

# Communication research: differences between the Iberian Peninsula and Latin America

Investigación en comunicación: diferencias entre Península Ibérica y América Latina

Pesquisa em comunicação: diferenças entre a Península Ibérica e a América Latina

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**ABSTRACT** | Scientific publications are essential for disseminating knowledge and promoting science. This research aims to analyze, code, and compare 4,098 scientific articles in the area of communication, from the journals of the SJR-Scimago-Scopus-Communication, Q1, Q2 index of Ibero-America. The analysis was performed using a codebook in which five trained coders participated. As analysis parameters, the authors' gender (first and second author), their H-index, the number of authors per article, their internationalization, their competitive funding, the authors' preponderant publication regions, and the most frequent article typology were considered. The results of the comparative study show significant differences between the Iberian Peninsula and Latin America in the variables studied. In the former, publications are more competitive in terms of number of articles, number of journals, funding and internationalization. A higher H index is also observed in authors from this region. Regarding gender, Latin America shows a higher percentage of female authors who publish the articles in first and second place. The expansion and professionalization of Ibero-American scientific publications of impact, and the financing of research, are priority aspects to continue building and disseminating science in the area of Communication.

**Keywords:** communication studies; scientific publications; scientific journals; Ibero-American Academy.

## HOW TO CITE

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Resumen | Las publicaciones científicas son fundamentales para difundir el conocimiento y promover la ciencia. El objetivo de esta investigación es el análisis y el estudio comparativo de 4098 artículos científicos del área de comunicación de las revistas del índice SJR-ScimagoScopus-Communication, Q1, Q2 de Iberoamérica. Para ello, se realizó un estudio codificando todos los artículos publicados durante 11 años, desde 2009 a 2019 (inclusive) en las revistas seleccionadas. El análisis se realizó mediante un libro de códigos en el que participaron cinco codificadores entrenados. Como parámetros de análisis, se consideró el género de los autores (primero y segundo), su índice H, el número de autores por artículo, su internacionalización, su financiamiento competitivo, las regiones de publicación preponderantes de los autores y la tipología de artículos más frecuente. Los resultados muestran diferencias significativas entre las regiones de la Península Ibérica y Latinoamérica en las variables estudiadas. En la primera, las publicaciones son más competitivas en cuanto al número de artículos, el de revistas, el financiamiento y la internacionalización. Se observa también un índice H más alto en los autores de esta región. Respecto del género, América Latina muestra un porcentaje más alto de autoras que publican los artículos en primero y en segundo lugar. La ampliación y profesionalización de las publicaciones científicas iberoamericanas de impacto y el financiamiento de las investigaciones son aspectos prioritarios para continuar construyendo y difundiendo la ciencia en el área de comunicación.

Palabras clave: estudios de comunicación; publicaciones científicas; revistas científicas; academia Iberoamericana.

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RESUMO | As publicações científicas são essenciais para divulgar o conhecimento e promover a ciência. O objetivo desta pesquisa é a análise, codificação e estudo comparativo de 4098 artigos científicos na área de comunicação, provenientes dos periódicos do índice SJR-Scimago-Scopus-Communication, Q1, Q2. da Ibero-América. O estudo foi realizado codificando todos os artigos publicados durante onze anos, de 2009 a 2019 (inclusive) nos periódicos selecionados, levando em consideração o número de autores, gênero do primeiro e segundo autor, país de origem da pesquisa, índice h., metodologia utilizada no artigo, internacionalização das publicações de comunicação e financiamento ou não dos artigos, tendo em conta se este financiamento provém de projetos internacionais, nacionais ou regionais. Os resultados do estudo comparativo mostram diferenças significativas entre as regiões da Península Ibérica e da América Latina nas variáveis estudadas. Na Península Ibérica, as publicações são mais competitivas em termos de número de artigos, número de revistas, financiamento e internacionalização. Além disso, um índice h é observado maior em autores da região da Península Ibérica. Em relação ao gênero dos autores, a região da América Latina apresenta maior percentual de autoras do sexo feminino que publicam os artigos em primeiro e segundo lugar. A expansão e profissionalização das publicações científicas ibero-americanas de impacto e o financiamento da pesquisa são aspectos prioritários para continuar construindo e divulgando ciência na área da Comunicação.

Palavras-chave: Estudos de comunicação; Publicações Científicas; revistas científicas; Academia Iberoamericana.

Scientific journals are the main tool for disseminating knowledge and communicating studies and research results to the scientific community (Esparcia & Ostio, 2019; Ruiz Corbella et al., 2020) and are therefore an indicator of the level of development of science and research in a region. Global research in this field is still dominated by North America, although other regions are increasingly represented and diversity is growing (Walter et al., 2018). Scientific publications of importance from the Ibero-American region are augmenting, although, as stated in the Elcano Royal Institute report (Badillo, 2021) “despite the fact that more than 850 million people on four continents speak Portuguese or Spanish –11% of the world’s population– only 1% of the world’s indexed scientific output is published in these two languages” (p. 11).

With this in mind, this study will compare the results of research on articles published in impact journals in the field of communication in Latin American science, focusing on two major blocks: journals from the Iberian Peninsula and Latin American journals. Starting from the study of all articles published in scientific communication journals indexed in SJR-ScimagoScopus-Communication in 2018 in Q1 and Q2, the differences and similarities between the two regions are analyzed in a period of 11 years, between 2009 and 2019, in the Iberian Peninsula (Spain, Portugal) and in three Latin American countries (Brazil, Chile, and Mexico, which meet this criterion). The fact that the study spans a full 11 years makes it possible not only to analyze the differences between magazines on both sides of the Atlantic at a given time, but also to examine the similarities and differences in their development.

As Niles and colleagues (2020) note, publish or perish is the credo of academia in Western contexts and a necessity for the advancement of the academic careers of college teachers, who must publish mainly in high-impact journals. In the 1990s, communication studies in Latin America were described as a seminal field (Fuentes Navarro, 1992) and, in recent decades, the quantity and quality of its production has steadily evolved, approaching international standards (Piñeiro-Naval et al., 2021; Cabrera & Pardo, 2022; Codina et al., 2022).

Earlier comparative studies between the two regions date back to the year 2000. In this context, Jones (2000) analyzed the growth of digital communication research journals in the countries of the Iberian Peninsula and Latin America, with particular attention to Spain, Mexico, and Brazil. This growth is linked to the existence of communication faculties and, consequently, to the training of research staff.

However, this boom is not always accompanied by international positioning. The communication journals published in Latin America (Rogel-Salazar et al., 2017; Arroyave-Cabrera & Gonzalez-Pardo, 2022) are not represented in the scientific databases. Among other things, this makes it difficult for researchers in the region

to develop their careers in their language (Rogel-Salazar et al., 2017; Aguado-López, et al., 2018).

In the first 20 years of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, there is no Spanish-speaking country other than Spain that ranks among the most productive in the Web of Science's Social Sciences Citation Index database. Between 2010 and 2020, Brazil falls out of the top 25 (Repiso & Moreno Delgado, 2020), although according to various authors (Baladrón-Pazos et al., 2014; Saperas Lapiedra, 2018; Martínez-Nicolás et al., 2019; Gómez-Escalonilla, 2020), communication research in Spain has gradually consolidated and increased its rigor since the 1990s.

This lack of positioning also extends to researchers in Latin American academia. Another recent study (Castillo-Esparcia & Castellero-Ostio, 2019) analyzes the first edition articles published in 2016 and 2017 in the 10 main communication journals indexed in the Journal Citation Reports (JCR) of the Web of Science, without distinction of origin. Among the results, we find that authors from the study area are underrepresented, with only one article per year by a Spanish author, both written with authors of another nationality, and none from Latin America. Articles by researchers from Spanish, Portuguese and Latin American universities in high-impact journals are practically non-existent (Ganter & Ortega, 2019; Carpentier, Ganter, Ortega, & Torrico, 2020), and only 3.2% (14 out of 434) of Latin American journals are represented in Scopus (González-Pardo et al., 2020).

Other data also emerge from this study that are interesting as a reference for our analysis, such as the position of women compared to men in authorship, which has progressively improved, or the fact that co-authorship is the most widespread or the concentration of researchers in some Spanish regions such as Madrid, Catalonia and Andalusia (Caffarel et al., 2018). In terms of topics, health communication, social interaction and digital media stand out (Castillo-Esparcia & Castellero-Ostio, 2019).

On the other hand, other recent studies deal with the bibliometric study of these Latin American journals (Cabrera & Pardo, 2022), although the time period is somewhat shorter than the one used in our sample. One of the main findings of this research is the shift in emphasis from essayistic treatises to an empirical approach (Cabrera & Pardo, 2022).

Therefore, improving the international recognition of Latin American communication academy journals seems to be key to improving the editorial management of scholarly communication publications and establishing an observatory to monitor compliance with the quality criteria of said publications, as proposed by Chávez Sánchez (2020).

Due to the growing importance of publication in indexed journals for the evaluation of research performance, production has increased significantly in recent years, both in Spain and Portugal and in the Latin American countries analyzed. However, this increase in production has not been accompanied by greater dynamism among researchers; rather, the number of citations has decreased significantly (Álvarez Nobell & Castillo Esparcia, 2015). Knowledge of the dynamics and contexts that prevail in the Latin American academy will contribute to a better understanding of the limits and possibilities of dialog between different research traditions and their role in improving communication research in general (Waisbord, 2019) and promoting academic cosmopolitanism (Ganter & Ortega, 2019; Hanitzsch, 2019; Waisbord, 2015, 2019), both methodologically (Beck, 2006) and theoretically (Waisbord, 2015).

Researchers face the need to be accredited and academically successful, which has fostered a growing interest in publishing in indexed journals. In this context, Badillo (2021) highlights the impact of this imperative in our culture when he states that the “incentives created by merit review systems, which mainly reward researchers who publish in the most prestigious and highly rated journals in international indices, have clear consequences in many areas, but especially and clearly in linguistic and cultural diversity” (p. 42). This has made the Spanish journal system vulnerable, where “resultadism takes precedence over the quality of the results” (Repiso & Moreno-Delgado 2022, p. 11).

The community of communication researchers in the Latin American academic world constitutes a large group of scholars, as it is composed of researchers from Latin American and European countries (Spain and Portugal) who teach and conduct research in these countries. Analyzing empirical data on the production of this community will help us to deepen the understanding of the (dis)connections in the academic dialog between South and North and contribute to a better theoretical understanding of the mechanisms that enable or constrain the flow of research between different academic environments.

### Methodology

The selection criterion for the sample analyzed is based on the SJR-2018 indicator and ranking, *Comunicación-Communication*, in which the journals in this field belonging to the first and second quartiles, Q1 and Q2, were selected. In Spain, the following journals were included in the sample selection: *Comunicar*, *Profesional De La Información*, the *Revista Latina de Comunicación Social* and the journal *Comunicación y Sociedad* (Spain)-*Communication and Society*. In Portugal, the journal *Media and Communication*, and in Latin America the journals *Interface - Comunicação, Saúde, Educação* from Brazil, *Cuadernos.Info* from Chile and *Comunicación y Sociedad* from Mexico.

The unit of analysis for this study is all articles published in these journals between January 1, 2009 and December 31, 2019 inclusive, regardless of their language. A total of 4098 articles were analyzed, and these objects of analysis were coded by the members of the project, teaching and research staff from different Spanish universities. They were specially trained to code the codebook, with a 99% reliability check of the variables.

The following descriptive variables in the articles' publications were analyzed: author's identification, college of affiliation, country, number of authors, authors' origin and identification of authors' H indices, with the aim of following their scientific evolution and productivity in the publications during the analyzed time series.

Coding was performed between April 2020 and February 2021 by five trained coders, each assigned one or two journals from the sample, with proportional quotas. No intercoder reliability contrasts were conducted, as it was determined that the coding items in the codebook were not equivocal to the trained researchers.

Title	SJR	H Index	Total Docs (2018)	Total Docs (3 years)	Total Refs (2018)	Cites total (3 years)	Reference docs (3 years)	Referemes/ Docs (2 years)	Ref./Doc. (2018)	Country
Comunicar	0.851 Q1	45	40	120	1666	427	120	3.36	41.65	Spain
Profesional de la Información	0.601 Q2	33	122	298	4452	464	298	1.48	36.49	Spain
Revista Latina de Comunicación Social	0.509 Q2	21	76	213	3045	197	213	0.84	40.07	Spain
Communication and Society	0.331 Q2	19	59	132	2954	103	122	0.71	50.07	Spain
Media and Communication	0.444 Q2	25	64	117	2777	188	98	1.85	43.39	Portugal
Interface: Communication, Health, Education	0.443 Q2	22	164	340	4272	230	297	0.67	26.05	Brazil
Cuadernos.info	0.430 Q2	11	28	87	1343	56	83	0.67	47.96	Chile
Comunicación y Sociedad (México)	0.289 Q2	8	39	89	1135	39	79	0.38	29.1	Mexico

Table 1. Selection of high impact scientific journals in communication. Spain, Portugal and Latin America

Source: Own elaboration based on Scimago Journal and Country Rank, 2018 data (<https://www.scimagojr.com/journalrank.php>).

We then conducted a systematic mapping of published evidence (Grant & Booth, 2009; Gough et al., 2017; EPPI-Centre, 2018) using a comprehensive and strategic search methodology.

In this article we analyze the most relevant results comparing two groups of journals: on the one hand, those from Spain and Portugal and, on the other hand, those from Latin American countries. A comparative study was carried out on the articles and authors published in the journals indexed in the SJR- 2018 ranking of communication in the last decade, available in the repositories and web of Q1 and Q2 journals.

The proposed research hypotheses are:

H1. There are differences between both blocks of journals, with those from the Iberian Peninsula being the most competitive in the number of journals, publication of articles, financing and internationalization.

H2. Regarding authorship, scientific journals show a preponderance of male authorship in the time series compared to female authorship.

H3. The preponderant regions of publication of articles belong to those with the greatest presence of universities and research groups, with authors from countries such as Spain, Brazil, Mexico, Argentina, and Chile.

H4. The H index is higher in authors published in Spanish journals than in Latin American journals.

H5. The number of authors in statistical fashion in the corpus of articles is limited to one author in Latin American journals, being slightly higher in the Iberian Peninsula.

H6. In both groups, the vast majority of the articles do not have competitive sources of funding and, in addition, their levels of internationalization are also marginal.

H7. Most of the articles will present a methodological approach based on the scientific method, with a greater presence of essays in Latin American journals.

Within the methodology used, we proceeded to perform a dump in the research and statistical analysis tool Qualtrics, following a coding-identification book of the descriptive variables present in the article publications.

## Results

According to the Journal and Country Rank data (2020), Spain is the Latin American country with the most articles, namely 1301, followed by Brazil with 463 articles, which is just over a third of the articles registered for Spain. Despite its size, Portugal is the third largest country with 185 articles.



In the h-index, a measure of author productivity and quality, Spain is the country with the highest average with 80, followed by Portugal and Chile with 34. In the impact metrics, citations per document, the country with the highest average is also Spain with 0.52 (with four journals in the SJR Q1 and Q2 ranking), second place goes to Mexico with 0.43 (with one journal in the SJR Q2 ranking), and third place to Chile, with 0.35 (with one journal in the SJR Q2 ranking).

Using this data from Scimago Journal and Country Rank, we can make an initial differentiation between the two groups of countries: Spain and Portugal have a larger number of documents and a higher H-index.

The latter is also confirmed by the sample of this research, as we found five journals for the Iberian Peninsula (four from Spain and one from Portugal), compared to three for all Latin American countries (one from Brazil, another from Mexico, and a third from Chile). The difference is even greater if we look at the number of articles: 2826 in the journals from the Iberian Peninsula compared to 1260 in the Latin American journals.

If we look at the international panorama of the 1996-2020 time series, we can see that Spain is already in third place in the ranking of articles published worldwide, behind the United States and the United Kingdom and ahead of China. However, it cannot maintain this third place either in the H-index or in citations per article, where it is overtaken by Australia. These data confirm the increase in production that we have linked to the increasing, but recent, professionalization of communication researchers and the ANECA effect. This term is used in the Spanish context to refer to the increase in scientific production in Spain after the National Agency for Quality Assessment and Accreditation (ANECA, by its Spanish acronym) established a certain number of scientific publications in indexed journals as an essential requirement for academic accreditation (Alcaide, 2019).

One of the objects analyzed is the gender of the authorship of the articles in the time series. In this sense, the overall data of the series offer a practically even distribution in terms of the gender of the first author, with 50.76% of authors being male and 49.17% female, and three articles not defining the gender of authorship. When these results are broken down by the two geographical regions, the following graph shows that in the three Latin American journals, the majority of authors are women, accounting for 59.1% of first authors and 61.92% of second authors. In the Iberian journals, women make up 44.59% of first authors and 48.01% of second authors. In both cases, there is a difference of more than 15 points in favor of women in the Latin American journals. It would be worth investigating whether this greater presence of the female gender in Latin American journals corresponds to an active participation of women in publications or whether it is only limited to local journals.



	Gender	Latin America	Iberian Peninsula
First author	Male	40.41%	55.34%
	Female	59.51%	44.59%
	Another	0.08%	0.07%
Second author	Male	37.74%	51.94%
	Female	61.92%	48.01%
	Another	0.34%	0.05%

Table 2. Gender of article authors

Source: Own elaboration based on data from the coding of valid articles (n=4098).

Another objective of our analysis was to identify the regions with the highest number of publications in the journals with the highest impact in the field of communication, represented in the top two quartiles Q1 and Q2 of the SJR-Scopus in the 2018 ranking, which is in force in Latin America in 2019. Brazil is the country with the highest number of publications, taking into account the college of origin of the first author, with more than half of the publications, namely 58.41%. It is followed at a considerable distance by Mexico with 9.37%. Only two other regions reach or exceed 5%: Portugal (5.71%) and Chile (5%). In terms of Latin American academies as a whole, Spain is the leading region with 52.98% of publications; Brazil is in second place with 18.60% and Mexico in third place with 4.62%.

If we extend the analysis to the second author, we find that Brazil's lead is reinforced with 72%. The only other region with more than 5% is Chile (5.14%), followed by Mexico (3.77%), Portugal (2.97%) and Argentina (2.51%). In the Latin American academy aggregate, Spain remains in first place with 54.27%, followed by Brazil, which consolidates its second position with 22.68%, and Mexico with 3.14%. Although the three positions are maintained in terms of first author analysis, we see that Brazil's position is growing the most.

When analyzing the authorship of the articles, we are also interested in whether they were written by one or more authors and whether there are differences between the regions. In the three journals analyzed in Latin America, 30.89% of the articles are written by a single author and 29.53% by two authors. We can see that the proportion of articles written by a single author is slightly higher than in the journals in the Iberian Peninsula (29.74%) and that the sum of one and two authors is practically identical.

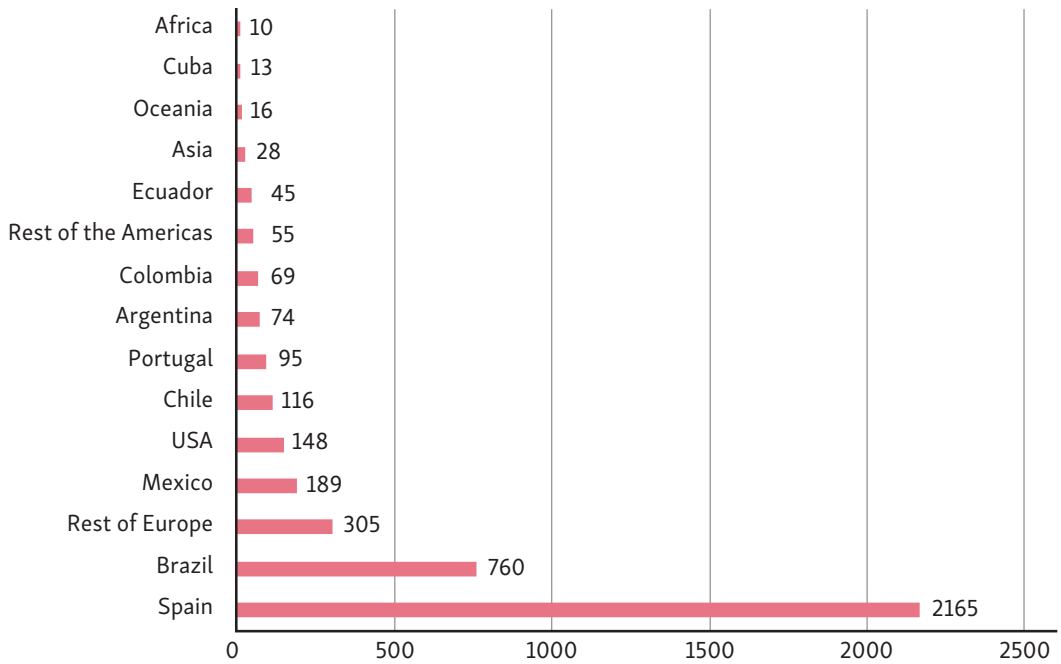


Figure 1. Latin American journals: comparison of the institution of origin of the first author. Comparison of Latin American and Iberian Peninsula journals

Source: Own elaboration based on valid coding of 4088 items with geographic identification.

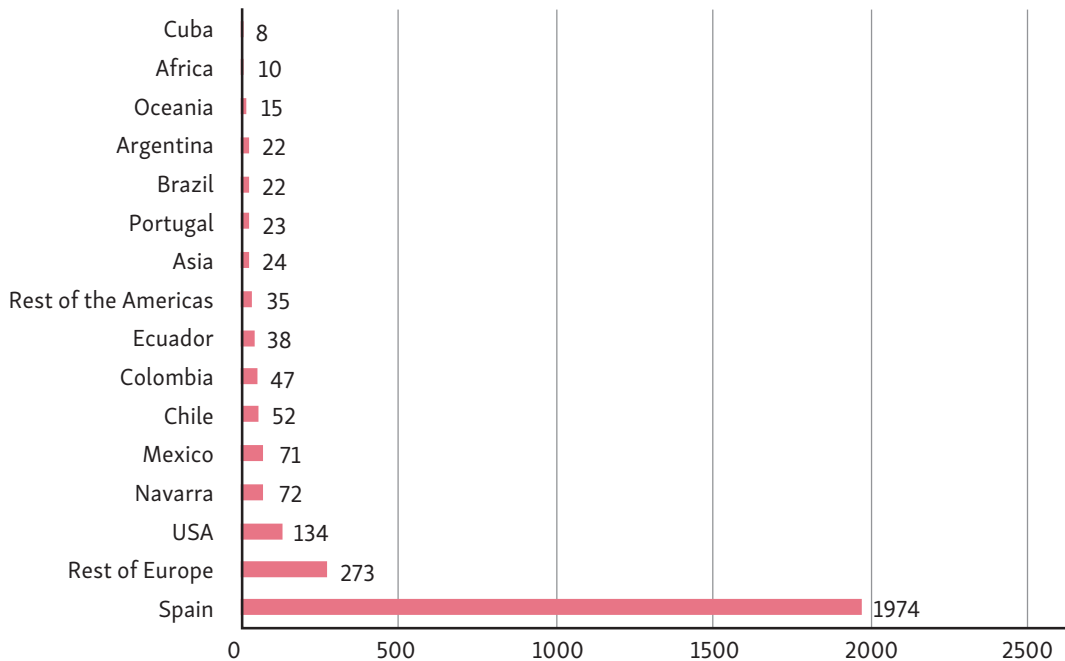


Figure 2. Iberian Peninsula journals: comparison of the institution of origin of the first author. Comparison between Latin American and Iberian Peninsula journals

Source: Own elaboration based on valid coding of 2820 items with geographic identification.

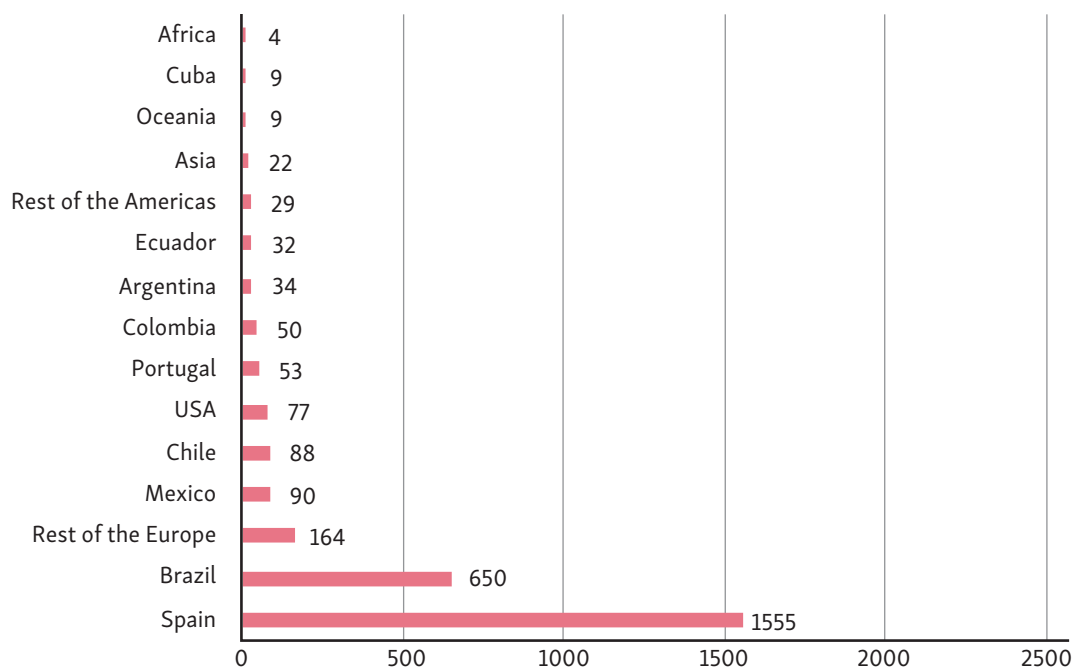


Figure 3. Latin American journals: comparison of the second author’s institution of origin  
 Source: Own elaboration based on valid coding of 2866 items with geographic identification.

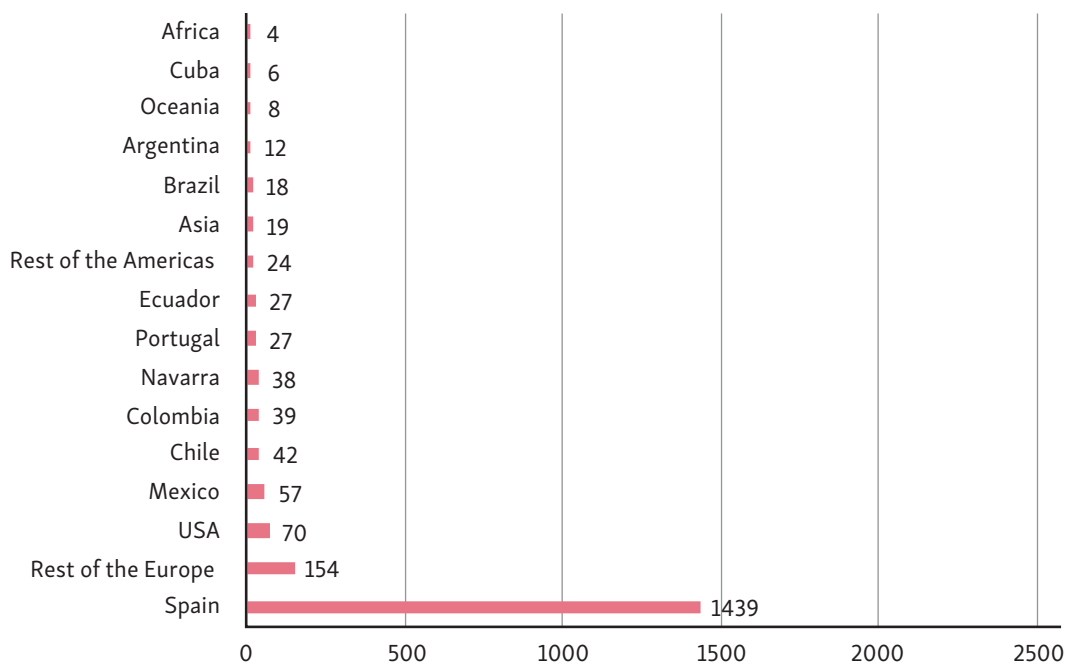


Figure 4. Iberian Peninsula journals: comparison of the institution of origin of the second author  
 Source: Own elaboration based on the valid coding of 1984 items with geographic identification.

	Gender	Latin-American	Iberian Peninsula
First author	Male	40.41%	55.34%
	Female	59.51%	44.59%
	Another	0.08%	0.07%
Second author	Male	37.74%	51.94%
	Female	61.92%	48.01%
	Another	0.34%	0.05%

Table 3. Number of authors per article

Source: Own elaboration based on valid coding of 4085 items with geographic identification.

The greatest difference is in the proportion of articles with three authors, which is 17.64% in the Latin American journals and 30.35% in the journals of the Iberian Peninsula. However, in Latin America four (9.9%) or even five or more authors per article (12.05%) are more frequent than in the Iberian Peninsula journals, where they are marginal with 5.74% for four authors and 3% for five or more authors. The explanation for this difference can be found in the regulations of the regulatory bodies in Spain, such as the ANECA, which leads to a maximum limit of three authors in order not to penalize six-year periods or accreditations.

To try to explain this difference, we will analyze the proportion of articles from both sides of the Atlantic that were produced through transnational collaborations. Overall, 92.11% of the articles analyzed originate from a single country; only 7.07% are articles resulting from transnational collaborations between two countries, 0.69% between three countries and only 0.13% of the sample analyzed between four or more countries.

In the Latin American journals, the number of articles from a single country rises to 96.89%, with 2.78% of articles produced in collaboration between two countries, 0.33% between three countries and none between four or more countries. In the Iberian Peninsula, collaboration is greater: 9.16% of articles are developed in transnational collaboration between two countries, 0.87% between three countries and 0.20% between four or more countries.

The participation of more countries therefore does not explain the greater number of articles with four or more authors in Latin America compared to the Iberian Peninsula. Transnational collaboration is marginal when publishing in these high impact journals, although this practice is even more pronounced in Latin American journals.

Number of countries	Latin America	Iberian Peninsula
One country	96.89%	89.77%
Two countries	2.78%	9.16%
Three countries	0.33%	0.87%
Four or more countries	0.00%	0.20%

Table 4. Number of countries collaborating with the article

Source: Own elaboration based on the coding of 3764 valid with recognition of the country.

	Latin America%	Iberian Peninsula
No	83.23%	65.90%
Yes, regional	7.55%	11.43%
Yes, national	8.66%	18.94%
Yes, international	0.56%	3.74%

Table 5: Funded or unfunded articles published in communication journals, association with funded or unfunded projects and type of funding

Source: Own elaboration based on the coding of 4075 valid articles with recognition of funding or non-funding of publications.

One of the variables examined to analyze the internationalization of the communication publications studied is whether the articles are financed and whether this is done within the framework of projects financed by international, national or regional funds. Of the articles published in the series, 71.24% were not funded. This overall percentage conceals a considerable disparity: while 83.23% of the articles published in the Latin American journals were not funded, this percentage drops to 65.90% in the Iberian journals. There are also differences in the type of funding: only 0.56% of Latin American journals were internationally funded, compared to 3.74% of Iberian journals.

Another variable highlighted in this analysis is the typology of articles published in these impact journals. The scientific method is used in 79.97% of the articles published in Latin America, a percentage far higher than the 56.91% of articles published in the journals of the Iberian Peninsula.

This data contrasts with what Barranquero Carretero (2011) had defined as one of the strengths of communication studies in Latin America, namely the questioning of the functionalist and empirical model. The significantly lower proportion of empirical articles in the Iberian Peninsula coincides with the strong resistance to the theoretical-empirical paradigm shift in Spanish academia identified by Goyanes and colleagues (2018).

Number of countries	Latin America	Iberian Peninsula
One country	96.89%	89.77%
Two countries	2.78%	9.16%
Three countries	0.33%	0.87%
Four or more countries	0.00%	0.20%

Table 6. Typology of articles in communication journals, 2009 to 2019.

Source: Own elaboration based on the coding of 4076 items with typology detection.

As these journals are considered impact journals by international standards, researchers feel compelled to adhere to methods that enjoy a higher level of acceptance when publishing in an international context (Demeter, 2018).

The studies of the Latin Academy of Communication have definitely adopted the scientific method that has become the standard for publication in the best indexed journals in the field in our cultural context.

In addition to this approach to the scientific method, another variable that helps us define the maturity of research in the communication discipline is the authors' h-index, which represents the relative weight of an author in a scientific community and measures both productivity and influence. This index, proposed by Jorge E. Hirsch (2005) of the College of California, has become a standard that measures the professional quality of scholars based on the number of citations of their scholarly articles. A scientist or researcher has an H-index if they have published H articles with at least H citations each.

We have created researcher profiles that are linked to this H-index so that we can make a comparison between the two markets. Practically half of the researchers published by Latin American journals (45.63%) can be defined as early career researchers (with an h-index of 3 or less in Google Scholar), compared to a significant but lower percentage in journals from the Iberian Peninsula (32.19%). In fact, in these journals, the most common profile is that of a researcher in the consolidation phase (36.8%), which accounts for a third of researchers in Latin America (33.34%). The distribution of senior sales representatives with high production and impact is also striking: 3.34% in Latin America and 5.78%, a significantly higher percentage, in journals from the Iberian Peninsula.



Profile	H Index	Peninsula	Latin America
Junior researchers	<1	21.46%	17.25%
	1-3	10.73%	28.38%
Researchers in consolidation phase	4-6	13.20%	15.34%
	7-9	11.95%	10.81%
	10-12	11.73%	7.15%
Consolidated high impact researchers	13-15	8.47%	5.33%
	16-18	6.49%	5.09%
	19-21	4.16%	2.70%
	22-31	6.03%	4.61%
Senior researchers with high production and impact	31-41	2.80%	2.07%
	>42	2.98%	1.27%

Table 7. h-index according to Google Scholar of the first author of the articles. Fuente: Source: Own elaboration based on the coding data of 4053 validated articles.

## Discussion

Scientific publications are of fundamental importance for the development of science and the dissemination of knowledge. This study analyzed 4098 articles from impact journals indexed in the SJR 2018 Comunicación-Communication ranking, belonging to the first and second quartiles, Q1 and Q2.

The comparison between the articles of Latin American impact journals (three) and those of the Iberian Peninsula (five) allows us to identify relevant results, which are presented in Table 8 below in the form of a table of Weaknesses, Threats, Strengths and Opportunities (SWOT) for Latin American journals.

Regarding the hypotheses made in this article, hypothesis H1 was positively confirmed, as we found that the main differences between magazines in Latin America and in the Iberian Peninsula are the lower number and production of articles, the greater dependence on a single territory (in this case Brazil) and the lower rate of financing and internationalization, all of which are reasons for the lower competitiveness in the Latin American region.

Hypothesis H2 was partially confirmed, as in Latin America both first and second authorship is predominantly female, while this is not the case in the Iberian Peninsula, which is one of the main differences between the two regions studied.

Weaknesses	Threats
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Little funding of publications of scientific articles in the journals with the highest impact, which account for less than 20% of the articles.</li> <li>2. Scientific publications focused on islands. Brazil is the country with the largest number of scientific publications; 58.41% of first authors in Latin American journals come from Brazil.</li> <li>3. Low presence of consolidated researchers with an H-index of more than 13, representing only 21% of the total.</li> <li>4. Low internationalization of the publication teams of Latin American academic publications.</li> <li>5. Loss of the theoretical identity of the American continent. Latin America in the face of the hegemony of the scientific method in impact journals.</li> <li>6. Limitation of publication spaces in first and second level academic journals in the field of communication between 2009 and 2019, as there are only three journals.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Scarce funding for development projects for young and mid-career researchers. The high percentage of publications with little funding is due to the fact that they are in the consolidation phase of their academic careers.</li> <li>2. The lack of sufficient projects of professional and well-funded scientific publications in the field of communication in the Spanish-speaking academy.</li> <li>3. The limitation of collaboration between different geographical areas that share a common language and academic tradition.</li> <li>4. The loss of interest in the development of scientific careers in communication between researchers and especially the male gender, the progressive decrease of a correct gender balance in the field of knowledge.</li> <li>5. The lack of scientific journals in Spanish, Portuguese or English indexed in quartiles 1 and 2 of the Scopus or JCR indices in Latin America.</li> </ol>
Strengths	Opportunities
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Social and economic interest in communication research.</li> <li>2. The dynamics of scientific societies at national and international level. The opening of communication bridges between scientific-idiomatic islands.</li> <li>3. Large presence of young scientists and senior scientists in the consolidation, who can be used for the professionalization of journals if appropriate incentives are created.</li> <li>4. Increasing presence in leadership and co-leadership in the publication of articles of the female gender, which represents the majority of scientific publications in journals with influence in the field of communication in Latin America.</li> <li>5. The majority of publications in bilingual or trilingual magazines in Spanish, Portuguese and English in editorial projects, giving the Latin American academy a distinct entity.</li> <li>6. The use of English in editorial projects facilitates the citation of articles with international influence.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Balanced gender ratio in the management of articles and publication teams.</li> <li>2. Development of new editorial projects for scientific journals of importance in Latin American science and gradual inclusion of consolidated journals in Latin America.</li> <li>3. Opening of scientific networks between science in Spanish and English in Latin America, North America and Spain-Europe.</li> <li>4. Future opportunities for a market of emerging science in Spanish throughout the Americas and in Europe-Spain.</li> <li>5. Area of knowledge in development, and that it should be developed in positivist and entrepreneurial social perception, virtuous transfers of communication research to society and its business structure.</li> </ol>

Table 8: Weaknesses, threats, strengths and opportunities identified in the scientific production of Latin American journals between 2009 and 2019

Source: Own elaboration based on article coding data and Mapcom I and Mapcom II project.

H3 was positively confirmed in the Iberian Peninsula, where we observed a much higher number in Spain and also for Latin America, with a concentration in Brazil. Hypothesis H4 could not be confirmed, at least not completely, since young researchers are in trend in the publications and time series studied and are more numerous in the Peninsula than researchers with the index  $<1$ , while in Latin America they are those who have an index  $h$  between 1 and 3.

However, there is evidence that fewer consolidated researchers with high impact publish in Latin American journals than in those of the Iberian Peninsula.

Hypothesis H5 was positively confirmed in its general part, as the type of authorship was mainly one or two authors, with more than 60% of the articles in Latin America and a similar percentage in the Iberian Peninsula. At the same time, the part of the hypothesis that assumed that the percentage of single authorship would be slightly higher in the Iberian Peninsula proved to be negative. The percentage is slightly more than one point higher in Latin America.

H6 is confirmed as positive, although the percentage of unfunded work is 17 points higher in Latin America. Internationalization is also significantly lower in Latin America than on the Iberian Peninsula.

Hypothesis H7 could not be confirmed, because although the scientific method is the predominant methodological approach in both markets, the percentage in Latin America is more than 20 points higher than in the Iberian Peninsula and the percentage of theoretical articles is lower.

## Conclusions

After analyzing the data, we find that Latin American journals have a slightly less favorable starting position than journals in the Iberian Peninsula to take advantage of current opportunities and face threats, especially in aspects such as article funding, internationalization or spaces available for publication in impact journals.

However, the high acceptance of the scientific method, the willingness to work in the articles in large and multidisciplinary teams, the large pool of new researchers or the presence of female researchers who lead or co-lead the articles, provide a good basis for the growth of this high impact publication in Latin America.

Another aspect that can be emphasized, as indicated by Chávez Sánchez (2020), is that in order to improve the international recognition of Latin American scientific communication journals, it seems essential to improve the editorial management of scientific communication journals and establish an observatory to monitor compliance with the quality criteria of said publications.

The need to increase the quantity and quality of scientific journals in the languages of the Latin academy, making them bilingual (Spanish, English, Portuguese, etc.) and professionalizing them for inclusion in the JCR-WOS and Scopus-SJR indices, among others, is fundamental for the dissemination of science. On the other hand, it is necessary to internationalize the scientific production of Iberian and Latin American research groups, into areas outside the traditional comfort zone, and to promote international and inter-college cooperation.

In order to continue expanding our field of knowledge in Ibero-America, we must not only increase the number of journals and their professionalization, but also improve the currently rather modest rates of internationalization, competitive funding of scientific publications and impact and citation. This is the way to further advance, build and disseminate the scholarly corpus in the field of communication in a region with enormous potential that continues to grow and develop.

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