






RESEARCH/INVESTIGACIÓN

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**TRANSFORMATION IN THE MOTIVATION AND ASPIRATIONS
OF SPANISH JOURNALISM STUDENTS OVER THREE YEARS: AN
ANALYSIS OF THE EXPLANATORY VARIABLES**

*La transformación en la motivación y las aspiraciones de los
estudiantes de Periodismo a lo largo de tres años de grado: un análisis
de las variables explicativas*

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ABSTRACT

This paper describes the evolution in the motivation of Journalism students throughout three years, and details through a regression analysis some of the variables that explain its fluctuations. In order to achieve that, three surveys were carried out in consecutive years (2017, 2018 y 2019) on two generations of students from the universities of Málaga and Complutense of Madrid (n=2,546). The results show a loss in the motivation in both groups: the most vocational students diminish around 30%, while the most discontent increase between 71% and 347% depending on the course. This is aggravated by the growing pushfulness of corporate communication and the high abandon rate of the survey, which tends to reflect disinterest in journalism as a profession. The regression analysis (adjusted $r^2 = 0.151$) indicated that the will of being a journalist was determined by other factors besides the course, such as satisfaction with the degree (the less satisfied are also less motivated) or area of interest (higher motivation in Sports, lower in Culture). Internship experience, perception of media performance, and age also had a minor impact.

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KEYWORDS: Journalism students - Motivation - Training - University - Satisfaction - Professional expectations - European Higher Education Area

RESUMEN

Este trabajo describe la evolución de la motivación profesional de los estudiantes de Periodismo a lo largo de tres años y detalla algunas de las variables que explican su fluctuación a través de un análisis de regresión. Para ello se realizaron tres encuestas en años consecutivos (2017, 2018 y 2019) a dos promociones de alumnos de las universidades de Málaga y Complutense de Madrid (n=2.546). Los resultados muestran una pérdida de la motivación en ambos grupos: los más vocacionales decrecen en torno a un 30%, mientras que los más descontentos aumentan entre un 71% y un 347% según el curso; todo ello agravado por la creciente pujanza de la comunicación corporativa y la alta tasa de abandono en la encuesta, que tiende a responder a una pérdida de interés por la profesión periodística. El análisis de regresión (r^2 ajustado = 0,151) indicó que la voluntad de dedicarse al Periodismo se veía determinada, además de por el curso, por otros factores como la satisfacción con el grado (a menor satisfacción, menor impulso vocacional) o el área de especialización de interés (más motivados los de Deportes, menos los de Cultura). También incidían en menor medida la experiencia en prácticas, la percepción sobre el estado de la profesión o la edad.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Estudiantes de Periodismo - Motivación - Formación - Universidad - Satisfacción - Expectativas profesionales - Espacio Europeo de Educación Superior.

A TRANSFORMAÇÃO NA MOTIVAÇÃO E AS ASPIRAÇÕES DOS ESTUDANTES DE JORNALISMO AO LONGO DE TRÊS ANOS DE GRADUAÇÃO: UMA ANÁLISE DAS VARIÁVEIS EXPLICATIVAS

RESUMO

Este trabalho descreve a evolução da motivação profissional dos estudantes de jornalismo ao longo de três anos e dá detalhes de algumas das variáveis que explicam sua flutuação através de uma análise de regressão. Para isso foram feitas três entrevistas nos anos consecutivos (2017, 2018 e 2019) a dois grupos de estudantes das universidades de Málaga e Complutense de Madrid (n=2.546). Os resultados mostram uma perda da motivação em ambos os grupos: os mais vocacionais decresce em torno de 30%, enquanto os mais descontentes aumentam entre 71% e 347% dependendo da graduação; tudo isso agravado pela crescente força da comunicação corporativa e a alta taxa de desistência na entrevista, que tende a responder a uma perda de interesse pela profissão periodística. A análise de regressão (r^2 ajustado = 0,151) indicou que o desejo de se-dedicar ao jornalismo é afetado, além do que pela própria graduação, por outros fatores como a satisfação

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com a formação (a menor satisfação, menor impulso vocacional) ou a área de especialização de interesse (mais motivados pelos esportes menos pela cultura). Também se encontrou que eram afetados em menor medida pela experiência em práticas, a percepção sobre o estado da profissão ou a idade.

PALAVRAS CHAVE

Estudantes de Jornalismo – Motivação – Formação– Universidade – Satisfação – Expectativas profissionais – Espaço Europeu de Educação Superior.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Every year, about 3,500 Journalism students graduate from Spanish faculties, a figure that has remained stable in the last triennium and reached its peak in 2014, coinciding with the end of studies for the first Bologna class, with a total of 3,951 new journalists (APM, 2018). These recent graduates are joined by the nearly 3,000 graduates a year in audiovisual techniques and communication, whose thematic affinity also qualifies them to perform functions that are very similar, if not identical, to those of traditional journalists.

This growing number of professionals with the necessary university training to practice journalism (López-García, 2010) has fueled the debate around the market's ability to absorb such a high demand for communicators (Deuze, 2006; Díaz-Nosty, 2011; Pestano, Rodríguez-Wangüemert, and Del Ponti, 2011). In this context, Hanusch et al. (2015) argue that, despite the long journey of this kind of comments, there is little evidence about the true motivations of journalism students, whose professional goals, despite what is commonly assumed, do not always involve finding a job in the field of journalistic information.

To date, the most relevant research on the motivations and expectations of Journalism students have been carried out in other countries (among others: Splichal and Sparks, 1994; Bjørnsen, Hovden, and Ottosen, 2007; Hanna and Sanders, 2007; Crawford, Fudge, Hubbard, and Filak, 2013; Mellado and Scherman, 2015; Coleman et al., 2018; Vilović, Majstorović, and Erceg, 2018; Oller, Arcila, and Olivera, 2019; Brown and Ibrayeva, 2019), although there is a reasonable amount of precedents in the national sphere (Ortega and Humanes, 2000; Sanders et al., 2008; Pastor, 2010;

Peinado-Miguel and Fernández-Sande, 2011; Pérez-Serrano, Ortiz-Sobrino, and Rodríguez-Barba, 2013; Humanes and Roses, 2014; Peinado-Miguel, Marta-Lazo, and Ortiz-Sobrino, 2015; Hernández-Franco, Muñoz-Velázquez, and Nó-Sánchez, 2016). These works tend to pay particular attention to the aspirations of students at the time of starting their university studies, or sometimes in an intermediate phase of them, but they rarely register their evolution accompanying them throughout the degree or repeating the measures in the final stretch, after four years shaping their perceptions and when their access to the labor market is closer.

In Spain, the reasons for studying Journalism are varied, although from the first works (Ortega and Humanes, 2000), those associated with creativity, the capacity for expression, or the taste for writing emerge as the main reasons (Pastor, 2010). Pastor catalogs in a second group the expectations of a dynamic, attractive, and not very monotonous job, and in a third the motivations related to public service and the repercussions of journalistic activity on society, a facet especially developed in Spanish students if it is compared with other contexts such as the British (Sanders et al., 2008). These three blocks have a certain correspondence with the four dimensions identified by Mellado and Scherman (2015) in their study of Chilean students: personal development, professional development, job security, and, finally, vocation and creativity.

Subsequently, Peinado-Miguel, Marta-Lazo, and Ortiz-Sobrino (2015) collected, with a sample from the Complutense University of Madrid and the University of Zaragoza, how among the main motivations of Journalism students were "to know other cultures and countries", carry out a "not routine and very attractive" activity, or the "taste" for writing and current information. These four variables occupied the first positions in the order of priorities of the students regardless of the center where they were enrolled – which is of little relevance when establishing student profiles (Humanes and Roses, 2014)–, while other reasons referring to public service, working conditions, or the pure vocational component were less popular among those surveyed. Besides, in this study, motivations began to be related to the students' work expectations, which the authors judged as "clearly pessimistic" (2015: 15): the vast majority considered that it would not be easy for them to practice the profession due to the aforementioned saturation of the labor market and that not even by being "very good" and having "professional talent" they would be able to find a job in a newsroom, so more than half chose to continue as students in the immediate future, either by prolonging their internships or improving their training.

More recently, García-Borrego (2019) detected a slight difference in motivation in first- and second-year students at the Complutense University of Madrid and the University of Malaga. Even being in the initial stage of their university studies, at least one in ten students showed serious doubts about wanting to dedicate themselves to journalism, compared to 69.3% who reflected a high vocational element, a share similar to that of Scandinavian students (Hovden and Ottosen, 2016). In other contexts, such as the Cuban, Venezuelan, and Ecuadorian (Oller,

Arcila, Olivera, 2019), the percentage of students who prefer journalism ranges between 52.6% and 75.5%, with public relations and advertising in second place, although this work included students belonging to both the Journalism and Social Communication degrees. In any case, it can be inferred that not all degree students have a clear intention of ending up as journalists.

To find diachronic studies or at least to establish comparisons between the motivations of the first and last year students, it is necessary to take a look at the international literature. In their landmark research on British students, Hanna and Sanders (2007) highlighted the decrease in the ratio of students who were convinced of wanting to pursue a career in the field of journalism: while at the beginning of their studies they represented 75% of the total of the class, at the end of them they hardly accounted for a little more than half (53%). At the same time, the percentage of those who were clear that they preferred another occupation went from just 1% to 9%. Hanna and Sanders (2007) add that these figures, in fact, under-represent students who at some point in their studies decided not to dedicate themselves to journalism, since many of them had already left the program. The main reason given by the dissatisfied students had to do with the poor job prospects that characterized the journalist profession in the United Kingdom. Therefore, a bad perception of the working conditions of the communicators had a direct impact on the will to work in a newsroom.

A more recent study by Vilović, Majstorović, and Erceg (2018) found, along the lines of Hanna and Sanders (2007), that Croatian students at the end of their studies reflected a greater pessimism when evaluating their employment possibilities, to which is added a growing degree of dissatisfaction with the education received, the latter also documented in Spain through various studies (Casero-Ripollés, Ortells-Badenes, and Doménech-Fabregat, 2013; Gómez-Calderón and Roses, 2013; Humanes and Roses, 2014). As a result, they were more likely to put journalism aside and opt for public relations as an option for the future.

There are also other works such as that of Bjørnsen, Hovden, and Ottosen (2007) that, although they did not directly address the evolution of motivations, they did perceive certain disbelief on the part of Norwegian students, who in the final stage of their studies had renounced ideals such as neutrality or the defense of the weak to adopt, instead, a more “cynical” stance (p. 391). In other words, that initial drive for idealized journalism had faded over the years.

In general lines, therefore, a panorama is drawn in which ending up working in a newsroom is usually widely considered by Journalism students as the ideal destination at the end of their studies, but this aspiration seems to decrease as they pass the courses. The reasons that can explain this drop in motivation are diverse, although they tend to revolve around disillusionment with the degree, with the operation of the profession, and with the job opportunities it offers. The fact that the education period itself may even take students away from their professional

aspirations is related to the traditional debate on the ideal model of university journalism education, intensified since the launch of the European Higher Education Area (Cantarero, 2002; Deuze, 2006; Pestano, Rodríguez-Wangüemert, and Del Ponti, 2011; Díaz del Campo Lozano, 2013; Sánchez-García, 2016; Tejedor-Calvo and Cervi, 2017).

2. OBJECTIVES

This work follows for the first time the evolution of two promotions of Journalism students from two Spanish universities, the Complutense University of Madrid and the University of Malaga, over three courses. Furthermore, it constitutes the first precedent of this line of research since the definitive implementation of the EHEA and, with it, of the Bologna Plan. The first objective (O1) that arises with this article is to describe the transformation of the motivation of Journalism students as each academic year passes. As a second objective (O2) it is proposed to identify which are the variables that explain and condition the intention to dedicate themselves to journalism, distinguishing between the sociodemographic, the perceptions about the current state of the profession, and those related to satisfaction with the degree in Journalism.

3. METHODOLOGY

The methodological instrument used for data collection was the survey, which was distributed during the first quarter of each academic year in three consecutive years to two promotions of students from the Complutense University of Madrid and the University of Malaga: the promotion or group 'A', which in that space of time went from first to the third year; and group 'B', which advanced from second to the fourth year. The first taking of the survey took place between September and October 2017; the third and last, in the same period of 2019. The selection of the centers was carried out by strategic and convenience criteria, trying to include both the one that welcomes more Journalism students each year, the Complutense University of Madrid, with 660 new admission places, as well as a smaller peripheral university, the University of Malaga, with 130 vacancies for the first year and characteristics comparable to those of other smaller universities. In any case, the previous literature has already highlighted the low importance of the center in statistical terms, and the selection made allows a reliable answer to the objectives that involve associations of variables (Wimmer and Dominick, 1996; Hayes, 2005).

The questionnaire used was designed following the contributions of the reference studies already mentioned (Splichal and Sparks, 1994; Ortega and Humanes, 2000; Bjørnsen, Hovden, and Ottosen, 2007; Hanna and Sanders, 2007; Peinado-Miguel and Fernández-Sande, 2011; Peinado-Miguel, Marta-Lazo, and Ortiz-Sobrino, Mellado and Scherman, 2015; Coleman et al., 2018), besides taking elements from other related works to prepare the list of independent variables (Weaver, 1998; APM, 2010-

2018; Weaver and Willnat, 2012; Humanes and Roses, 2014; Nygren, 2016; Williams, Guglietti, and Haney, 2017).

The main variable of the study consisted of an item measured with a Likert scale from 0 to 10 in which the student was asked: "How clearly do you want to dedicate yourself to journalism?" The 0 implied 'Not at all clear' and the 10 'Completely clear'.

As possible predictors, three groups of variables were used:

- Sociodemographic variables: composed by university of origin (coded as a nominal variable), gender (nominal), age (scale), course (ordinal), previous professional experience (nominal), internship experience (nominal), and the section of interest, to be distinguished between Local (nominal), Politics (nominal), Economy (nominal), Sports (nominal), Culture (nominal), and/or Other non-journalistic functions (nominal).
- Variables of perception of the state of the media sector (or media performance): assessment of the work of journalism informing the public (Likert scale 0-10), of the ethical standards and honesty of journalists (scale), of the level of preparation of journalists (scale), of the ability of journalists to cause positive changes in society (scale), of the degree of freedom of expression (scale), of the degree of independence of the media (scale), of the degree of autonomy of the journalists (scale), the working conditions of journalists (scale), and the state of internships in companies (scale), and the perception of coincidence between the ideals of journalism transmitted during the career and those applied by the media in reality (scale).
- Variables of perception and satisfaction with the degree in Journalism: assessment of the level of preparation of the students (scale 0-10), of the interest of the students in learning (scale), of the level of preparation of Journalism professors (scale), and of the professors' ability to produce changes in the mentality of students (scale), general satisfaction with the quality of the education received to date (scale), and the perception of the need for university study of journalism to practice it (nominal).

The questionnaires were distributed during school hours, with prior agreement with the teaching staff responsible for the compulsory subjects, to reach the largest number of answers possible. Only those students who refused to participate in the survey or were not present in the classroom at the time of providing the cards were left out of the study. Once the data had been loaded into an SPSS matrix and the anomalous or erroneous entries were eliminated, a total of 2,546 valid responses were reached, homogeneously distributed between group 'A' (1,261, 49.5%) and 'B' (1,285, 50.5%).

3.1. Sample description

Around four out of every five responses (79.5%) corresponded to students from the Complutense University of Madrid, a proportion in line with the number of total

students from each center. 61.9% of those surveyed identified themselves as women, 37.6% as men –again in line with the usual percentages in these degrees–, and the remaining 0.4% chose not to answer the question. The average age was 19.2 years old in the first data collection, 20.2 in the second, and 21.4 in the third. Regarding the course, a greater number of responses was obtained in the first year, when the students were in the first or second year (42.7% of the total), than in the two subsequent data collection (27.1% the second year and 30.2% the third).

Only 2.4% of those surveyed claimed to have practiced the journalistic profession before starting their studies, and 11.8% claimed to have done internships. This figure was higher among students in group 'B', where it reached 38.4% in the last year of the survey, when they were in their fourth year of Journalism, than among those in group 'A', who stayed at a 9.4% for the third year. Regarding labor preferences, the data coincide in both promotions: the Culture section is the preferred one by a certain amount, with 44.9% of respondents interested in practicing in this section. They are followed at a certain distance by Sports, with 37.3%, and Politics, with 30.8%. Curiously, the non-journalistic professional option (12.2%), which includes disciplines such as institutional and corporate communication or marketing, appears above other outlets such as local (11.4%) or economics journalism (8.0%).

The aggregated data of the two groups can be checked in Table 1.

Table 1. Description of the sample.

	Group 'A' (1º-2º-3º)		Group 'B' (2º-3º-4º)			
N	1,261		1,285			
University	UMA = 20.8%	UCM = 79.2%	UMA = 20.6%	UCM = 81.3%		
Gender	M = 37.7%	W = 61.9%	M = 38.3%	W = 63.1%		
Age	Average = 19.61	DT = 2.937	A = 20.66	DT = 2.070		
Year	1 = 44.9%	2 = 28,9%	3 = 26.2%	1 = 41.3%	2 = 25.9%	3 = 34.7%
Practiced before	Yes = 2.4%	No = 97.5%	Yes = 2.5%	No = 99.3%		
Has done internships	Yes = 5.9%	No = 94.1%	Yes = 17.9%	No = 83.9%		
Interest in Local	Yes = 13.0%	No = 85.2%	Yes = 10.1%	No = 89.8%		
Interest in Politics	Yes = 32.2%	No = 66.1%	Yes = 30.1%	No = 69.8%		
Interest in Economics	Yes = 8.8%	No = 89.5%	Yes = 7.3%	No = 92.5%		
Interest in Sports	Yes = 39.7%	No = 58.5%	Yes = 35.5%	No = 64.3%		
Interest in Culture	Yes = 43.1%	No = 55.2%	Yes = 47.6%	No = 52.3%		
Interest in non-journalism	Yes = 10.2%	No = 87.6%	Yes = 14.4%	No = 84.2%		

Source: Self-made based on student surveys.

4. RESULTS

Apparently, a first analysis of the averages obtained in each year indicates a certain drop of student motivation as the courses go by, although they remain at relatively high levels, always above seven. The fall would also be relatively higher from the third year, around 5% per year, than from first to second, where there is hardly any variation (2.1% less in the Complutense University of Madrid and 0.9% less in the University of Malaga). At the end of the three years, the first group was 5.6% more unmotivated; the second, 10.6% (see Table 2).

Table 2. Average of the question “How clearly do you want to dedicate yourself to journalism?”, by group and course.

	1°	2°	3°	4°	Difference
Group 'A'	7.91	7.79	7.47		-5.6%
Difference		-1.54%	-4.28%		
Group 'B'		7.85	7.39	7.02	-10.6%
Difference			-6.22%	-5.27%	

Source: Self-made based on student surveys.

However, it is necessary to take into account the decrease in the response rate of students between the first and last year of the survey, which according to the work of Hanna and Sanders (2007) constitutes an indicator of how the most dissatisfied students have dropped out of Journalism studies or, at least, have stopped attending class. That is to say: when the students most interested in practicing the profession are in the classroom, the levels of motivation tend to appear overvalued. In the present case, within group 'A' there was a 41.5% drop in the number of responses between the first year and the third; within 'B', 16.1%.

Complementarily, it is also of interest to pay attention to the proportion of extra-motivated students, that is, those who were completely clear that they wanted to dedicate themselves to journalism and marked a "10" as an answer to the question posed. While in the first year they constituted 26.8% and 24.6% of groups 'A' and 'B', respectively, in the last year they were 18.8% and 16.6%. The fall, therefore, had been 29.8% in the first case and 32.4% in the second. The ratio of the highly unmotivated also grew (answer '0' to the question posed): 70.9% in group 'A' and 346.9% in group 'B', as shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Frequencies of the question “How clearly do you want to dedicate yourself to journalism?”, at the first and last year.

		First year (17)	Last year (19)	Difference
Group A (1°-3°)	Number of responses	566	331	-41.5%
	Extra-motivated (10/10)	26.8%	18.8%	-29.8%

	Unmotivated (0/10)	1.1%	1.8%	+70.9%
Group B (2 ^o -4 ^o)	Number of responses	521	437	-16.1%
	Extra-motivated (10/10)	24.6%	16.6%	-32.4%
	Unmotivated (0/10)	0.8%	3.5%	+346.9%

Source: Self-made based on student surveys.

To compare the effect of the passing of the courses on the motivation of the students with that of the rest of the contemplated variables, the multiple linear regression analysis was carried out. This hypothesis testing technique, which was ultimately able to explain 15.1% of the variance, resulted in the importance of the course in explaining students' motivation. It was, however, the third variable with the most impact of all those studied, although it was above relevant items such as those related to the state of the media and the journalistic profession. The three regression models used can be seen in detail in Table 4.

Table 3. Multiple linear regression analysis: predictors of the motivation expressed by the student

Predictor variables	Regression 1 (β)	Regression 2 (β)	Regression 3 (β)
Sociodemographic variables			
From the UMA	0.038	0.007	0.007
Is a woman	0.048*	0.023	0.010
Age	0.032	0.076**	0.069*
Course	-0.137***	-0.148***	-0.106***
Previous work experience	0.009	0.000	0.013
Internship experience	0.076***	0.061***	0.062**
Interest in the Local section	0.058***	0.051*	0.041*
Interest in the Politics section	0.134***	0.126***	0.104***
Interest in the Economy section	0.047*	0.053**	0.056**
Interest in the Sports section	0.208***	0.203***	0.191***
Interest in the Culture section	0.030	0.032	0.012
Interest in non-journalistic field	-0.126***	-0.109***	-0.101***
Perceptions about media performance			
Journalism work		0.040	0.035
Journalists' ethics		0.010	0.011
Journalists' preparation		0.083***	0.044
Ability to produce changes in society		0.056*	0.036
Degree of freedom of expression		0.042	0.040
Degree of independence of the media		-0.08*	-0.089**
Degree of autonomy of journalists		0.031	0.035
Journalists' working conditions		-0.035	-0.041
Professional internship status		0.017	0.002
Matching ideals of the university and the media		0.05*	0.010
Perceptions about the degree in Journalism			
Students' preparation level			0.001
Degree of interest of students			0.086***

Degree of teachers' preparation			-0.077**
Teachers' ability to produce change			0.001
Satisfaction with education			0.167***
Need of education to practice			0.09***
Observations	2,534	2,345	2,178
R ² adjusted	0.097	0.122	0.151

*p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.005

Source: Self-made based on student surveys.

Obeying the coefficients produced by the proposed regression model, the main explanatory variables of the motivation of Journalism students are, by order:

1. Interest in the Sports section ($\beta=0.191$, $p<0.001$). This is the variable with the highest beta. A student who marked this area as one of his favorites enjoyed, on average, a motivation 0.81 points higher than that of any other classmate who did not. Also marking the option of Politics ($\beta=0.104$, $p<0.001$) and, to a lesser extent, those of Economy ($\beta=0.056$, $p<0.01$) and Local ($\beta=0.041$, $p<0.05$) had a positive effect on the expressed desire of the student. This leaves Culture, the field preferred by students, as the one with the worst average. As the effect of the chosen section was cumulative, a student interested in Politics, Economics, and Sports averaged 1.69 points of motivation more than those in Culture.
2. Satisfaction with the education received ($\beta=0.167$, $p <0.001$). Among those who valued the degree in Journalism more positively, the conviction of wanting to dedicate themselves to journalism was greater. On average, a student who assessed the quality of teaching with a '10' indicated 1.54 points of motivation more than a student who declared himself very dissatisfied with the degree (score of '0'). In direct relation to teaching as well, students who considered the existence of a university degree in Journalism to practice the profession unnecessary showed less motivation (0.44 points less, with $\beta=0.090$, $p<0.001$) than those who did consider it essential. However, a poor conception of the teaching staff did increase motivation ($\beta=-0.077$, $p<0.01$), as did the perception of a high degree of interest by their peers ($\beta=0.086$, $p<0.001$), which suggests a kind of contagion effect of the desire to be a journalist.
3. Course ($\beta=0.106$, $p<0.001$). Adjusting for the rest of the variables, for each year of the degree that passed, the student's motivation decreased by 0.21 points. This figure, although in quantitative terms seems small, needs to be seen in perspective: on the one hand because, as has already been pointed out, it does not take into account non-attending students or those who dropped out; on the other, because, as the correlation matrix shows, the course is closely linked to other variables that affect student motivation, such as the aforementioned satisfaction with the education received ($r=-0.279$, $p<0.001$). In other words, passing the course has an effect in itself on student motivation and, at the same time, correlates with other variables that also negatively condition this aspiration.

4. Interest in non-journalistic communication areas ($\beta=0.101$, $p<0.001$). The conviction of a student who considers professional options such as institutional and corporate communication or marketing –the most frequently included in this answer– is on average 0.70 points lower than that of the rest of his classmates. This variable correlates again with the course ($r=0.098$, $p<0.001$), becoming more present as the years go by: group 'A' began the series of surveys with only 0.9% of them considering this type of professional opportunities and ended up reaching 2.4% (that is, 266.7% more). Group 'B' experienced an even greater change: from the 1.2% that these students represented when they were in the second year, it went to 7.3% at the beginning of the fourth year, 608.3% more. However, this job possibility, although gaining followers, still seems small among the students who answered the questionnaire.
5. Perception of the degree of independence of the media ($\beta=0.089$, $p<0.01$). The students most critical of the autonomy of the newspapers were, at the same time, those who had the clearest vocation for journalism. This was, in fact, the only variable related to the performance of the media that produced statistically significant coefficients. Although in the second proposed regression model certain items did seem to have some influence, as happened with the perception of the degree of preparation of journalists, this was annulled by including the variables related to Journalism studies.
6. Internship experience ($\beta=0.062$, $p<0.01$). Having made stays in the media or other institutions through the internship programs offered by the center added an average of 0.38 points to the motivation of the students. In good logic, the course also correlates with the internship variable in a positive sense ($r=0.34$, $p<0.001$), as can be seen from the fact that two out of every five fourth-year students had completed at least one internship, without which the average motivation at the end of the studies would suffer even more.
7. Age ($\beta=0.069$, $p<0.05$). It was the last variable with sufficient statistical significance to be considered a predictor of motivation. Thus, a student 15 years older than a classmate with whom he agreed in the rest of the characteristics, perceptions, and aspirations scored one more point on average. The remaining sociodemographic variables –gender, university of origin, and previous work experience as a journalist– did not have a relevant impact on the motivation of Journalism students.

5. CONCLUSIONS

The main conclusion of the present work, in response to O1, is that, indeed, there is a tangible drop in the motivation of Journalism students as the courses progress. Although the provided figures do not reflect an excessive decline in the desire to be a journalist - between 10% and 15% between the first and last year - it should be noted, as Hanna and Sanders (2007) did, that these data only correspond to students who continued to attend class after three years, and therefore under-represent those who dropped out of their studies. However, the decrease in the percentage of extra-

motivated students and the increase of the most discouraged ones suggest that, had it been possible to have the entire sample available, the results would certainly have been more conclusive. This circumstance encourages the carrying out of panel studies complemented with in-depth interviews that research in greater detail the transformations that the motivation of Journalism students undergoes.

The course turned out to be a determining factor in itself once the rest of the factors that could determine the level of motivation of the students were taken into account, and at the same time, it was correlated with other variables that negatively affected the student's vocation, such as satisfaction with the education received, so its effect, in a way, was amplified. Even so, individually, its predictive capacity was below other variables such as interest in the area of Sports or satisfaction with the studies.

The fact that dissatisfaction with the degree in Journalism reduced student motivation and, on the other hand, the low level perceived in the teaching staff increased it can be explained by the way of interpreting the question: the dissatisfied may feel that they have been wrong when opting for Journalism studies and, for that reason, they show a greater demotivation, but they do not attribute it to the quality of the teaching staff. However, the most motivated may feel, despite being convinced that they have entered the desired program, that teachers, somehow, do not respond to their expectations. In any case, the influence of these variables may, again, be approached from a qualitative point of view to expand the findings already presented.

Besides, the strength of non-journalistic communication areas such as cabinet work or marketing work, which weaken the vocation of being a journalist and grow as a work priority as the years go by, makes you think of the low expectations that Peinado-Miguel, Marta-Lazo, and Ortiz-Sobrino (2015) pointed out, for which the students rejected the possibility of dedicating themselves to journalism at the end of the career and opted for other routes. This is especially relevant since it has been observed that a low valuation of the media ecosystem does not negatively affect the desire to professionally dedicate themselves to journalism, but rather produces the opposite effect. The reasons, therefore, would not be found in the characteristics of the journalist's job; perhaps, rather, in the difficulties of access to the market. The preference for institutional and corporate communication, one of the increasingly common outlets offered by Journalism education, seems alien to national contexts and the nature of each media system, as this phenomenon is also reflected in research such as that of Vilović, Majstorović, and Erceg (2018) in Croatia, or that of Oller, Arcila, and Olivera (2019) in Cuba, Ecuador, and Venezuela.

In short, responding to O2, the factors that positively affect the motivation of the Journalism student are, from greater to lesser influence: interest in sports journalism, general satisfaction with the education received, interest in the Politics section, the perception of the need for the degree to practice the profession, the perceived interest

of their peers, age, experience in internships, and interest in the areas of Economy and Local. On the contrary, the variables that lower motivation are, from greater to lesser effect: the passing of the courses, the interest in non-journalistic communication, the perception of the level of independence of the media, and the level of preparation perceived in the teaching staff (see Graph 1).

Interés en la sección Deportes	0,191
Satisfacción con estudios	0,167
Interés en la sección Política	0,104
Necesidad de estudios para ejercer	0,090
Grado interés estudiantes	0,086
Edad	0,069
Experiencia de prácticas	0,062
Interés en la sección Economía	0,056
Interés en la sección Local	0,041
Grado preparación profesorado	-0,077
Grado independencia medios	-0,089
Interés en ámbito no periodístico	-0,101
Curso	-0,106

Graph 1. Predictive variables of motivation, ordered by the coefficient β .

Source: Self-made based on student surveys.

This first diachronic study, which, as in previous studies, does not show great differences between the studied centers (Humanes and Roses, 2014), represents a new step forward in research on the motivations and professional aspirations of Journalism students and focuses on the effect of the higher education model when modulating these expectations, an aspect that must necessarily be taken into account in future studies on the university education of future communicators.

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