81.4%	8.9%	4.8%
Breaches		Yes		No	
		84%		16%	
	Income Inequality	84%		16%	
	Wealth Inequality	24.9%		75.1%	
	Inequality of opportunities	7.4%		92.6%	
	Gender breach	8.2%		91.8%	
	Race and migration	14.1%		85.9%	
	Social Class	71.4%		28.6%	
	Age breach	25.3%		74.7%	
	Breaches mentioned in each news	M= 1.19		S.D= 0.695	
General remedies	Predistribution	8.9%		91.1%	
	Redistribution and Tax Justice	56.5%		43.5%	
	Legal remedies	19.3%		80.7%	
	Policy Making	17.1%		82.9%	
	General remedies mentioned in each news	M= 1.02		S.D= 0.709	
Specific remedies	Subsidies	13%		87%	
	Public sector housing	33.5%		66.5%	
	Private sector housing	19.3%		80.7%	
	Fair lending and limitation rents	9.3%		90.7%	
	Scattered site housing	10.8%		89.2%	
	Tax property	14.1%		85.9%	
	Specific remedies mentioned in each news	M= 1.00		S.D= 0.930	

Source: Prepared by the author.

5.1. Framing differences between the Irish and Spanish online media agendas

The disaggregated analysis by country in Table 4 shows statistically significant differences. Thus, when defining inequality, differences are only observed according to the level of inequality, with a higher coverage from a micro level in the Irish media than in the Spanish media, 87.9 per cent vs. 73.3 per cent. The situation, in the case of the macro level, is the opposite, 0 per cent vs. 10.8 per cent.

Regarding the gaps, the racial and immigration breach grows in the Irish media, 20.1 per cent vs. 6.7 per cent). Meanwhile, the social class gap increases in the Spanish media, 77.5 per cent vs. 66.4 per cent. There are no differ-

ences in the number of gaps mentioned by news between Irish and Spanish media.

General remedies also show differences between countries. Redistribution and tax justice increase their salience in the Irish media, 66.4 per cent vs. 44.2 per cent; meanwhile, legal remedies increase their salience in the Spanish media, 29.2 per cent vs. 11.4 per cent. There is also no difference in the number of general remedies mentioned in the Irish media compared to the Spanish media.

Finally, the specific remedies to address problems related to housing access show the greatest differentiation between countries. Thus, in the Irish media, there is a greater presence of remedies related to: public sector housing, 45.6 per cent vs. 18.3 per cent; Fair lending and limitation rents, 12.8 per cent vs. 5 per cent; and scattered-site housing, 15.4 per cent vs. 5 per cent. Only measures connected to private sector housing have a greater presence in the Spanish media, 25 per cent vs. 14.8 per cent. Consequently, the presence of specific remedies is more common in the Irish media, $M = 1.15$; $SD = 1.023$, than in the Spanish media, $M = 0.82$; $SD = 0.767$ ($F(1, 267) = 8.652$, $p = 0.004$, $n_2 = 0.031$).

Table 4. Statistical differences between the Irish and Spanish media agenda

Definition of inequality	Level of inequality	Ireland				Spain			
		Macro	Micro	Both	Not applicable	Macro	Micro	Both	Not applicable
		0%	87.9%	6%	6%	10.8%	73.3%	12.5%	3.3%
		$\chi^2 = 21.995$		$gI = 3$		$p = 0.000$		Cramér's $V = 0.286$	
		Yes		No		Yes		No	
Breaches	Race and migration	20.1%		79.9%		6.7%		93.3%	
		$\chi^2 = 9.938$		$gI = 1$		$p = 0.002$		Cramér's $V = 0.192$	
	Social Class	66.4%		33.6%		77.5%		22.5%	
General remedies		$\chi^2 = 3.977$		$gI = 1$		$p = 0.046$		Cramér's $V = 0.122$	
	Redistribution and Tax Justice	66.4%		33.6%		44.2%		55.8%	
		$\chi^2 = 3.977$		$gI = 1$		$p = 0.000$		Cramér's $V = 0.223$	
	Legal remedies	11.4%		88.6%		29.2%		70.8%	
Specific remedies		$\chi^2 = 13.440$		$gI = 1$		$p = 0.000$		Cramér's $V = 0.224$	
	Public sector housing	45.6%		54.4%		18.3%		81.7%	
		$\chi^2 = 22.258$		$gI = 1$		$p = 0.000$		Cramér's $V = 0.288$	
	Private sector housing	14.8%		85.2%		25%		75%	
		$\chi^2 = 4.465$		$gI = 1$		$p = 0.035$		Cramér's $V = 0.129$	
	Fair lending and limitation rents	12.8%		87.2%		5%		95%	
		$\chi^2 = 4.738$		$gI = 1$		$p = 0.030$		Cramér's $V = 0.133$	
	Scattered-site housing	15.4%		84.6%		5%		95%	
		$\chi^2 = 7.527$		$gI = 1$		$p = 0.006$		Cramér's $V = 0.167$	

Source: Prepared by the author.

5.2. Framing differences by media ideology

The comparison between left-wing and right-wing media shows similar coverage of the housing problem. There are only some differences related to the definition of inequality and the general solutions to the housing access problem. First, right-wing media consider inequality as a cause to a higher degree than left-wing media, 90.7 per cent vs. 77.3 per cent. Regarding general remedies, right-wing media promote a higher presence of redistribution and tax justice, 62 per cent vs. 49.6 per cent; whereas left-wing media highlight legal remedies, 25.2 per cent vs. 14.7 per cent, and policy-making, 22.7 per cent vs. 12.7 per cent. However, it is necessary to consider that these differences, related to the general remedies, have a very low relation strength. There are no differences in the number of breaches, or general or specific remedies in the news based on ideology.

Table 5. Statistical differences between left-wing and right-wing media

Definition of inequality	Inequality as	Left			Right		
		Cause	Consequence	Neither	Cause	Consequence	Neither
		77.3%	0.8%	21.8%	90.7%	6.7%	2.7%
		$\chi^2 = 28.798$		gl= 2	$p = 0.000$		Cramér's V= 0.327
	Income inequality	Yes	No		Yes	No	
		79%	21%		88%	12%	
		$\chi^2 = 4.010$		gl= 1	$p = 0.045$		Cramér's V= 0.122
General remedies	Redistribution and Tax Justice	49.6%	50.4%		62%	38%	
		$\chi^2 = 4.165$		gl= 1	$p = 0.041$		Cramér's V= 0.124
	Legal remedies	25.2%	74.8%		14.7%	85.3%	
		$\chi^2 = 4.730$		gl= 1	$p = 0.030$		Cramér's V= 0.133
	Policy making	22.7%	77.3%		12.7%	87.3%	
		$\chi^2 = 4.702$		gl= 1	$p = 0.030$		Cramér's V= 0.132

Source: Prepared by the author.

However, differences according to the media's ideology vary in each country. Thus, while the coverage of the housing problem in Spain remains unchanged; in Ireland, this question changes the coverage of this problem.

Spanish media agenda is more homogeneous. Therefore, only statistically significant differences are observed in the definition of inequality as a cause or consequence. Right-wing media report it more frequently than left-wing media, both as a cause, 86.5 per cent vs. 80.9 per cent, and as a consequence, 13.5 per cent vs. 0 per cent.

On the other hand, the Irish media agenda is more diverse. This diversity is centred on the definition of inequality, especially in the approach to general and specific remedies. Firstly, when defining inequality, right-wing media mention it as the cause of the problem more frequently than left-wing media, 92.9 per cent vs. 72.5 per cent. Furthermore, differences are observed in defining inequality from the perspective of income inequality, which is more

commonly emphasized in right-wing media, 91.8 per cent vs. 78.4 per cent. Secondly, regarding general remedies, right-wing media place greater emphasis on redistribution and tax justice, 72.4 per cent versus 54.9 per cent, while left-wing media afford greater significance to legal remedies, 19.6 per cent vs. 7.1 per cent, as well as policy-making, 25.5 per cent vs. 11.2 per cent. Finally, differences, according to media ideology, are also observed in the presence of specific remedies. In this case, left-wing media are more likely to address specific solutions related to subsidies, scattered-site housing and property tax, 23.5 per cent vs. 11.2 per cent, in all three variables. Similarly to the general analysis, there are no differences, based on media ideology, in the number of breaches general and specific remedies mentioned in the news.

Table 6. Statistical differences between left-wing and right-wing media in in Spain and Ireland

SPAIN							
Definition of Inequality as inequality		Left			Right		
		Cause	Consequence	Neither	Cause	Consequence	Neither
		80.9%	0%	19.1%	86.5%	13.5%	0%
		x²= 19.208		gl= 2	p= 0.000	Cramér's V= 0.400	
IRELAND							
Definition of Inequality as inequality		Left			Right		
		Cause	Consequence	Neither	Cause	Consequence	Neither
		72.5%	2%	25.5%	92.9%	3.1%	4.1%
		x²= 15.236		gl= 2	p= 0.000	Cramér's V= 0.320	
General remedies	Income inequality	Yes	No	Yes	No		
		78.4%	21.6%	91.8%	8.2%		
		x²= 5.418		gl= 1	p= 0.020	Cramér's V= 0.191	
	Redistribution and Tax Justice	54.9%	45.1%	72.4%	27.6%		
		x²= 4.632		gl= 1	p= 0.031	Cramér's V= 0.176	
	Legal remedies	19.6%	80.4%	7.1%	92.9%		
Specific remedies		x²= 5.156		gl= 1	p= 0.023	Cramér's V= 0.186	
	Policy making	25.5%	74.5%	11.2%	88.8%		
		x²= 5.052		gl= 1	p= 0.025	Cramér's V= 0.184	
	Subsidies	23.5%	76.5%	11.2%	88.8%		
		x²= 3.891		gl= 1	p= 0.049	Cramér's V= 0.162	
	Scattered-site housing	23.5%	76.5%	11.2%	88.8%		
	x²= 3.891		gl= 1	p= 0.049	Cramér's V= 0.162		
	Tax proprierty	23.5%	76.5%	11.2%	88.8%		
		x²= 3.891		gl= 1	p= 0.049	Cramér's V= 0.162	

Source: Prepared by the author.

6. Discussion

The analysis of the news stories that address the housing problem and its relation to inequality shows a definition of inequality as a cause of the problem. While it is quite obvious that inequality is a multifaceted issue, so it is proba-

bly better to talk about *inequalities*, a general economic unbalance is framed in the news items we examine. This inequality is framed, mainly, from a micro level; that is, from the differences between individuals, and also refers to income inequality and, less frequently, to wealth inequality. Moreover, the most common breaches in the coverage of the problem are the social class gap and the generation gap. In terms of measures to resolve the problem, the most common general remedies are those related to redistribution and tax justice, and, to a lesser extent, legal remedies and policy making. On the other hand, the most common specific measure is the one linked to public sector housing. The rest of the specific remedies – private sector housing, tax property, subsidies, scattered-site housing, and fair lending and limitation rents – have less salience.

Framing a diagnosis of inequality, or inequalities, as a cause of social of political discontent, is neither enough nor effective to tackle such a big problem, as recognized by national and supranational institutions, and by many specialists. Providing a solution to each issue related to economic inequality seems also a function of a healthy media system, most especially when the precisely so-called *solution journalism* (Ibáñez Castejón, 2021), a more positive and proactive approach to elaborating the news in a more comprehensive, less fragmented way, has been proposed. For instance, based on the London School of Economics' Multidimensional Inequality Framework (McKnight et al., 2017), and on Nobel Prize-winning Amartya Sen's *capability approach*, Oxfam proposed in a report to focus on the solutions at least as much as the causes. Those solutions, at least the institutional ones, include the political and administrative, both of which come from the governmental institutions, and the ones that could come from the courts. Amending preexisting laws, including, as it has been proposed for Ireland, the Constitution itself – Spain recognizes in its own a universal right to housing –, or passing new ones (the Spanish Ley de Vivienda, 20023 [Housing Act], or the Irish Housing Act, 1988), is one of those solutions. Media can cover not only the discussions leading to enacting those legal instruments, but can also follow their application and effectiveness (or lack of it). Eventually, the courts might have a word on the application of those legal provisions. Other legal solutions, related to an always sensitive topic such as taxation and tax justice, include redistributive measures, addressing resources to the less favoured people, and predistributive measures, in which equality should be guaranteed from the very beginning, assuring this way equal opportunities. Ultimately, it is to propose “structural solutions for structural inequalities” (Visentini et al., 2021).

The Irish and Spanish media systems produce changes in the coverage of the topic. These countries, in which housing is a major issue, for very different reasons, show a structural contrast. Ireland is one of the EU countries in which a higher percentage of the population live in unifamilial houses and residential suburbs, while Spain, on the other extreme, is one of the countries in which most of the population live in apartments, regardless their social class and income. Spain is a much more populated country, near 10 times the Irish.

On the other hand, despite the fact that it was traditionally and, to some extent, when new economic crisis outburst (for instance, in 2008), it is a highly migrating society, our analysis shows that the racial issues seem to have a deeper importance in Ireland than in Spain. Some reasons might explain this fact. One is that the recent migration to the island is related to refugees, and that the Irish government was unprepared to receive and accommodate such a great number of new people, with different cultures and languages. Plainly speaking, there are not enough housing offers for them. Ireland is one of the few Western countries in which the far-right parties have virtually no presence at the institutional level, but that in no way means that there is not a far-right movement, whose presence is perceivable in some digital-native media. The shape of that discourse is also remarkable. There are some comments by active readers near the conception of immigration of presumed wanted (or “unvetted”) people also present in the American alt-right. That political alignment insists on the supposedly rooted problem, for instance, in *Gript.ie*, October 30, 2023, when the writer insisted that “until we reduce immigration significantly, the housing crisis will continue forever and ever”, and, as a conclusion, thought that “we natives might have a place to live.” It is quite clear how a nativist discourse is also appearing in the only European country where the far-right political parties have a less intense presence in the institutions.⁸

On the other hand, Irish legacy media propose more reasonable measures, relying much more on redistribution than on legal measures, namely in passing new specific laws whose effectiveness is always to be seen. Tax harmonization, however, is less mentioned. Again, for different reasons. Spain has unequal taxation levels in the different so-called autonomous communities, and it has been even defined as an imperfect, or semi-federal state – also, as a failed federal state. Two such regions, the so-called historical, foral ones, the Basque Country and Navarre, enjoy singular economic and tax regimes, and Catalonia is also claiming for 2024 onwards such a different status. Tax inequality is an internal issue in Spain. In Ireland, it is not, but an international issue, when compared to the different tax pressures applied in the Republic and many of the rest of the EU member states. The relationship between the Irish and the Americans can explain this since Ireland serves as a good place for the US technological giants, such as Google, to settle. During the period of our research, the political parties in office were in the Spanish government left-handed, and in Ireland, a centre-right coalition. While in Spain the solutions proposed by the government were mainly a legal regulation of the private market and, to a lesser extent, a public policy of building new houses, in Ireland we can observe, especially from legacy media such as the hegemonic *Irish Times* newspaper – considered today a quite liberal, even socio-democratic medium – a solution both based in public and, especially, private building, so measures to inspire the private initiative are welcome.

8. <<https://gript.ie/interest-rate-increases-spooking-property-market-along-with-supply-issues-survey-finds/>>

In the definition of inequality, the micro perspective becomes more present in the Spanish media. The gaps present in the news also show some differences. Even though social class is the main breach in both media systems, the racial component increases its relevance in the Irish agenda. The most important differences arise in the measures to face the housing problem. Within the general remedies, redistribution and tax justice increase their salience in the Irish media, whereas legal remedies increase their salience in the Spanish media. On the other hand, the differences in specific remedies are even greater. Firstly, the number of measures is usually higher in the Irish news than in the Spanish news. As a consequence, public sector housing, fair lending, limitation of rents and scattered-site housing solutions are more present in the Irish media agenda. Only the private sector housing solutions increase their importance in the Spanish market.

Finally, media ideology also affects the framing of the housing problem. Nevertheless, the differences are more pronounced at the global level and among Irish media than among the Spanish media. First of all, left-wing and right-wing media have a similar definition of inequality, as they accept the ones that come from institutions and academia. There is no sense in proposing new definitions of a well-quantified problem. Another thing is the approach to it. The differences are reduced to the higher definition of inequality as a cause in the right-wing media and to the higher emphasis on income inequality. Furthermore, differences are only found in general remedies, with redistribution and tax justice growing in the right-wing media and legal remedies and policymaking in the left-wing media. Probably this is because the reality of the market and the limitations of regulating private property, also from a constitutional point of view, are more widely accepted in a liberal media system, such as the Irish, than in a polarized one, such as the Spanish media. These differences persist among Irish media of different ideologies, and in this case, differences are also found in the development of specific remedies. Discussions are more nuanced in the liberal media system than in a polarized one. Hence, specific remedies related to subsidies, scattered-site housing, and tax property are mentioned more frequently, and not surprisingly, in the Irish left-wing media than in the right-wing media. On the other hand, in the Spanish media agenda, differences in framing according to ideology only occur when the media define inequality as a cause. This is more important than it might seem at first glance. If inequality is not a cause, but an effect, the ideological alignment on what is the ultimate origin of it, and attributing the responsibility for it to the opponent, is easier. This is more common in the right-wing media. In all other aspects, the Spanish media agenda shows a more homogeneous approach.

7. Conclusion

Taking as a starting point the coverage of this problem in the Irish and Spanish media, two such different societies in terms of housing model and of

media system – while both having a problem with proving house to everyone without exacerbating inequalities –, the framing of the housing access problem from the perspectives of the definition of inequality, related breaches, and the associated remedies – general and specific – reveals several common characteristics. Therefore, the analysis from the perspective of issue-specific frames could show a certain homogeneity of the news content. However, an analysis based on media nationality and ideology refines these general results. Content diversity in this context appears to be shaped by differing national media landscapes. The Irish media system, for example, demonstrates greater diversity of content, which is largely based on the ideological variations across media outlets. In contrast, in the Spanish media system, ideology does not so significantly contribute to differences in topic coverage, resulting instead in a more uniform approach to the issue. There are, however, remarkable nuances in the approach to the topic, maybe not so spectacular, but when examined closer, or relevance: the different approach, according to the ideological alignment of media, to inequality – and of the housing crisis, as one of its main manifestations – as a cause or as an effect, attributed, in the second case, to reputedly wrong political decisions by the opponent. This is typical of a polarized media – and political – system like the Mediterranean one, according to the classical categorization proposed by Daniel Hallin and Paolo Mancini.

Using content analysis, and categories well-established in precedent literature, our modest research study – true as it is that it is reduced to just two countries during a short period of time – can provide a model for further research on the topic. This goes beyond a simple analysis of how (digital) media deal with the housing problem. First, because this is an issue that is symptomatic of economic inequalities in our societies. Second, and mainly, because it helps reveal some ideological axis, not only in polarized media systems and societies, such as Spain, but also in more liberal, business-oriented media systems, such as Ireland. Ideological treats are present in all of them, and no topic is free from their influence. The roots of inequalities are deep down in every society, affect fundamental rights, can erode democracy since weakening trust in media, and go beyond the economic, usually presented in a numeric, non-faced, non-personal way by media – but which has an undeniable, profound importance in people's everyday life. We have also tried to provide an insight into how legacy and Internet-native media have a word on part of the digital public sphere (Sakariassen, 2020; Vermeulen, 2021; Fuchs, 2021) and on framing a relevant issue, in the vogue previous research studies have done, at least in the Spanish case (Pérez-Altable & Serrano-Tellería, 2021).

It should be noted that this research presents certain limitations that future studies could address. Firstly, it would be beneficial to advance the analysis by not focusing solely on the mentions of measures, but also by examining the sentiment or tone with which these measures are discussed. The mere mention does not reveal the media outlet's stance, particularly if the sentiment is positive or negative. Furthermore, while the media system in

which outlets operate and their ideological orientation are influential in the journalistic production process, other factors also shape the construction of journalistic narratives. As Shoemaker and Reese (2014) highlight, these factors arise from social systems, public institutions connected to the media, the journalistic profession, media organizations, and the individual characteristics of journalists. Last, but not least, longitudinal studies in historical series are needed to explain in much more detail the ultimate reasons for media coverage of issues related to economic inequality.

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Media education and countering disinformation: A qualitative study of Egyptian youth

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Abstract

Media education is essential for cultivating critical and analytical thinking, enabling individuals to evaluate and engage responsibly with media content. This study examines the role of media education in countering extremist ideologies and misinformation, focusing on how it fosters media awareness and literacy among university students. Using a qualitative approach, the research employed in-depth interviews with twelve purposively selected media professionals, educators and experts, alongside focus-group discussions with students from Cairo University, Misr International University and the American University in Cairo. Findings show strong expert consensus on the importance of equipping youth with media literacy skills. Students primarily engage with digital rather than traditional media but exhibit limited understanding of media education concepts. The study concludes by recommending strategies to strengthen media literacy initiatives and integrate media education within educational systems to enhance critical awareness and resilience against misinformation.

Keywords: media education; media literacy; youth; disinformation; digital media

Resum. *Educació mediàtica i combat a la desinformació: un estudi qualitatiu entre els joves egipcis*

L'educació mediàtica és fonamental per desenvolupar el pensament crític i analític, enfortir la capacitat d'avaluar i interpretar els continguts mediàtics i promoure l'autoregulació necessària per interactuar de manera responsable amb els missatges. Aquest estudi analitza el seu paper en la prevenció d'ideologies extremistes i la desinformació, amb èmfasi en la seva contribució al foment de l'alfabetització mediàtica entre estudiants universitaris. A través d'una metodologia qualitativa, es van fer entrevistes en profunditat a dotze profes-

sionals dels mitjans, educadors i experts, a més de grups de discussió amb estudiants de tres universitats egípcies: Universitat del Caire (pública), Universitat Misr Internacional (privada) i Universitat Americana del Caire (internacional). Els resultats mostren consens sobre la necessitat de dotar els joves de competències mediàtiques. També revelen que els estudiants prioritzen els mitjans digitals sobre els tradicionals i posseeixen un coneixement limitat de l'educació mediàtica. Es conclou amb recomanacions per enfortir l'alfabetització mediàtica i integrar-la en els sistemes educatius.

Paraules clau: educació mediàtica; alfabetització mediàtica; joves; desinformació; mitjans digitals

Resumen. *Educación mediática y combate a la desinformación: un estudio cualitativo entre los jóvenes egipcios*

La educación mediática es fundamental para desarrollar el pensamiento crítico y analítico, fortalecer la capacidad de evaluar e interpretar los contenidos mediáticos y promover la autorregulación necesaria para interactuar de manera responsable con los mensajes. Este estudio analiza su papel en la prevención de ideologías extremistas y la desinformación, con énfasis en su contribución al fomento de la alfabetización mediática entre estudiantes universitarios. A través de una metodología cualitativa, se realizaron entrevistas en profundidad a doce profesionales de los medios, educadores y expertos, además de grupos de discusión con estudiantes de tres universidades egipcias: Universidad del Cairo (pública), Universidad Misr Internacional (privada) y Universidad Americana del Cairo (internacional). Los resultados muestran consenso sobre la necesidad de dotar a los jóvenes de competencias mediáticas. También revelan que los estudiantes priorizan los medios digitales sobre los tradicionales y poseen un conocimiento limitado de la educación mediática. Se concluye con recomendaciones para fortalecer la alfabetización mediática e integrarla en los sistemas educativos.

Palabras clave: educación mediática; alfabetización mediática; jóvenes; desinformación; medios digitales

1. Introduction

In today's digitally saturated environment, individuals are constantly exposed to media messages that shape perceptions, behaviors and values. Advances in communication technologies have transformed media from a linear system into an interactive, multidirectional process in which audiences act as active "prosumers", simultaneously consuming and producing content (Tayie, 2012). This shift holds particular significance in Arab societies, where globalized media often introduce values that may conflict with local traditions and ethical frameworks.

The rapid spread of misinformation and disinformation, especially via social media, has made media and information literacy a national priority. Policymakers, educators and civil society increasingly recognize the need to equip citizens – particularly youth – with critical skills to evaluate and interpret media messages. Media literacy is now viewed as a civic necessity that enables individuals to resist manipulation and participate meaningfully in democratic discourse (Carlsson et al., 2008; Hobbs, 2016).

Media content today not only informs but also persuades and manipulates, challenging moral and educational systems. In response, media education has emerged as a strategic means to foster critical awareness and analytical skills. It safeguards individuals, especially youth, from harmful influences while cultivating reflective thinking essential for informed citizenship (Buckingham, 2010, 2020; Martens, 2010).

This study examines the role of media education in countering extremist ideologies and false information among university students. It explores how developing critical media skills can transform students into discerning consumers and responsible digital participants. Media education further promotes ethical judgment and self-regulation, helping individuals distinguish interpretation from objective analysis (Hobbs & Jensen, 2013).

Governments and international bodies increasingly acknowledge the value of media education. The British Minister of Culture, for instance, equated the importance of media literacy importance with that of mathematics and science, underscoring its role in fostering active citizenship and societal resilience against disinformation and ideological extremism (McNulty, 2004).

2. Statement of the research question

The relationship between media literacy education and the fight against misinformation, disinformation and hate speech has become increasingly critical. As societies face growing social and communicative challenges, citizens must be equipped to address them effectively. The current digital media ecosystem often contributes to these problems, particularly through the spread of misleading information. Media education therefore plays a key role in countering fake news and hate speech, while also promoting broader societal change and encouraging policy actions that regulate harmful media practices (Tayie et al., 2012).

This study aims to identify how media education can reduce intellectual extremism among youth by fostering analytical and critical thinking towards media messages. Given the escalating issues linked to excessive and unhealthy digital media use, media education is a vital tool for transforming negative public attitudes and addressing social problems. The central question guiding this study is: What role can media literacy education play in combating misinformation, disinformation and hate speech?

2.1. *Significance of the study*

In today's fast-paced digital world, it has become increasingly difficult for governments and educational institutions to monitor or regulate the vast volume of messages circulating across media platforms and social networking sites. Given this situation, there is a pressing need for educational frameworks and curricula that can function as informational gatekeepers, not through

external censorship but by fostering the critical awareness and analytical skills of the audience, especially among young people, who represent the next generation.

This study is significant for several reasons:

1. Media as an influential force: Media platforms today serve as powerful tools for disseminating content that often carries specific agendas or ideologies. These messages can potentially misguide or negatively influence young people's beliefs, cultural identities, and knowledge base. Therefore, it is essential to equip youth with media literacy skills to help them critically engage with such content.
2. Urgent need for protection: With the rapid advances of communication technologies and the overwhelming presence of media platforms in the information society, there is an urgent need to protect children, adolescents and youth from the potentially harmful effects of media exposure, including misinformation and manipulation.
3. Media education as a bridge: Media education offers a vital means of fostering effective and conscious communication between youth, media platforms and media content. It encourages a more thoughtful and informed interaction with media messages.
4. Developing media literacy: Much as formal education teaches individuals to read and write, media education teaches young people how to observe, interpret and listen critically and cautiously, enabling them to become more discerning media consumers.
5. Fostering critical thinking and creativity: Media education plays a crucial role in developing critical thinking skills and creativity, helping young people to better understand themselves, recognize their individuality, and explore their inner potential.
6. Empowering decision-making: By developing media literacy, young people gain the skills and confidence necessary to make informed decisions that affect their present lives and future paths, allowing them to act more thoughtfully within their communities and societies.
7. Combating misinformation and hate speech: Finally, media education is an essential tool in the fight against disinformation, fake news and hate speech. It empowers youth to question, evaluate and verify information, thereby promoting more informed and tolerant societies.

2.2. Objectives of the study

This study aims to achieve the following objectives:

1. To assess the level of awareness among Egyptian youth regarding the concept and principles of media education.
2. To explore the role of media education in addressing and mitigating the spread of misinformation, disinformation and hate speech.

3. To examine the extent to which exposure to media education influences behavioral change among youth in relation to misinformation and hate speech.
4. To evaluate the effectiveness of media education as a tool for confronting extremist ideologies among university students.

2.3. Literature review

A growing body of research highlights the importance of media education in equipping youth with critical thinking skills to navigate the complex digital landscape. This review synthesizes recent studies, particularly from Arab contexts, grouped thematically.

- *Media education and value formation*: Garcia et al. (2024) found that media education fosters positive values, civic responsibility and democratic awareness among youth. Similarly, Abdul Jalil (2023) reported that social media use influences students' religious perceptions in the UAE, underscoring the need for strategic media education to promote critical engagement with online religious content.
- *Media literacy and digital risk*: El Mokadem (2023) identified media literacy as vital for combating misinformation and manipulated media. Garcia et al. (2024) linked media awareness to more ethical online participation and recommended university-level training. Studies focusing on Egyptian youth have also noted the prevalence of digital risks – including cyberbullying, rumors, false news, and other harms – and advocated for stronger media awareness and preventative measures to protect young people in digital spaces (El Mokadem, 2023).
- *Pedagogical approaches*: Al-Omari and Al-Khalidi (2021) observed moderate media skills among Jordanian pre-service teachers, recommending a national media education plan. A study examining interactive video production in media literacy education with university students found that creating and engaging with media productions significantly improved students' understanding of media literacy concepts and critical engagement, compared with traditional lecture-only approaches. Students valued the active learning, personal engagement, and media production experience, which enhanced their skills more than passive listening (Zhou & Derakhshan, 2024).
- *Development of critical thinking*: Gezmen and Eken (2020) demonstrated that students receiving media education exhibited greater critical analysis skills. Halpern (2024) confirmed similar outcomes but noted moderate literacy levels overall, signaling the need for curriculum enhancement.
- *Social impact*: Umm Al-Ratem and Awaj (2018) examined the role of media education in addressing symbolic violence against women, promoting youth empowerment as “prosumers” (Tayie et al., 2012).

Scharrer and Ramasubramanian (2015) found positive effects on attitudes to diversity, while Jaberian (2023) linked digital literacy to higher online engagement and social capital.

- *Cultural context*: Belkasi (2017) and Daif (2018) stressed the need for active, culturally aware media engagement rather than avoidance, calling for education that fosters autonomy and critical reflection in diverse media environments.

Collectively, these studies affirm the central role of media education in cultivating analytical thinking, ethical engagement and democratic participation. Most research focuses on youth, and relies on qualitative methods such as interviews and focus groups, highlighting media education as a key instrument for digital resilience and social responsibility.

2.4. Theoretical framework

This study draws on James Potter's Media Literacy Theory (2004, 2010, 2022), which frames media literacy as a core skill in today's media-saturated world. Rather than a peripheral skill, it is essential for navigating complex information environments, engaging constructively and fostering equitable and democratic societies.

Potter views audiences as active participants in meaning-making and identity formation, rejecting traditional models that depict media influence as one-way and deterministic. Instead, he presents a reciprocal relationship between media and audiences, in which individuals interpret content through their cultural, social and cognitive contexts, co-constructing meaning rather than passively absorbing it.

Media literacy, according to Potter, comprises several interrelated skills:

1. *Critical engagement*: Analyzing, deconstructing and evaluating media credibility and persuasive strategies.
2. *Logical evaluation*: Distinguishing fact from opinion, and identifying bias and intent.
3. *Active participation*: Creating and sharing original or social media content.
4. *Civic engagement*: Using the different media channels for dialogue, democratic participation and reflection on societal narratives.
5. *Cultural awareness*: Understanding how media reflect or challenge social values and norms (Carlsson & Culver, 2013).

Collectively, these elements position media literacy as a transformative tool that empowers individuals to critique and contribute to the media ecosystem. It promotes informed citizenship and participatory democracy, casting audiences as co-creators of meaning and agents of social change.

2.5. The research questions

This study aims to address the following research questions:

1. What are the media usage habits of Egyptian youth?
2. What is the level of awareness among youth regarding media education?
3. How do young people perceive the role of media education in combating misinformation, disinformation and hate speech?
4. What are the types and patterns of media education practices adopted by university youth to counter fake news and hate speech?
5. What is the impact of media education on the selective exposure of youth to information sources?
6. What strategies do youth propose to counter misinformation in the media?

3. Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative research design, which is particularly suited for exploring perceptions, experiences and in-depth insights into complex social phenomena such as media education and youth engagement. The research relies on two primary qualitative methods: in-depth interviews and focus group discussions.

3.1. In-depth interviews

A purposive sample of 12 key informants, including media professionals, educators and academic experts, was selected to provide informed perspectives on the role of media education in combating misinformation, disinformation and hate speech. These participants were chosen for their specialized knowledge and practical experience in the fields of media and education. Interviews were conducted either face-to-face or via telephone calls, depending on participant availability and logistical considerations. All interviews took place during February and March 2025, and were audio-recorded with the informed consent of the participants. The recordings were subsequently transcribed verbatim for qualitative analysis.

3.2. Focus-group discussions

To capture the perspectives of university youth, the study conducted 14 focus group discussions with participants aged 18 to 22 years. Each focus group consisted of 8 to 12 participants, drawn purposively from three distinct types of institutions to ensure diversity in experiences and attitudes:

- A public university (Cairo University).
- A private university (Misr International University).
- An international university (The American University in Cairo).

The discussions were conducted either on campus or online via Zoom, depending on the group's preference and accessibility. Each session lasted approximately 45 minutes, and the seating arrangements were adapted (circular or rectangular) to ensure participant comfort and effective communication. A trained moderator facilitated the discussions using a semi-structured guide, encouraging open dialogue while ensuring the conversation remained focused on the study's central themes. This approach aligns with established practices in qualitative inquiry, in which the moderator plays a key role in guiding group dynamics and eliciting a range of views (Tayie, 2017: 204).

3.3. Data collection and analysis

All sessions were audio-recorded with participant consent, then transcribed for thematic analysis. The transcripts were carefully reviewed to identify recurring themes, patterns and significant insights related to media consumption habits, awareness of media education, and strategies used by youth to address digital misinformation and hate speech. A coding framework was developed to support a systematic analysis of the data, ensuring consistency and analytical rigor. This qualitative approach allowed for a nuanced understanding of both expert and youth perspectives on the influence and application of media education in contemporary Egyptian society.

4. Findings

The findings of this study are presented in two parts: first, the findings of the in-depth interviews with expert informants, followed by the findings of the focus group discussions with youth participants.

4.1. Findings of in-depth interviews

Findings from in-depth interviews provide valuable insights into the role of media in shaping beliefs and perceptions, as well as the necessity for media education in addressing the challenges associated with digital media. The responses from the experts highlight several key themes and concerns. Here are the main findings of the interviews:

- *Media influence on behavior, values and lifestyles:* Experts agree that exposure to media content has a significant impact on shaping beliefs, perceptions and even lifestyle choices. This suggests that media play a crucial role in socialization and cultural formation. It's important to stress the need for a balanced media environment, in which diverse perspectives are represented. Educational programs could focus on encouraging individuals to consume media critically, especially content that influences their values and perceptions.

- *Importance of media literacy*: Experts emphasize the importance of integrating media literacy education into educational systems, both in schools and universities, and even in family settings. Most interviewees feel that there should be a national strategy to integrate media literacy education into the curriculum. This could include, according to the interviewees, practical workshops for students and parents on how to analyze, evaluate and interpret media messages. Collaboration with local media outlets and tech companies might help in developing targeted educational content.
- *The role of the family role in media education*: Many interviewees stressed that families should also play an active role in media education, particularly regarding children's use of digital media. Developing awareness programs that target parents is essential. These programs should focus on understanding the potential risks of digital media (such as exposure to harmful content or cyberbullying) and ways to guide children towards safe, productive media usage.
- *Concerns about misinformation and hate speech*: Nearly all experts agree that misinformation, disinformation and hate speech are prevalent in digital media. Media outlets and digital platforms need to invest in training journalists and content creators on how to identify and counteract misinformation. Governments and organizations should support policies that combat hate speech and false information while also ensuring freedom of expression. Bullying, infringing on the freedom of others, or other issues and challenges were among the important issues on digital media.
- *The role of Western media*: Many experts feel that Western media often portrays Arabs and Muslims in a negative light, influenced by political agendas. It was suggested that a nuanced approach to media education should include discussions about media bias, geopolitical influences, and how global narratives shape perceptions. Promoting diverse media voices and offering alternative viewpoints could help in counteracting this bias.
- *The need for digital media literacy to protect identity and privacy*: Experts agreed on the need for digital media literacy, especially for young people, to help preserve personal identity, security and privacy in the digital age. It was also suggested that media literacy programs should specifically address the risks of digital media, such as data privacy breaches, online identity theft and cyberbullying. Teaching people how to protect their digital footprints and privacy is essential in today's media landscape.
- *The role of media organizations*: Some experts (mainly educationalist) suggested that media organizations themselves should play a role in promoting media literacy, critical thinking and combating misinformation. Media outlets should be proactive in disseminating educational content that encourages critical engagement with the different

kinds of media. This could be through public service campaigns, partnerships with educational institutions or social media initiatives focused on promoting media literacy and combating fake news.

- *Media education also includes production*: One expert said, “Media education is not limited to the aspect of receiving only but goes beyond that to conscious and purposeful participation in the production of media content; and media literacy includes critical thinking that enables one to build independent judgments about media content.” Another expert said, “Media education influences our orientation, our opinions, our outlook on different things in life, and our perception of different environments, through knowledge aspects.” For most of the experts interviewed, media education is related to the following issues: ‘How is news content made?’, ‘What is the difference between news content and other types of advertising content?’, ‘What is advertising?’, ‘What is an article?’, ‘What distinguishes a news story from an opinion piece?’, ‘Who owns social media and the overall business model?’. Youth and people in general must acquire the skill to be able to understand the above issues.
- *Suggestions for future action*: The following suggestions were mentioned by the experts interviewed:
 - *Curriculum development*: Collaboration is needed with educators, media professionals and policy makers to design a media literacy curriculum that includes practical lessons on critical thinking, identifying biases and understanding the ethical implications of media content.
 - *Public awareness campaigns*: National awareness campaigns that educate the public about the risks of misinformation, hate speech and media manipulation must be organized. These campaigns should also emphasize the importance of responsible media consumption, particularly in the digital space.
 - *Parent education programs*: There should be programs aimed at educating parents about the digital landscape, including how to monitor and guide their children’s media consumption. This could also include tips on creating a healthy media environment at home.
 - *Incorporating critical media engagement*: Media outlets should actively engage their audience by promoting media literacy in their content. This could be done by offering articles, videos and even interactive content that helps the public critically engage with the information they consume.
 - *Government and policy role*: Governments should support initiatives that promote digital literacy and regulate digital platforms to reduce the spread of misinformation. They should also encourage collaboration between tech companies, media organizations and educational.

To conclude, results of the in-depth interview reveal a growing consensus about the critical need for media literacy education to address the challenges posed by the digital media landscape. Experts are united in their call for integrating media literacy into education systems, empowering families and addressing the negative impacts of misinformation and hate speech. Looking to the future, a comprehensive strategy involving multiple stakeholders – governments, educational institutions, media organizations and families – is necessary to equip individuals with the skills needed to navigate the complexities of the digital age safely and responsibly.

4.2. Findings of focus-group discussions

Findings of the focus-group discussions were categorized into four main sections: students' patterns of media use; awareness about media education among university students; awareness about misleading information and combating it; and finally, students' suggestions to counter misinformation.

4.2.1. Patterns of media use

Findings related to patterns of media use have shown the following:

- *Heavy reliance on digital media:* Egyptian youth depend mainly on digital platforms for information, reflecting global trends that these have replaced traditional media. Cairo University students use digital media moderately for family contact, whereas private and international university students use it predominantly for entertainment, revealing socio-economic differences. Traditional media were seldom used; only a few Cairo University females mentioned watching TV series. Convenience and easy access were the main reasons for heavy digital media use.
- *Mobile device dominance:* Students have full access to digital media, with mobile phones being the most used device. Nearly all own smartphones – mainly iPhones – demonstrating the centrality of mobile technology in youth culture. Some private and international university students use multiple numbers for privacy, while Cairo University students, especially women, use one number mainly for family contact. Most subscriptions are funded by parents. Facebook (98%) and WhatsApp are the most popular platforms, with TikTok also widely used. Gender differences were observed, as media use patterns varied by interest and purpose.
- *Gender-based preferences:* Clear gender differences emerged in media use. Girls were more conservative, using media for communication and serious purposes, while boys focused on entertainment and gaming. Girls preferred comedy and entertainment videos on TikTok and YouTube, whereas boys favored games on WhatsApp, TikTok and Instagram.
- *Lack of parental supervision:* Most students (96%) reported no parental involvement in their media use, indicating largely unregulated digital

habits. This raises concerns about unchecked exposure to misinformation and harmful content. Students from private and international universities rarely discussed media with their families, while some Cairo University girls reported doing so, reflecting more traditional, conservative family influence and a socio-economic divide in media oversight.

- *Outdoor activities and media use:* Students engaged in sports or other activities used digital media less than inactive peers. Most students spent significant time in virtual spaces chatting and consuming online content, with friends' recommendations being their main source of digital media choices.

From the above findings we may conclude that the patterns of media use are affected by certain variables which include gender and socio-economic background.

4.2.2. *Awareness about media education*

Findings relating to awareness about media education include the following:

- *Lack of awareness about media literacy education:* Many students lack awareness about the concept of media education, misinformation and disinformation, which is troubling. Even though some students had been introduced to media literacy in academic contexts, the majority did not grasp its importance or relevance. This highlights the gap in formal education systems regarding digital literacy and critical thinking skills in media consumption.
- *Need for comprehensive media education:* Findings show that most students lack awareness of media literacy and its role in critically assessing digital content. Only those who studied media-related subjects understood its importance. Many were unaware of technology's potential harms or the influence of media on behavior.

These results highlight an urgent need to integrate comprehensive media literacy education into curricula to build critical thinking and combat misinformation.

4.2.3. *Awareness about misleading information and dealing with it*

When asked about their understanding of misinformation and disinformation, it became clear that most students had limited knowledge of these concepts. Despite this, several respondents expressed greater trust in digital media than in traditional sources, viewing digital platforms as their primary source of information. This reliance on digital media poses a significant risk, as many students admitted difficulty in distinguishing between truthful and misleading content. The discussions highlighted that this confusion stems largely from the overwhelming volume of information available on social net-

working sites. The constant stream of content makes it easier for facts to be distorted or falsified through technology, making the verification of truth more challenging. Only a small number of students reported confidence in their ability to differentiate between real and fake news. These students attributed their skill to:

- Following reliable information sources;
- Aligning information with personal beliefs, cultural norms and religious values; and
- Repeated exposure to the same information from multiple sources.

This finding is supported by Al-Kholi (2023), who noted that many individuals tend to prioritize the content of the information over its source, and that the speed of news transmission often influences perceptions of credibility. On the other hand, students who had taken courses or had prior knowledge in media education were generally more cautious. They reported actively questioning the content they consume on digital platforms. When asked how they verify information, they mentioned:

- Consulting other digital media sources; and
- Discussing it with family members and friends.

In addition, students' perceptions of other nationalities revealed certain biases. Spanish, Greek and Italian people were viewed positively, while the USA and Israel were seen in a negative light. Students attributed this to the ongoing Israeli aggression in Gaza, referencing the abuse of Palestinian human rights in both Gaza and the West Bank. They also criticized the United States' support for Israel, labeling it as backing for the "inhuman aggression and killing of innocent women and children".

4.2.4. Suggestions of students to counter misinformation

Students emphasized the need for institutional action to curb misinformation, including government enforcement against hate speech and false content. They also highlighted the importance of raising public awareness, particularly among youth, through media education delivered via digital platforms and television using engaging visual tools. Despite limited prior exposure, most agreed that media literacy is vital for developing critical thinking and analytical skills necessary to identify and resist disinformation.

5. Conclusion and discussion

This study outlines the media consumption habits and concerns of Egyptian youth. The digital age provides convenience but also presents challenges such as misinformation and low media literacy. To address this, education systems must incorporate digital literacy and critical thinking into their curricula.

Parents, educators and media organizations should work together to promote responsible media literacy among youth in Egypt.

The findings from the in-depth interviews and focus-group discussions highlight the pressing need for comprehensive media education to address the challenges of the digital media landscape. Experts and students alike agree that media plays a significant role in shaping beliefs, behaviors and perceptions, particularly in the context of digital platforms where misinformation, disinformation and hate speech are pervasive. The importance of integrating media literacy education into educational curricula, both in schools and universities, is strongly emphasized, with a focus on developing critical thinking skills and promoting responsible media consumption.

Families play a crucial role in media education by helping parents understand the risks of digital media and how to guide their children's usage. Parents should encourage open discussions about digital media and should actively engage with their children to balance their virtual and real-world experiences. They can provide alternatives for free time based on their children's interests and guide them in using digital media to develop their talents. Additionally, parents should promote digital literacy to help children navigate the challenges of the digital age.

Moreover, university students often lack awareness of media education, typically only learning its concepts through their curriculum. This highlights the need for public awareness campaigns and broader media literacy programs targeting young people.

The discussions emphasize the need to address digital privacy concerns, ensuring youth have the knowledge to protect their identity and security online. Findings suggest a collaborative approach involving educational institutions, media organizations, families and policymakers to enhance media literacy and promote responsible digital citizenship. Experts recommend introducing a media education course as a university requirement for various disciplines. Additionally, media professionals and influencers should be accountable for misleading information, and media organizations should establish ethics and codes of conduct. Strengthening connections between news organizations and universities is also advised.

Media education is not only a defense project that aims to protect, but also an empowerment project that aims to prepare members of the public to understand and analyze media messages and contents that surround them. It is also about creating an audience who can be producers as well as consumers. Media education skills have become essential skills for individuals of all ages. International organizations, especially UNESCO, have recognized the importance of media education to prepare young people to live in a world of power, image, sound and word (Grizzle, 2016). This indicates that the media as an institution in the society is an influential authority on values, beliefs, attitudes and practices in various aspects, economically, socially and culturally. As a result, the need for media education has become increasingly urgent, as it plays a vital role in developing conscious, responsible and engaged citizens who actively

contribute to national identity. Media education equips individuals with essential skills – such as critical, creative and scientific thinking – that enable them to form independent judgments about media content and its production (Šuminas & Jastramskis, 2020: 232-236). While combating disinformation and hate speech is challenging, especially on social media, raising awareness and encouraging source verification can help limit their spread. Media organizations also have a role to play.

6. Future research

Considering the above results, several directions for future research can be suggested to deepen our understanding of media education and its impact. These may include the following:

1. Longitudinal studies on media literacy and behavior change.
2. Impact of parental involvement in media education.
3. Exploring the role of social media platforms in spreading disinformation.
4. Media education across socioeconomic backgrounds.
5. Exploring the effectiveness of media literacy campaigns. Experts suggested national awareness campaigns to promote media literacy. Research could evaluate the effectiveness of such campaigns.
6. Gender differences in media consumption and critical engagement. The present study highlighted gender-based differences in media use patterns; future studies could investigate how these gendered patterns impact media literacy needs and how educational programs can be designed to engage both genders in critical media consumption and combat misinformation.
7. Digital privacy and security awareness. Given the increasing concerns about digital privacy, especially among youth, research could focus on the role of media literacy programs in enhancing awareness about digital security and privacy risks. This could include exploring how students understand and apply concepts of data privacy, identity theft and cyberbullying, and whether they are equipped with the skills to protect themselves online.
8. Assessing the impact of media literacy on attitudes toward media bias.

By addressing these areas, future research can contribute to the development of more effective media literacy strategies, help policymakers and educators refine their approaches, and ultimately promote a more media-savvy, critical, and responsible public in the digital age.

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The architecture of misleading: How journalists spread inaccurate information on digital platforms

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Abstract

Drawing on a semi-systematic review and a qualitative analysis of posts on Facebook and Instagram between November 2023 and March 2025, the article identifies several subtle practices through which news outlets mislead audiences, even when they can reasonably anticipate that these strategies will confuse typical users: (1) digitally manipulated images that fabricate or exaggerate threats; (2) authentic but decontextualised photographs that invite false associations; (3) emotional clickbait pairings of headlines and visuals in which corrective information is relegated to lengthy captions; and (4) ambiguous or omissive headlines that rely on pragmatic implicatures rather than explicit falsehoods. The analysis shows that journalistic disinformation on social media is often produced through editorial choices aligned with platform logics of visibility and engagement. Understanding these practices is key to rethinking media accountability in digital environments where most users engage only with headlines, thumbnails and brief snippets, rather than with full articles.

Keywords: disinformation; misinformation; journalism; social media; visual communication; clickbait; editorial practices

Resum. *L'arquitectura d'allò enganyós: com els periodistes difonen informació inexacta a les plataformes digitals*

A partir d'una revisió semisistemàtica i d'una anàlisi qualitativa de publicacions a Facebook i Instagram entre novembre de 2023 i març de 2025, l'article identifica diverses

pràctiques subtils mitjançant les quals els mitjans informatius enganyen les audiències, tot i que poden anticipar raonablement que aquestes estratègies confondran els usuaris habituals: 1) imatges manipulades digitalment que fabriquen o exageren amenaces; 2) fotografies autèntiques però descontextualitzades que conviden a associacions falses; 3) combinacions emocionals de titulars i imatges en les quals la informació correctiva es relega a peus de foto extensos; i 4) titulars ambigus o amb omissions que depenen d'implícacions pragmàtiques més que no pas de falsedats explícites. L'anàlisi mostra que la desinformació periodística a les xarxes socials sol produir-se a través de decisions editorials alineades amb les lògiques de visibilitat i compromís de les plataformes. Comprendre aquestes pràctiques és clau per replantejar la rendició de comptes dels mitjans en entorns digitals on la majoria dels usuaris només interactuen amb titulars, miniatures i textos breus, i no pas amb els articles complets.

Paraules clau: desinformació; informació errònia; periodisme; xarxes socials; comunicació visual; pescaclics; pràctiques editorials

Resumen. *La arquitectura de lo engañoso: cómo los periodistas difunden información inexacta en las plataformas digitales*

A partir de una revisión semisistemática y de un análisis cualitativo de publicaciones en Facebook e Instagram entre noviembre de 2023 y marzo de 2025, el artículo identifica varias prácticas sutiles mediante las cuales los medios informativos engañan a las audiencias, aun cuando pueden anticipar razonablemente que estas estrategias confundirán a los usuarios habituales: 1) imágenes manipuladas digitalmente que fabrican o exageran amenazas; 2) fotografías auténticas pero descontextualizadas que invitan a asociaciones falsas; 3) combinaciones emocionales de titulares e imágenes en las que la información correctiva se relega a pies de foto extensos; y 4) titulares ambiguos u omisivos que dependen de implicaturas pragmáticas más que de falsedades explícitas. El análisis muestra que la desinformación periodística en redes sociales suele producirse a través de decisiones editoriales alineadas con las lógicas de visibilidad y compromiso de las plataformas. Comprender estas prácticas es clave para replantear la rendición de cuentas de los medios en entornos digitales donde la mayoría de los usuarios solo interactúan con titulares, miniaturas y textos breves, y no con los artículos completos.

Palabras clave: desinformación; información errónea; periodismo; redes sociales; comunicación visual; cebo de clics; prácticas editoriales

1. Introduction

Misleading information has become almost a built-in feature of today's social media environment. The very design of platforms—with their brief, fragmented and highly emotional content—favours the emergence and spread of misleading information, whether unintentional (misinformation) or intentional (disinformation). Not every post is misleading, but avoiding that outcome requires active curation and conscious editorial decisions that are often at odds with the incentives of speed, virality and engagement. News reports, memes, partisan commentary and outright propaganda all circulate in the same feeds, within interfaces optimised for rapid scrolling rather than careful scrutiny (Lewandowsky et al., 2017; García-Marín & Salvat, 2021). Recent

advances in generative artificial intelligence sharpen this problem by enabling the swift production of realistic synthetic images and videos, while at the same time generating widespread doubt about whether what appears on screen is “real” or machine-generated (Aïmeur et al., 2023; Wolff & Taddicken, 2024).

Crucially, however, misleading information are no longer confined to coordinated campaigns run by identifiable groups. They are increasingly embedded in the very dynamics of social platforms. The rapid, immediate circulation of content entails a high ethical responsibility: seemingly minor editorial choices about how to package and promote information can easily slip into patterns that mislead (García-Serrano et al., 2019; Iosifidis & Nicolli, 2020). Digital news outlets, in particular, often contribute to this environment through some forms of clickbait and engagement-driven strategies, fuelled by intense competition and the need to survive in the crowded cybersphere (Rogers & Niederer, 2020; Wu et al., 2019).

On one side, there are sophisticated disinformation operations supported by bots, dedicated websites and polarising narratives that are barely detectable for users with limited critical and digital skills (Kuo & Marwick, 2021; Uyheng et al., 2021). On the other, there is a subtler kind of misleading communication produced by those who are supposed to inform: journalists and news organisations (Ecker et al., 2014). In this latter case, misleading content arises not from fully fabricated stories, but from minimal edits, framing choices and dissemination tactics applied to otherwise real material by supposedly trustworthy actors such as digital news media. These practices can be conceptualised as a form of journalistic disinformation that is implicit rather than explicit, hard to detect for users, and easy for its authors to defend—since each individual element can be presented as technically accurate—while still having significant impact because audiences tend to attribute credibility to journalistic sources (Ecker et al., 2014; Lewandowsky et al., 2017).

Over the last decade, research on misinformation and disinformation has expanded rapidly in journalism and communication studies (García-Marín & Salvat, 2021; Lewandowsky et al., 2017; Uyheng et al., 2021). Much of this work has focused on the activities of political actors, trolls, bots or fringe communities, as well as on the design of fact-checking initiatives and platform governance (Aïmeur et al., 2023; Hassan et al., 2023; Iosifidis & Nicolli, 2020; Rogers & Niederer, 2020; Tandoc et al., 2020; Wu et al., 2019; Caled & Silva, 2022). In these accounts, professional news organisations are often treated as potential correctives to falsehoods or as targets of manipulation. Their own contribution to disinformation—especially through editorial decisions tailored to social media—has received, by comparison, much less systematic and theory-driven attention aimed at identifying the intentionally misleading strategies they employ.

This blind spot, in which there has been little clear theorisation and systematisation of when an informer misleads intentionally, as opposed to unin-

entionally misinforming, is important to address if we consider the continuing centrality of news brands in users' feeds (Allen et al., 2024). Despite a sustained crisis of trust in the media, fuelled by perceptions of partisanship, economic precariousness and past failures in accountability (Barredo-Ibáñez et al., 2022; Barredo-Ibáñez et al., 2024; Díaz-Cerveró et al., 2024; Weikmann & Lecheler, 2023), journalistic outlets remain key reference points for public debate and policy agendas (Hakhverdian, 2012; Wetts, 2020). Their posts carry an institutional authority that anonymous accounts lack. When they adopt misleading strategies, the resulting disinformation may therefore be especially influential.

In social media environments, disinformation does not always appear as straightforward lies or fabricated stories. It often operates through subtle manipulations of salience and context. These manipulations are particularly compatible with platform logics that reward novelty, emotion and conflict (Rogers & Niederer, 2020; Tandoc et al., 2020). Thus, disinformation can be seen not only as the product of malicious outsiders, but also as a side-effect of routine editorial practices adapted to the attention economy.

Starting from this premise, the present article explores how journalists mislead on digital platforms even when they work with real material. It approaches disinformation as an implicit outcome of specific framing strategies in social media news flows and asks: Through which concrete editorial and visual strategies do professional outlets produce misleading interpretations on Facebook and Instagram?

To address this question, the article combines a semi-systematic review of work on mis- and disinformation and visual communication with a qualitative analysis of selected posts published between November 2023 and March 2025. Instead of developing a full typology, it focuses on describing and illustrating several recurring practices: digital manipulation of images, decontextualised photographs, ambiguous or omissive headlines, and emotional click-bait with buried corrections. By focusing on detailed case studies, it seeks to advance debates on journalistic responsibility in platformed environments and to provide a basis for further empirical research.

2. Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative, exploratory design whose aim is to identify and describe subtle journalistic practices on social media that have disinformative effects. It combines a semi-systematic literature review with a case-based analysis of posts published on Facebook and Instagram.

2.1. *Semi-systematic literature review*

The first stage consisted of a semi-systematic review of the literature (Snyder, 2019). This approach is particularly suited to research fields that are fragmented and interdisciplinary—such as the study of misleading information

in digital journalism—because it allows for a structured yet flexible mapping of concepts, debates and findings across different domains.

The review focused on three main strands:

1. Definitions of misinformation and disinformation and their relevance for journalism, including work on intent, harm and corrective interventions (Fallis, 2015; Lewandowsky et al., 2017; Treen et al., 2020; Kim & Gil de Zúñiga, 2020; van der Linden, 2022).
2. Research on digital journalism and platform logics, such news consumption via social media and clickbait practices (Ireton & Posetti, 2018; Biyani et al., 2016; García-Serrano et al., 2019; Bergström & Jervelycke Belfrage, 2018; Ju et al., 2014; Wagner & Boczkowski, 2019; Welbers & Opgenhaffen, 2019).
3. Studies on visual communication and manipulation in news contexts, particularly the use of images in misleading or decontextualised ways (Ecker et al., 2014; Lee et al., 2024; Marwick & Lewis, 2017; Dan et al., 2021; Hameleers et al., 2022; Weikmann & Lecheler, 2023; Allen et al., 2024).

Searches were carried out mainly in Web of Science, Scopus, Google Scholar and Dialnet, prioritising publications in English and Spanish from 2010 onwards. In total, 48 publications were selected for in-depth analysis. After screening titles and abstracts, relevant full texts were examined to extract recurring concepts and mechanisms related to journalistic mis- and disinformation on social media.

2.2. *Qualitative analysis of social media posts*

The empirical component consists of a purposive sample of posts published on Facebook and Instagram by established news outlets between November 2023 and March 2025. The selection focused on posts that:

- sparked public controversy or debate about their accuracy or fairness;
- were discussed in fact-checking reports or other media coverage; or
- clearly illustrated strategies identified in the literature (e.g., ambiguous headlines, decontextualised images, emotional clickbait).

The core set of cases includes:

- A Facebook post by *La Razón* (Spain) about clashes between Colombian fans and Uruguayan players after the Copa América match of 11 July 2024.
- An Instagram card by *El Economista* (Spain) announcing an amnesty agreement between PSOE and Junts, accompanied by a photograph of Pedro Sánchez and Carles Puigdemont.

- An Instagram post by *El Tiempo* (Colombia) on a police intervention in Winter Haven, Florida, involving a woman and her three-year-old daughter (El Tiempo, 2025).
- Additional examples discussed in the literature, such as the *Chicago Tribune* headline about a doctor's death following COVID-19 vaccination (van der Linden, 2022; Allen et al., 2024) and a Spanish click-bait headline about a Madrid hospital allowing children's dogs (García-Serrano et al., 2019).

Each case was examined in context: the visual composition, headline and caption as displayed on the platform; the full article where available; and, when relevant, subsequent clarifications or corrections. The goal is not statistical generalisation but analytical illustration—showing how specific combinations of text and image can lead to disinformative interpretations.

3. Conceptual background: Disinformation, misinformation and platform logics

3.1. Misinformation and disinformation

Research on digital mis- and disinformation is often complicated by conceptual ambiguity. In journalistic contexts, the terms are sometimes used interchangeably, which obscures important ethical and analytical distinctions (Marwick & Lewis, 2017; Allen et al., 2024; van der Linden, 2022).

Following Fallis (2015), disinformation is understood here as representational content—true or false—that is created and disseminated with the intention to mislead. It is harmful because it is “likely to lead to false beliefs” (p. 406) and because it is designed to distort audiences’ understanding of reality. Misinformation, by contrast, refers to inaccurate or misleading content that circulates without such intent, often as a result of error, negligence or insufficient verification (Treen et al., 2020).

Kim and Gil de Zúñiga (2020) propose the broader category of *pseudoinformation* to capture both phenomena, given that, in practice, audiences may experience similar harms regardless of intent. Yet the distinction remains crucial in journalism, where professional norms and accountability are at stake. Unintentional mistakes can in principle be corrected and prevented through better routines; deliberate disinformation involves a conscious violation of journalistic duties.

On social media, discerning intent is especially challenging. However, when outlets adopt strategies that they can reasonably expect to mislead typical users—such as pairing a sensational headline with a decontextualised photo and burying key clarifications deep in the text—it is plausible to treat these decisions as disinformative practices, even if individual journalists might insist on the technical accuracy of each element.

3.2. Journalism, platform logics and framing

Classical theories of agenda-setting emphasise how news outlets influence which issues are perceived as salient by the public (McCombs, 2006). In the platform era, this power is partly reconfigured by algorithmic ranking and by users' own sharing practices, but professional media organisations continue to play a central role in producing and legitimising information (Bolsen et al., 2014; Ireton & Posetti, 2018; Kreiss, 2021).

Social media introduce at least three relevant constraints for journalistic communication:

1. Fragmentation of texts. Articles are typically promoted through short posts that combine an image, a headline and, at most, a brief caption. Many users decide whether to click based solely on this fragment, and a large proportion never read the full article (Ecker et al., 2014; Lee et al., 2024).
2. Metrics and engagement. Visibility is determined partly by interactions such as likes, comments and shares. Content that triggers strong emotions—indignation, fear, admiration—tends to perform better, creating pressure to adopt more dramatic framings (Rogers & Niederer, 2020; Tandoc et al., 2020).
3. Visual primacy. Images and thumbnails function as attention hooks. They are processed rapidly and can powerfully shape interpretation before any text is read (Dan et al., 2021; Weikmann & Lecheler, 2023).

To understand how these dynamics can lead to misleading outcomes, it is useful to draw on framing theory. Entman (1993) defines framing as the process of selecting certain aspects of perceived reality and making them more salient in a text to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation or treatment recommendation. Frames shape which cognitive schemas are activated and how events are interpreted: Vincent-Price and Powers (1997) show that framing effects arise when message structure and content activate particular considerations, while Cacciatore et al. (2015) emphasise that news not only conveys facts but also triggers pre-existing knowledge structures. Under social media logics, these frames can be strategically selective in ways that are likely to mislead—for example, when headlines and images magnify dramatic elements, when archive photos are reused without context, or when key qualifications are relegated to places where few users will see them (Ecker et al., 2014; Pinto-Garzón, 2025). Within this environment, editorial decisions about cropping, colour, layout, wording and placement acquire heightened importance. The next section examines how these decisions materialise in specific cases of journalistic disinformation on Facebook and Instagram.

4. Subtle journalistic disinformation practices on social media

4.1. Fabricated visual details

In July 2024, the Spanish newspaper *La Razón* published a Facebook post about the confrontation between Uruguayan players and Colombian fans following a Copa América match. The headline referred to a “brutal brawl with knives,” and the accompanying image showed a Colombian supporter in a yellow national-team jersey apparently raising a knife above his head in a threatening gesture (Figure 1).

Figure 1. False news report from *La Razón*



Source: *La Razón* [Facebook post], July 11, 2024.

Later, alternative versions of the same photograph circulated, revealing that the knife had been digitally added: in the original, the fan's raised hand was empty (Figure 2). The manipulated image thus introduced a weapon that was never present in the scene. The alteration visually supported the textual claim that fans were armed with knives, escalating the perceived gravity of the confrontation and reinforcing stereotypes about violent supporters (La Razón, 2024; Verdezoto, 2024).

Figure 2. Unedited Photograph

Source: Verdezoto (2024).

From a disinformation perspective, this case is straightforward: a fabricated visual element transforms the meaning of an otherwise real event. While there were indeed clashes in the stadium, the addition of a knife shifts the story from spontaneous scuffles to an armed attack. For many users, the doctored photograph—encountered quickly while scrolling—may become the primary memory of what happened.

The ethical problem is deeper than a technical breach of photojournalistic norms. It lies in the deliberate choice to publish an image that radically intensifies the narrative of violence in a way that aligns with a sensational headline and with engagement-driven platform incentives. In social media environments where corrections, if they occur, rarely reach all those exposed to the original post, such manipulations have lasting disinformative effects.

4.2. *Decontextualised archive images: El Economista's amnesty card*

Not all visual disinformation involves altering pixels. Authentic photographs can become misleading when they are reused without adequate context. On 9 November 2023, *El Economista*, a Spanish economic newspaper, posted an Instagram card announcing that PSOE and Junts had reached an agreement on the amnesty law and unlocked Pedro Sánchez's investiture. The visual featured a large block of text alongside a photograph of Pedro Sánchez shaking hands with Carles Puigdemont, leader of Junts per Catalunya (El Economista, 2023) (Figure 3).

At the time, however, no recent in-person meeting between the two politicians had been reported. The image was an archive photo taken in 2016. Some users, confused by the apparently “too perfect” picture, speculated in

Figure 3. Instagram Post by *El Economista*

Source: *El Economista* [Instagram post], November 9, 2023.

the comments that it had been generated by AI. In a reply, the outlet clarified that the photograph was real but old. Neither the Instagram post nor the linked article mentioned the date or explained the origin of the image, and the article itself did not reproduce the photo (Julbe, 2023).

This is a clear instance of decontextualisation. The photograph is technically accurate, yet its combination with the headline on a card strongly implies a recent handshake sealing the amnesty deal. For users unfamiliar with the political timeline, the most natural inference is that Sánchez and Puigdemont had just met to finalise the agreement.

The problem here is not merely an oversight. In a design culture where images are carefully chosen to reinforce textual messages, omitting the date of an archive photo is a meaningful choice. It allows the outlet to capitalise on the symbolic power of a handshake image while preserving the ability to claim, if challenged, that nothing “untrue” was said. On a platform like Instagram, where the card may circulate independently from the full article, this strategy effectively functions as disinformation by association¹.

1. The reference list includes the links to the cases discussed. Some of these were previously presented at the *International Conference on Communication and Applied Technologies (ICOMTA) 2025*.

4.3. *Ambiguous headlines and omission-based clickbait*

Another recurrent pattern in journalistic disinformation on social media concerns the use of headlines that rely on implicatures and omissions rather than explicit false statements. These formulations are particularly potent on platforms where headlines often appear alone in previews or cards. A widely discussed example is the *Chicago Tribune* headline analysed by van der Linden (2022) and Allen et al. (2024): “Healthy doctor dies two weeks after getting COVID vaccine; CDC investigating why.” The sentence is factually correct: the doctor did die, and the CDC did investigate. Yet the temporal juxtaposition invites readers to infer a causal link between the vaccination and the death, despite the lack of evidence. On platforms where the headline circulates independently of the full article, this implication can fuel vaccine hesitancy even if the body text contains disclaimers.

García-Serrano et al. (2019) offer another illustration from Spanish journalism: a headline proclaiming that a “Madrid hospital opens its doors to children’s dogs.” The phrase suggests that dogs are now generally allowed inside the hospital. Only within the article does the outlet specify that visits are tightly restricted to one hour per week, under strict safety and hygiene conditions. According to Biyani et al. (2016), such formulations fit within omissive or erroneous clickbait, where key contextual details are left out of the headline even though they fundamentally alter the story.

These examples resonate with classical pragmatics: readers assume, under the cooperative principle (Grice, 1991), that journalists choose the most relevant and informative wording. When essential constraints (such as “under strict conditions” or “no causal link has been established”) are omitted, the default inference is that the event occurred in a strong, unqualified form.

On social media, where users often encounter only the headline or share articles without reading them, these omissions effectively produce disinformation. The mechanism is especially insidious because, from a legalistic standpoint, the outlet can argue that the wording is not strictly false—only “incomplete.” For audiences, however, the practical outcome is the formation of inaccurate beliefs.

4.4. *Emotional clickbait and buried clarifications: El Tiempo’s police post*

A further pattern involves the pairing of emotionally charged headlines and visuals with partial explanations that are placed where few users will see them. An Instagram post by *El Tiempo*, a major Colombian newspaper, illustrates this mechanism (El Tiempo, 2025). The post shows a capture from a surveillance-style video recorded in Winter Haven, Florida: a police officer stands next to a small child lying on the pavement, which is encircled by a prominent red graphic (Figure 4). That frame is used as the main image of the post. The overlay text states: “Policía en EE. UU. mantuvo a niña de tres años en el suelo mientras requisaba a su mamá” (‘Police officer in the U.S. kept a three-year-old girl on the ground while searching her mother’).

Figure 4. Instagram Post by *El Tiempo*

Source: *El Tiempo* (2025).

The framing suggests a scenario of explicit police abuse: an officer forcing a toddler to lie on the ground during a search. However, the long caption that accompanies the post on Instagram introduces an important nuance. In the sixth paragraph of eight, *El Tiempo* notes that, according to the official version, the child was not ordered to lie down; she simply imitated her mother's position during the arrest.

Several features make this composition disinformative:

- The headline is categorical and attributes agency to the officer ("kept the girl on the ground"), without indicating that this is contested.

- The captured frame is edited with a red circle around the girl, reinforcing the implication of coercion and heightening the emotional impact.
- The clarification appears only mid-way through a long block of text, accessible after clicking “see more”—a step many users will never take.

Psychological research on headline effects suggests that initial interpretations formed from titles and images tend to persist despite later corrections (Ecker et al., 2014). In this case, even readers who reach the paragraph about the official version may still retain the impression of deliberate abuse. For those who only see the image and headline, the story is unequivocal: a police officer forced a three-year-old to lie on the ground.

This strategy exploits the emotional charge of the scene and the high engagement potential of stories about police misconduct while maintaining a form of plausible deniability: the outlet can point to the buried paragraph as evidence that it presented multiple sides. In practice, however, the design of the post ensures that the disinformative framing is far more visible than the nuance.

5. Discussion

The cases analysed in this article, together with previous literature, point to several common features that help conceptualise disinformation as an implicit outcome of news framing on social media. First, disinformation often arises from the interaction between editorial intentions and platform architectures. Journalistic outlets seek visibility in algorithmically curated feeds where attention is scarce. Under these conditions, emotionally charged stories, dramatic images and simplified narratives are more likely to achieve reach and engagement. The resulting incentives favour strategies such as sensational cropping, archive photos without dates, categorical headlines and visually highlighted victims or perpetrators. Even if individual journalists do not explicitly aim to deceive, the cumulative effect of these practices is to produce systematically misleading impressions.

Second, the line between accurate reporting and disinformation is frequently drawn at the level of context rather than of isolated facts. In the *La Razón* case, a single fabricated detail—the knife—completely changes the meaning of the scene. In the *El Economista* and *Chicago Tribune* examples, the images and headlines are technically correct but stripped of crucial temporal or causal information. The *El Tiempo* post demonstrates how sequencing and placement (headline and thumbnail versus buried clarification) shape interpretation. These patterns suggest that disinformation can be understood as a function not only of what is said or shown, but of how and where it is presented within the architecture of the platform.

Third, generative AI intensifies, but does not create, the underlying vulnerabilities. The possibility of effortless synthetic imagery makes it easier to fabricate scenes like the knife-wielding fan. At the same time, it contributes

to a more general epistemic instability, where audiences doubt the authenticity of even genuine photographs. Yet the core disinformative mechanisms analysed here—decontextualisation, omission, emotional framing—are independent of AI and were already present in pre-AI digital journalism.

Finally, these findings have implications for debates on media accountability. Traditional models of journalistic responsibility focus on accuracy at the article level and on mechanisms such as corrections or ombudsman columns. On social media, however, much of the impact occurs at the level of posts that may be consumed without access to later clarifications. This suggests the need to rethink standards so that they explicitly address platform-specific practices: for instance, requiring that key contextual information (date, location, contested status of claims) appear in the visible part of headlines and captions, and enforcing clear labelling of archive images, illustrative montages and AI-generated content.

6. Conclusions

This article has argued that disinformation from digital news media should be understood not only as the work of fringe actors or fully fabricated stories, but also as an implicit outcome of routine, platform-oriented journalistic practices. The analysis of selected Facebook and Instagram posts by established outlets shows how editorial choices about images, headlines and captions can systematically mislead audiences even when the underlying material is real.

Across the cases, four recurring practices stand out: digitally manipulated images that fabricate or exaggerate threats; the reuse of authentic but decontextualised photographs that invite false associations; ambiguous or omissive headlines that rely on implicatures rather than explicit falsehoods; and emotional clickbait pairings of headlines and visuals in which key clarifications are buried in long captions. Together, these patterns illustrate how professional outlets can contribute to disinformation without inventing entire stories, by deploying framing strategies that exploit platform dynamics and user habits—rapid scrolling, headline-only reading and visual primacy—while preserving a surface of technical accuracy.

The study is limited by its small, purposive sample and by its focus on publicly visible posts, which prevents generalisations about prevalence and does not empirically assess audience effects. Future research could build on this work by developing coding schemes for large-scale analyses of news posts, by testing experimentally how different framings shape users' interpretations and trust, and by examining newsroom decision-making around social media strategies.

Despite these limitations, the analysis underscores the need to incorporate journalistic social media practices into any serious account of contemporary disinformation. As long as news outlets remain central actors in the digital public sphere, their responsibility cannot end with avoiding outright falsehoods; it must also include scrutinising how their choices about images,

headlines and captions may turn real events into misleading stories for platform audiences.

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Ressenyes

MALALANA UREÑA, Antonio (2024)

El cómic como fuente de información para investigar las crisis en Oriente Próximo (1948-2020)

Madrid: CEU Ediciones, 145 p.

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Las crisis en Oriente Próximo a través del cómic

El autor del libro, catedrático de Periodismo de la Universidad CEU-San Pablo y especialista en metodologías de investigación, profundiza en esta obra sobre la importancia del cómic como fuente de información e instrumento de interpretación de la realidad.

Malalana, un erudito con amplio conocimiento en estudios de medios y cultura visual, ofrece una mirada profunda y detallada sobre de qué modo el cómic ha servido como medio de expresión y reflexión social en Oriente Próximo. Un tema de candente actualidad (el ataque de Hamas en la Franja de Gaza del pasado 7 de octubre de 2023 y la respuesta del Gobierno de Israel es el último y dramático ejemplo) le sirve al autor para demostrar de qué manera el género del cómic se convierte en una más de las fuentes de información, al mismo nivel que el resto, para que la opinión pública conozca y entienda lo que acontece en aquella zona históricamente tan conflictiva.

El autor revisa acontecimientos como la guerra civil libanesa, la invasión soviética de Afganistán y la respuesta de los muyahidines, la revolución islámica en Irán, la primavera árabe y, por supuesto, los conflictos en Israel y Palestina.

Malalana muestra cómo el cómic, a menudo visto aún como un medio de entretenimiento, ha sido utilizado en Oriente Próximo como una herramienta poderosa para realizar la crítica social y política.

El libro recoge de manera exhaustiva (264 referencias) las obras de cómic más representativas publicadas durante el período analizado (desde la creación del Estado de Israel hasta 2020), comentadas y clasificadas por temas y géneros. Entre ellas, algunas de autores tan conocidos como Hergé, Marjan Satrapi, Riad Sattouf o Mana Neyestani, y, por supuesto, los conflictos en Israel y Palestina.

Con esta obra Malalana lleva a cabo una aportación imprescindible para los estudiosos del cómic, demuestra su gran eficacia como género periodístico, y a la vez proporciona herramientas para conocer e interpretar, a través de este género lexicopictográfico, los múltiples conflictos bélicos que se han producido desde la segunda mitad del siglo XX hasta la actualidad en Oriente Medio, una de las zonas más inestables del planeta.

Además, el libro aborda la evolución estilística del cómic en la región, mostrando cómo los artistas locales han adoptado y adaptado influencias de

estilos occidentales y orientales para crear una forma de arte única y representativa de sus culturas. El autor también examina la recepción de estos cómics, tanto a nivel local como internacional, señalando la creciente importancia de la industria del cómic en Oriente Próximo en el escenario global. El enfoque interdisciplinario de Malalana, que combina análisis cultural, histórico y artístico, proporciona una visión holística del tema. Este libro es una referencia valiosa para académicos interesados en la intersección de la cultura popular y la política, así como para aquellos que estudian la evolución de las formas narrativas en contextos no occidentales.

La profundidad de la investigación y el análisis de Malalana asegura que este libro se convierta en una obra de referencia en el estudio del cómic y la cultura visual.

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