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MEDIA COMPETENCIES IN COMMUNICATION PROGRAMMES AT LATIN AMERICAN UNIVERSITIES

Analysis and Contributions to Communication Education

VALIA VENEGAS-MEJÍA [1]
vvenegas@unfv.edu.pe
JOSÉ ESQUIVEL-GRADOS [2]
jesquivel@unjfsc.edu.pe
ZAYRA MERARI CUSTODIO-SEMINARIO[1]
2023008676@unfv.edu.pe
SEBASTIÁN SANTIAGO CÁCERES-CURAY[1]
2023008587@unfv.edu.pe
[1] Universidad Nacional Federico Villarreal, Perú
[2] Universidad Nacional José Faustino Sánchez Carrión, Perú

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ABSTRACT

The expansion of digital environments and media convergence is reshaping communication professions, requiring comprehensive media competencies that combine critical analysis, responsible production, and strategic use of ICT. This study examines how such competencies are embedded in the graduate profiles of Communication Sciences programmes at Latin American universities to identify advances, gaps, and opportunities to strengthen regional training. Using a qualitative hermeneutic–comparative design, we analysed selected curricula and conducted interviews with subject-matter experts to contextualise results. The analysis followed the media competency dimensions proposed by Ferrés and Piscitelli (2012). Findings indicate a transversal emphasis on production, language, and technology, whereas ideology/values and aesthetics are less consistently integrated. The study proposes guidelines to enhance graduate profiles and foster critical, inclusive, and context-relevant communication education in response to digital and media literacy challenges in Latin America.

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1. Introduction

The current information age, or digital age, is a historical period characterised by the rapid expansion of information and communication technologies, which have reoriented the way in which people in general, and communicators in particular, access, share and use increasingly abundant information. In the specific case of Communication Sciences students, their training implies that they must develop in an environment where the production, distribution and consumption of information occurs at an unprecedented speed, as a result of the use of digital technologies. These developments present opportunities and, at the same time, challenges for university students, who must adapt to innovative forms of communication and information processing.

As technologies and new media have caused a revolution in all areas of human activity, particularly in professional training in Communication Sciences, it is necessary to incorporate media competencies into the respective degree programmes, from a humanistic, pragmatic and transdisciplinary approach. According to the proposal made by the Commission of the European Communities (2007), university students must develop their ability to perceive, analyse and make use of media content, using it to communicate, express themselves, learn and inform themselves in a critical, participatory, democratic and ethical manner.

In the international university sphere, several studies have been conducted on competencies in university education. The case of competencies in degree programmes and graduate profiles, specifically media competencies, allows students to interact with the information disseminated in the media with a critical stance (Soto Ocampo, 2023; Pérez-Femenía & Iglesias-García, 2022). However, in the case of the Communication Sciences degree programme, these competencies are considered specific competencies and require special attention in terms of their development, which demands that students master knowledge, skills and attitudes geared towards the production, management and critical analysis of media content from different environments.

In Spain, Grijalba et al. (2022) conducted a research with the objective of recognising professional profiles in Audiovisual Communication Studies and identifying the training needs related to these types of training, combining scientific rhetoric, reports and studies with in-depth interviews with professionals and teachers with prestigious academic backgrounds. After conducting in-depth interviews and correlating the data collected with scientific literature on the training of audiovisual communicators, "it was found that the three areas analysed open up opportunities for employment and training, both in terms of including updated subjects in the degree programme and in offering specific degrees" (p. 99).

Complementing the topic of profiles, training conditions are important, as observed in the study of university students in Uruguay conducted by Terra Barral (2022), who concluded that "virtuality undermines academic training, because praxis and face-to-face interaction build affectivity, and this is a fundamental part of any collective creative process of audiovisual construction" (p. 304). These results pose a challenge in the training of media competencies in students with the implementation of appropriate methodologies aimed at achieving the graduate profile, within the framework of comprehensive training.

In Peru, a study by Mamani-Quispe et al. (2022) conducted with millennial students at the National University of San Agustín found that a greater media culture is necessary to use ICTs effectively, as the development of their media competencies was rated as average, which would affect optimal academic performance. These results highlight that various factors must be addressed within the framework of an evaluative culture of the university degree programme in general and the achievement of the graduate profile in particular.

In the case of Communication Sciences students, media competencies refer to the ability to critically analyse media content and information in different formats and platforms, and even to produce and manage them using various digital technologies, which involves assessing the credibility of information, understanding media codes and languages to create clear and concise messages, using language that is understandable, relevant and adapted to the needs and interests of the audience. In general, the problem with digital competencies in vocational training centres on the need to reinforce them in students in order to achieve adequate adaptation to the digital age because poor development could exclude them from learning opportunities.

Specifically, the development of media competencies is fundamental in university education and involves the design and implementation of curricular proposals and a commitment to teaching practices that enable students to take on the challenges of interacting with information and audiovisual products in the media in an adequate manner, considering that media literacy is significant for creating a more competitive and participatory knowledge economy to optimise public services and improve the quality of life of the audience (Commission of the European Communities, 2007; Pérez-Femenía & Iglesias-García, 2022).

The analysis of media competencies is based on the principles of Ferrés & Piscitelli (2012) and Ferrés (2007), authors that take into account various dimensions of media competencies: language, technology, reception and interaction, production and dissemination, ideology and values, and aesthetics, which constitute the synthesis of the contributions made in a study with 50 experts of various nationalities. This type of proposal is relevant considering the changes taking place in the media and media education. Marín-Gutiérrez et al. (2019) emphasise that media competencies must be integrated into university curricula in order to build communication skills and develop problem-solving abilities, considering that advances in ICTs should not divert attention away from media management and innovation.

Media competency, according to Ferrés & Piscitelli (2012), is the "ability to interact critically with media messages produced by others, and to be able to produce and disseminate one's own messages" (pp. 77-78); while Romero Rodríguez et al. (2019) state that: "Media competencies are a set of skills that every individual should possess in order to consume and produce digital and media information critically and analytically" (p. 346). Besides, Ríos Hernández et al. (2022) state that: "Media competence involves the mastery of knowledge, skills and attitudes geared towards the production, management and analysis of media content with and from diverse environments that foster critical thinking" (p. 245).

Mateus et al. (2019), with regard to the media competencies that should give autonomy to the individual, present an adaptation of the dimensions proposed by Ferrés and Piscitelli (2012), considering them to be a benchmark in the field of media competencies: language is the ability to interpret and evaluate different codes of representation and the role they play in a message; technologies involve understanding the role that ICTs play in society; interaction is the knowledge of the implications of non-compliance with rules and the attitude towards such situations; aesthetics means the sensitivity to recognise a production that does not meet minimum quality requirements; ideology and values are the ability to assess the reliability of information sources from which critical conclusions are drawn; and production and dissemination involves knowledge of factors that subject productions to industry constraints.

With regard to the university bibliographic material commonly used in Communication Sciences programmes, which was analysed based on the media competencies dimensions of Ferrés and Piscitelli (2012), it was found that the ideology and values dimension is more frequent, while at the other extreme is the aesthetic dimension (López-Romero & Aguaded-Gómez, 2015); something that should receive preferential attention considering that communicators should receive a solid humanistic education. These results show that there is no homogeneous treatment in the bibliographic material about the dimensions of media competencies, which are considered by the authors.

In the case of the Communication Sciences curricula, competencies must respond to social and labour demands, in a society marked by international guidelines, such as the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) proposed by the United Nations (UN), such as achieving SDG 4: Quality Education, since education is crucial to achieving other SDGs, "helps reduce inequalities" and "live a healthier and more sustainable life". At the national policy level, as in the case of Peru, the study is part of the "National Education Project - PEN to 2036: The Challenge of Full Citizenship", the Strategic Plan for National Development (PEDN) to 2036 and the Country Vision to 2050.

The global and local public policy scenario provides a framework for designing and innovating curricular competencies, and media competencies in particular are decisive for achieving success in the academic and professional training of future communicators, considering that they are geared towards enabling students to access and critically evaluate information, optimise communication and socialise in virtual environments, focusing on creative problem solving, and, in the case of graduates and degree holders, optimise their employability. Therefore, integrating media and information literacy into the curriculum is key to educating citizens who are critical and committed to sustainability (Lan-Nguyen & Zarra-Nezhad, 2023).

Poor development of media competencies implies a decrease in the ability to interact critically with the media, which is a problem in media education in today's information society. Hence, the need to analyse the media competencies (Mateus et al., 2019) that characterise today's communicators and that play a decisive role in learning in the training process (Grijalba et al., 2022; Soto, 2023); analysis of the graduate profiles of curricula and the opinions of academic experts. Therefore, it is important to know how media competencies are integrated into the curriculum of Communication Sciences programmes at Latin American universities according to accreditation standards set by accrediting bodies.

As can be seen, the digital age is characterised by a series of technological, social, cultural, educational and other changes. This process has led to changes in the habits of internet users in terms of the use and consumption of information and technological tools, which have gradually adapted to their needs and interests. In this context, it is worth analysing a key element of Communication Science curricula, based on the following question: How are media competencies integrated into the graduate profile in Communication Science degree programme at Latin American universities?

Answering this question involves analysing media competencies in the graduate profiles of Communication Science degree programmes at Latin American universities; specifically: a) describing the media competencies present in the graduate profiles of Communication degree programmes at Latin American universities; b) comparing the educational approaches to Communication Science between different universities in the region; c) analyse experts' perceptions regarding the incorporation of media competencies in the aforementioned degree programmes; d) identify emerging trends for curricular innovation in Communication Sciences degree programmes. In this way, the results of the study in the regional context allow us to propose contributions that can be considered in the short and medium term in curricular innovation, in terms of graduate profiles.

2. Methods

The study was conducted using a qualitative approach (Paramo Reales, 2020) and seeks to understand how media competencies are presented in the graduate profiles of Communication Sciences degree programmes at Latin American universities. A phenomenological-hermeneutic design was used (Flick, 2018; Gómez Briceño, 2023) was used, as the opinions and analysis of the graduate profiles by eight experts in curriculum, digital culture, communication, educommunication specialists, media literacy and university education in Communication Sciences were considered, and an attempt was made to characterise them, identifying patterns, challenges and opportunities for improvement.

The sample of Communication Sciences degree programme from various universities and participants in the study was non-probabilistic (Hadi et al., 2023), with intentional or theoretical sampling (Vásquez Ramírez et al., 2023), as the plans and subjects involved were selected from different contexts, the number of which depended on the saturation of categories (Esquivel-Grados, 2025; Sánchez Gómez et al., 2012).

Data collection techniques were used for documentary analysis: Review of plans, semi-structured interviews with experts to learn about perceptions of the media competencies of the degree programmes' graduate profiles. The instruments associated with the techniques were: A document analysis guide, to examine the graduate profiles of the degree programme, and a semi-structured interview guide, to gather the opinions of experts on the subject. To ensure validity and reliability, data and researcher triangulation was used (Carvajal et al., 2023; Martínez Miguélez, 2006). Validity tests were also carried out on categories and reliability associated with the selection of sample participants.

The design of the aforementioned data collection instruments took into account the dimensions of media competencies: language, technology, reception and interaction, production and dissemination, ideology and values, and aesthetics (Ferrés & Piscitelli, 2012). Meanwhile, data collection was carried out in two stages, considering that the instruments applied were redesigned as the data were collected and analysed. Data analysis followed a cyclical process of deep understanding involving interaction between the participants' discourse and the researchers' interpretation, where the route is from the parts to the whole and from the whole to the parts through a hermeneutic circle, which involves examining the parts of the discourse in detail, developing codes and patterns, reordering them and continuing with constant reflection to arrive at a complete and coherent interpretation (Gibbs, 2024).

3. Results

The selection of the Communication Sciences degree programme at Latin American universities was made based on inclusion and exclusion criteria.

Inclusion criteria:

- Geographical location: Universities located in Latin American countries.
- Accreditation: The Communication Sciences programme must be accredited by a recognised national or international entity (CNA Chile, SINEACE Peru, among others.).
- Current academic offering: The programme must be currently active and admit new students.
- Access to public information: Availability of graduate profiles, degree programme and educational objectives online.
- Institutional diversity: Must include public and private universities to ensure representativeness of the regional higher education system.
- Ranking: The university must be among the top-ranked institutions in its country.
- Exclusion criteria
- Accreditation: Programmes without current accreditation or in the process of suspension.
- Access to information: Universities with limited public documentation on their communication programmes.
- Specific programme: Institutions focused exclusively on technical areas or with a limited focus on journalism, without a broader communication dimension.
- Validity: Programmes that are closed or have a closing date in the near future.
- Age: New universities (less than 10 years old) without external evaluation.

Table 1. Final selection of universities with Communication Sciences study programmes

Country	Type	Accrediting institution*	Justification
Peru	Public	SUNEDU/ SINEACE	Academic benchmark, critical-humanistic approach.
	Private		Solid track record, detailed graduate profile, critical and interdisciplinary approach.
Mexico:	Public	COPAES	Flagship programme, extensive academic output and regional impact.
Colombia	Public	CNA	Programme with a focus on research, community communication and comprehensive training.
Argentina	Public	CONEAU	Academic benchmark, critical cultural approach, strong tradition in media and communication.
Ecuador	Private	CACES	Focus on corporate and digital communication, access to the degree programme and professional profile.
Chile	Private	CNA	Solid track record, detailed graduate profile, critical and interdisciplinary approach

Note: (*) Name of the accrediting body: SUNEDU (National Superintendency of Higher University Education); SINEACE (National System for the Evaluation, Accreditation and Certification of Educational Quality); COPAES (Council for the Accreditation of Higher Education); CNA (National Accreditation Council); CONEAU (National Commission for University Evaluation and Accreditation); CACES (Council for Quality Assurance in Higher Education)

Source: authors' elaboration, 2025

It is important to consider the degree programmes of universities that have undergone professional training quality assessment processes. In other words, accreditation guarantees “effective assessment of student progress and achievement of the graduate profile, actions to collect and analyse information, monitor and review results, and manage quality” (SINEACE, 2025, p. 8). Educational quality at the university level responds to terms such as change, innovation, and improvement, which are the actions necessary to achieve the mission's objectives. In this sense, accreditation is oriented towards the pursuit of a culture of quality and continuous improvement in universities.

Table 2. Presentation of key competencies in the graduate profile for Communication Sciences programmes at Latin American universities

University	Country	Key competencies in the graduate profile (summary)
UN1	Peru	Ability to synthesise, critique and analyse social and communication phenomena. Effectively researches and produces information and communication Organises, plans and directs communication projects.
UP2	Peru	Researches social communication Connects actors in the public sphere Constructs communication discourses Manages communication processes Applies communication technologies Acts ethically.
UN3	Mexico:	Identifies, analyses and diagnoses communication processes. Designs, produces and evaluates communication products. Leads innovative strategies with critical thinking. Integrates diverse theoretical and methodological knowledge. Manages communication projects with leadership and ethics.
UN4	Colombia	Management and leadership skills in communication processes. Respect for principles such as democracy, plurality and social responsibility. Adequate decision-making in the field of communication. Creativity and initiative to take on new challenges. Analysis of cybercommunication and forecasting of new scenarios.
UN5	Argentina	Implements communication systems and organises media. Produces and interprets different types of messages. Conducts studies and research in social communication. Applies technology in the production and evaluation of messages. Advises on communication systems and processes.
UP6	Ecuador	Generates public relations and produces effective messages. Manages content on social media and digital campaigns. Communicates social responsibility projects. Protects the image and reputation of companies. Promotes effective communication within and outside organisations.
UP7	Chile	Researches and produces contextualised information in various formats. Interprets national and international reality and edits content with informative criteria. Practises journalism independently and safeguards press freedom. Critically analyses the processes and effects of public communication. Takes a humanistic perspective and social responsibility in their work. Continuously improves through reflection, critical analysis and specialisation. Collaborates in interdisciplinary teams, contributing a communicative perspective.

Note: Competency data summarised from university websites.
Source: authors' elaboration, 2025

In the comparative qualitative analysis, expert participants consider the following dimensions: common cross-cutting competencies for each curriculum, distinctive approaches by university, and observable tensions or gaps.

With regard to common cross-cutting competencies, various graduate profiles from university communication science degree programmes coincide on several key competencies, reflecting a common regional basis for the training of communicators:

- *Production of messages and communication content:* The profiles emphasise the ability to construct effective discourses adapted to different media and audiences.
- *Management of communication processes:* The planning and execution of communication strategies in public and private organisations is valued.
- *Critical thinking:* Attention is given to the development of the ability to analyse information objectively, questioning assumptions, evaluating evidence and identifying inconsistencies in order to reach well-founded conclusions and make informed decisions.
- *Research skills:* Research skills are explicitly highlighted as a central component of the profile.

- *Professional ethics:* Emphasis is placed on the ethical dimension, although with varying degrees of depth (democratic values, plurality, social responsibility, etc.); however, this is not the consensus among the profiles analysed, although it should be.

In terms of the distinctive approaches of the curriculum profiles, the analysis of the competencies of the graduate profiles of each university's curriculum reflects its institutional vision and national context:

- UP1: Responds to a hybrid training approach: *Humanistic-critical and pragmatic-professional*, balancing understanding and transformation of reality with action, performance and communication management.
- UP2: Integrates theoretical, technological, ethical and management competencies. Has a *balanced and interdisciplinary profile*.
- UN3: Highlights *theoretical-methodological integration* and innovative leadership. Emphasises the training of *strategic professionals*.
- UN4: Committed to *humanistic and critical training,* with a strong focus on democratic values, leadership and analysis of new information and communication technologies.
- UN5: Emphasises *institutional intervention* and technical production capabilities, as it has a more technical and applied approach.
- UP6: Excels in *corporate and digital communication*, market-oriented competencies and institutional reputation.
- UP7: Dominant *humanistic-critical* profile reflected in the defence of press freedom, social responsibility, reflection, interpretation and critical thinking, and understanding of social and cultural phenomena; and a complementary profile: *pragmatic-professional.*

Regarding observable tensions or gaps, the following can be observed in the graduate profiles of the degree programmes:

- Some universities, such as UP6, prioritise the corporate over the community or political, which may be an indicator of a *business-oriented approach*.
- Ethics is always present in all curricula, but only UP2 and UN3 explicitly address it as a *cross-cutting value* and not just as a professional standard.
- Some universities explicitly mention *interculturality* or working with *diverse audiences*, a key aspect in the region, as well as *social responsibility*, at a time when sustainability is being called for and inclusive media education should be education for diversity and inclusion through critical intercultural media literacy (Carrión et al, 2022; Melo-Pfeifer, 2022; Torres Carceller, 2022; Verón Lassa et al., 2025).

The analysis suggests that there is regional convergence around essential communication competencies (Rojas-Estrada et al., 2023; Romero Rodríguez et al., 2019), but each institution puts its own stamp on the programme, reflecting its academic tradition, political vision and sociocultural context. This allows us to consider a future typology of communication graduate profiles in Latin America, such as strategic-corporate, critical-humanistic, technological-practical, etc., as shown in Table 3:

Table 3. Comparative typology of training models in Latin American universities

Training model	University	Main focus	Key characteristics
Critical-humanistic	UP1 UP2-UN4 UP7	Ethical, reflective and socially committed education.	Emphasis on critical analysis, cross-cutting ethics, communication management in public and community contexts. Comprehensive training with a humanistic foundation.
Strategic-corporate	UP6, partly UN3	Communication in organisations, reputation and institutional image.	Focus on public relations, social marketing, production of persuasive messages and digital campaigns.
Research-academic	UP2-UN3-UN5	Development of scientific and methodological thinking.	Mastery of qualitative and quantitative methodologies, ability to design and execute research in social communication.
Technological-practical	UN1 UN5-UP6 UP7	Technical media production and ICT application.	Mastery of digital tools, audiovisual language, transmedia production. Focused on "communicational doing".

Training model	University	Main focus	Key characteristics
Political-communicational	UN4, partly UN3	Social transformation and analysis of the public sphere.	Communication for social change, focus on democracy, citizenship, plurality. Incorporation of critical analysis of power and the public sphere.

Note: Elaboration based on analysis of data from Table 2.
Source: authors' elaboration, 2025

In terms of methodological observations regarding training models, it can be seen that some universities combine two models (i.e., UP2: Critical-Humanistic plus Investigative-Academic). This typology allows training proposals to be segmented for comparative analysis, curriculum diagnosis or educational quality studies in communication. In the case of the political-communication model, although it is present in UN4, it is not strongly represented in all universities, which opens up opportunities for future programmes with a transformative approach.

Based on the dimensions of audiovisual communication competence by Ferrés (2007) and media competence by Ferrés & Piscitelli's (2012) , it is possible to identify the media competences that universities declare in certain Communication Sciences graduate profiles and that correspond directly to these dimensions, in line with Rojas-Estrada et al. (2023).

Table 4. *Comparative typology according to the main dimensions of media competences in the graduate profiles of Communication Sciences curricula at Latin American universities*

Dimensions	Summary of media competences in graduate profiles	Univ.
Media language	Constructs coherent and effective communicational discourses.	UP2
	Produces and interprets different types of messages.	UN5
	Generates public relations and produces effective messages.	UP6
	Designs, produces and evaluates communication products.	UN3
Technology	Applies communication technologies in the production and dissemination of content.	UP2
	Applies technology in the production and evaluation of messages.	UN5
	Manages content on social media and digital campaigns.	UP6
	Analysis of cybercommunication and forecasting of new scenarios.	UN4
Reception and interaction	Ability to synthesise, critique and analyse social and communication phenomena	UN1
	Connects actors in the public sphere	UP2
	Identifies, analyses and diagnoses communication processes	UN3
	Makes appropriate decisions in the field of communication	UN4
	Promotes effective communication within and outside organisations	UP6
	Interprets national and international reality and edits content with informative criteria.	UP7
	Critically analyses the processes and effects of public communication	UP7
	Continuously improves through reflection, critical analysis and specialisation	UP7
	Collaborates in interdisciplinary teams, contributing a communicative perspective	UP7
Production and dissemination	Effectively researches and produces information and communication	UN1
	Organises, plans and directs communication projects	UN1
	Manages communication processes in various organisations	UP2
	Designs, produces and evaluates communication products	UN3
	Implements communication systems and organises media	UN5
	Manages content on social media and digital campaigns	UP6
	Researches and produces contextualised journalistic information in various formats	UP7
Ideology and values	Acts ethically in professional practice.	UP2
	Manages communication projects with leadership and ethics.	UN3
	Respect for principles such as democracy, plurality and social responsibility.	UN4
	Communicates social responsibility projects.	UP6
	Practise journalism independently and safeguard press freedom.	UP7
	Take a humanistic perspective and social responsibility in your work.	UP7
Aesthetics	Creativity and initiative to take on new challenges.	UN4
	Involve an aesthetic component in “producing and interpreting messages...”	UN5
	Leads innovative strategies with critical thinking.	UN3

Note: Elaboration based on the analysis of data collected and the dimensions of media competence by Ferrés and Piscitelli (2012).
Source: authors' elaboration, 2025

In the previous table, the analysis of the competences has allowed them to be placed in a main dimension, but they are also related to other associated dimensions, according to the guidelines of Ferrés and Piscitelli (2012). Thus, for example, the dimension "effectively researches and produces information and communication" in the UN1 graduate profile is related to the associated dimensions "language" and "technology".

As can also be seen in the tabular summary above, which is the result of triangulating the findings of the experts and researchers, the graduate profiles emphasise the dimensions of "reception and interaction", "production and dissemination", and "ideology and values"; with "media language", "technology", and "aesthetics" being the least favoured, a result that is consistent to a certain extent with that of López-Romero & Aguaded-Gómez (2015); Neglecting "aesthetics" implies limited and unattractive communication production, with no capacity to design attractive, creative and persuasive messages, as well as reduced critical capacity in relation to visual discourses and a loss of competitiveness in digital and transmedia environments.

In the case of the "media language" dimension, which corresponds to those competencies related to constructing, interpreting or analysing messages; the "technology" dimension, which refers to those competencies associated with the use of digital tools and media for communication; the "reception and interaction" dimension, referring to the processes of interpretation, analysis and relationship with audiences and actors; with regard to the dimension of "production and dissemination", which corresponds to the creation, circulation, and management of messages or content; with regard to the dimension of "ideology and values", which corresponds to the ethics, responsibility, and social meaning of communication, it is observed in four of the five universities; while the "aesthetics" dimension, which refers to creativity, style and expressive quality in messages, is less frequent, as in the case of UN4: "Creativity and initiative to take on new challenges" or UN3: "Leads innovative strategies with critical thinking".

As can be seen, media competencies in graduate profiles are presented in a heterogeneous manner in the degree programmes of the various universities analysed, which may affect "the production, management and analysis of media content with and from diverse environments that foster critical thinking" (Ríos Hernández et al., 2022, p. 245). According to the findings of a study conducted by these authors in four Latin American countries among undergraduate students, the results showed that social media was used predominantly for colloquial language and limited content production, with an emphasis on leisure and personal satisfaction; however, there was evidence of growing use associated with informal learning, through the production of video tutorials, especially on YouTube. This implies the need to resort to digital and audiovisual literacy so that students use social media for educational purposes, turning them into educational spaces that encourage more student participation, discussion, and expression.

Based on the analysis of Table 2, which shows the competencies of the graduate profiles of Communication Sciences curricula at Latin American universities, as well as Tables 3 and 4 and the dimensions of media competence by Ferrés and Piscitelli (2012) (language, technology, reception and interaction, production and dissemination, ideology and values, aesthetics), and considering sustainability trends (Lan-Nguyen and Zarra-Nezhad, 2023), digitalisation, and the recommendations of Rojas-Estrada et al. (2023), media competences are proposed by updating the dimensions of the aforementioned authors that could guide the curriculum update, considering these competences as a cross-cutting component to address phenomena of emerging media systems, such as growing disinformation (Portugal Escóbar, 2021).

Table 5. Proposed media competencies for innovation in graduate profiles for Communication Sciences curricula.

Competency	Knowledge	Abilities	Attitudes
Competency in transmedia language and digital narratives	Principles of transmedia communication, digital narratives, audiovisual, multimedia and interactive languages.	Design and articulate messages in multiple languages and platforms; integrate visual, audio and textual codes for diverse audiences.	Creativity, innovation and adaptability to communicate in hybrid and global cultural settings.
Technological competency and sustainable innovation	Emerging technologies and their applicability in communication; principles of sustainability and digital eco-design.	Applying technologies in content production and management; evaluating the social and environmental impact of digital solutions.	Environmental and social responsibility; commitment to ethical and sustainable innovation.
Critical competency in digital reception and interaction	Reception theories, interaction on social media, media and digital literacy, disinformation and fact-checking.	Critically analyse messages and sources; identify fake news; participate in democratic and respectful digital interactions.	Critical thinking, ethics in digital communication, respect for diversity of opinion.
Competency in responsible content production, dissemination and management	Digital production and distribution strategies, network management, multi-platform communication, accessibility and media inclusion.	Produce and disseminate quality content tailored to diverse audiences; manage communication projects with social impact.	Social responsibility, sensitivity to cultural diversity, commitment to quality information.
Ethical and ideological competence in public communication	Professional ethics, ideologies and representations in the media, international regulatory frameworks for communication, responsible digital citizenship.	Detecting stereotypes, biases and values in media messages; applying ethical principles in communication creation and management; using information ethically.	Transparency, plurality, social responsibility and democratic commitment in communication.
Aesthetic and creative competence for social transformation	Aesthetic theories, creativity in communication, digital art and visual design applied to media education; augmented reality.	Designing innovative messages with aesthetic impact; integrating communication proposals that inspire social and cultural change	Artistic sensitivity, commitment to social transformation and promotion of cultural sustainability.

Note: Media competencies generated from the analysis of graduate profiles from Communication Sciences curricula at Latin American universities and the proposal by Ferrés and Piscitelli (2012).
Source: authors' elaboration, 2025

As can be seen, the analysis of the programme's graduate profiles by researchers and the opinions of curriculum experts has led to a proposal for media competencies, adapting the theoretical guidelines of Ferrés and Piscitelli (2012) to the demands of the current context, the UNESCO competency approach (2017), the 2030 Agenda, and the European digital literacy frameworks (DigComp and DigCompEdu) (European Commission, 2022; Redecker & Punie, 2017), allowing for alignment with international quality and accreditation standards, where media literacy from academia, among other aspects, addresses the reproduction of generative artificial intelligence tools that have intensified the risk and spread of digital disinformation (López-Borrull & Bermejo, 2025).

Within the framework of educational innovation, the learning of media competencies mediated by augmented reality should be considered an integrative content within the guidelines for the development of aesthetic and creative competence for social transformation, especially within the framework of critical media literacy (Murcia Rodríguez, 2025) and from interaction with information broadcast in the media with a critical stance (Ríos Hernández et al., 2022; Romero Rodríguez et al., 2019).

Media competencies, as a proposal to update the graduate profiles of Communication Sciences curricula, also respond to UNESCO guidelines (2023) that promote competencies for work and life, linking professional training with rapidly evolving employability. The proposal is that communication

education and technical and vocational training (TVET) contribute to the achievement of SDG4 goals related to "ensuring inclusive, equitable and quality education and promoting lifelong learning opportunities for all" and SDG8 goals aimed at promoting "decent work and economic growth"; This implies that sustainable lifelong learning should be promoted in university education, preventing uncertain transitions (Lan-Nguyen and Zarra-Nezhad, 2023).

4. Conclusions

The graduate profiles of the Communication Sciences curricula in Latin American universities that have been analysed share a common core of media competencies, focused on message production, communication management and critical thinking, reflecting a regional educational foundation. However, the diversity of institutional training approaches highlights both the richness and the tensions in training models, which implies the need to move towards the integration of cross-cutting competencies such as interculturality, sustainability, digital innovation and social responsibility in order to respond to current demands, where digital disinformation is increasing due to the reproduction of generative artificial intelligence tools.

The curricula of Communication Science programmes at the Latin American universities analysed include media competencies, which cover message production, communication process management, critical thinking and professional ethics; however, their formulation and level of integration vary from one university to another, reflecting heterogeneous curricular approaches that respond to institutional and national contexts.

A comparative analysis of the graduate profiles of the curricula identified different training models or approaches: critical-humanistic, strategic-corporate, investigative-academic, technological-practical, and political-communicational. This typology reveals a couple of trends: convergences in basic competencies and tensions linked to the weight given to corporate, ethical, or community issues.

Specialists agree that the inclusion of media competencies in graduate profiles is essential to respond to the challenges of the current digital age. However, they warn of the need to strengthen underdeveloped or unexplained dimensions, such as interculturality, technological innovation, mainstreaming ethics, social responsibility and research, which may affect the production, management and analysis of media content with and from different spaces that promote critical thinking.

The research confirms that there is a common regional basis for communication training, but also an opportunity to move towards the integration of media competencies geared towards digital competencies, social responsibility, interculturality, ethical citizenship and sustainability. These emerging trends make it possible to plan curricular innovations that respond to the 2030 Agenda and strengthen the quality of higher education in communication sciences in Latin America.

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