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Most relevant competencies in audiovisual communication studies. Perceptions of professionals, teachers and students

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Abstract

Introduction: The paper analyses perceptions of professionals, teachers and students in the field of audiovisual communication about the level of relevance of disciplinary, professional, academic and specific competencies included in the study program. **Methodology:** using surveys, we performed the statistics descriptive analyses of the mean scores granted by respondents to 62 competencies, and also competencies grouping was done to make comparability easier. **Results:** All competencies are considered at least moderately important. Specific competencies are best evaluated, while disciplinary competencies get lower scores. Compared with previous studies, a better evaluation of transversal, procedural and instrumental competencies is detected. **Discussion and Conclusions:** a very competitive labor market that values self-sufficiency and versatility and a professional sector with very diverse profiles are factors influencing in the loss of relevance of disciplinary competencies.

Keywords

Competencies; Audiovisual communication; Survey; Professional profiles; CIT.

Contents

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1. Introduction and state of the art

Communication professionals and, more specifically professionals of audiovisual communication, have seen in the last decade how the digitalization and the subsequent emergence of new formats, new roles for audiences and new ways of content distribution routes have led to deep changes in the productive structures and in the ways of working (Suárez Rodríguez, 2016). Additionally, there was a deep economic crisis in Spain that caused an increasing precarity of labor conditions in the communication sector as well (Studies Office of *CC.OO.* Navarra, 2010). Both phenomena have resulted in the demand of audiovisual communication professionals with a greater versatility and polyvalence, able to carry out a wide diversity of tasks and who incorporate technological progresses in their working routines.

However, it seems that the study programs of university degrees in audiovisual communication do not adapt to this new context sufficiently. Thus, for instance, the capacity of teachers to update their own education is questioned (European Schoolnet and Digital Europe, 2014: 13); we notice about the interference that entails for communication studies subjects, the fact of dedicating many hours to training students in new and needed technological tools (Benítez Iglesias and Stepanian Taracido, 2012: 131); there is disparity observed between academic and professionals when is time to evaluate what competencies are more important (García Ureta, Toral Madariaga and Murelaga Ibarra, 2012: 414); the university is criticized due to offering education that is scarcely oriented to professional practice (FTI and AMETIC, 2013: 9); this lack of connection with the “real world” is linked to the scant interdisciplinary nature of communication studies (Núñez, García and Abuín, 2013: 182); the scarce development of professional competencies in the university field is outstanding (Universia-Accenture, 2007: 113); or regret about the lack of emphasis in relational competencies in the university education (Pérez Martínez, 2011: 93). All these problems are presented as evidence that current studies cannot provide all the education the market requires for audiovisual communication professionals.

However, we notice that neither teachers nor professionals have limited to confirming this adaptation need for study programs without suggesting possible actions to solve it. On the contrary, there are numerous contributions that describe and analyze these new educational and competency needs both from the academy itself as well as from the professional world. Regarding the former collective, it is interesting to observe some of the new competencies that teachers and researchers of the communication field indicate as indispensable for practicing the profession, from the academic perspective. For instance, Gil Ruiz and De Miguel Zamora (2016) defend the relevance of values education before the predominance of purely technical competencies. Also Marfil-Carmona (2014) emphasize in the need of developing the critical capacity as an essential element for educating good professionals, while Sánchez Cobarro and Peña Acuña (2016) confirm the need to introduce personal and social competencies in study programs, that ensure the correct personal development in a very competitive professional environment. On the other hand, other contributions underline the need of

introducing audiovisual alphabetization more strongly in study programs on communication degrees, both in a transversal manner as well while planning specific subjects about the issue, complying with recommendations from different international organizations (Tucho, Fernández-Planells, Lozano and Figueras-Maz, 2015). Finally, there is mention to the relevance of introducing education on entrepreneurship in communication degrees, in order to respond to the transformations of a labor market with an increasing demand for more autonomous professionals (Peña Fernández, Lazkano Arrillada and Pérez Dasilva, 2016).

Regarding the demands formulated from the professional sector, it is worth mentioning there is a practically unanimous emphasis for potentiating competencies related to the use of information and communication technologies (CIT) and with the acquisition of digital competencies (FTI and AMETIC, 2013; Núñez, García and Abuín, 2013; Correyero Ruiz and Baladrón Pazos, 2010; of Vicente and Domínguez, 2011). Moreover, there is highlight about the need to educate multifunctional professionals able to adapt to changes (Fundación Audiovisual de Andalucía, 2012; Vázquez Gestal, Fernández Souto, 2012), before the great diversity of existing professional profiles and its constant evolution. However, apart from these widely shared criteria, and precisely as a consequence of the multitude and heterogeneity of existing profiles, we observe a broad scope of opinions regarding what are the competencies considered necessary for professionals of audiovisual communication.

Thus, for instance, considering the growth and potential of the transmedia television production, Alcázar García (2016) not only bets on information focused in the creation of transmedia contents, but also oriented towards indispensable skills to perform a project of those characteristics, such as teamwork, knowledge about social audience's metrics and the disposition for innovation. At the same time, Saló Benito (2016) emphasizes on the need to educate talented professionals both due to creative and production aspects before the emergence of new figures requiring that versatility, like the showrunner. In the specific case of photography directors, McGowan (2016) claims the technical training to intervene in post-production processes with new digital equipment, before the risk of losing control over the cinematographic production. Besides, an emerging figure in cinema and television is the production research, for which it is indispensable, according to Caldera Serrano (2015), to include competencies related to documentation and knowledge about image rights in communication studies. On the other hand, Vinader Segura, Abuín Vences and García García (2011) demand some study programs that include competencies they consider indispensable for the new professional profiles rising from the emergence of the social web. In this sense, they consider as especially relevant, competencies of technical nature in relation to web usability, communities dynamization, analysis of social audience or web design and programming.

In any case, it seems evident that one of the issues generating more debate is the matter about competencies necessary for the practice of professions related to audiovisual communication, it is linked with the need that university study programs ensure the development of the complete scope of technical and technological competencies demanded by the market. Thus, beyond the logical need of developing basic digital competencies, the debate is whether the university should make an effort for constantly introducing new competencies about usage of technological tools or whether it should focus on developing more general and attitudinal competencies instead, that allow future professionals to adapt to a changing technological environment that will necessarily be positioned before education.

Considering this starting point, this paper proposes to delve in the debate inquiring in perceptions about the relevance of the different competencies related to the practice of professions in the field of audiovisual communication.

2. Objectives and Methodology

The context of deep transformations in the sector of audiovisual communication described in the previous section requires an evaluation of the education the professionals receive, in order to suggest, in this case, some amendments in the study programs. Thus, this research's main objective is to contribute to this debate by determining what are the competencies considered most relevant for the development of the tasks typical from the field of audiovisual communication among professionals of the sector, teachers and students of the Degree in Audiovisual Communication in Spain, in order to offer knowledge that can be useful for adapting these studies to the needs of the current labor market and the expectations of students.

Specifically, we suggest the following specific objectives:

- a. Determine the relevance granted by professionals, teachers and students of audiovisual communication to the different competencies related to the profession's practice, using a scoring system that allows quantitative management of data and an objective comparison between competencies.
- b. Evaluate the degree of relevance granted to the different set of competencies grouped in competency dimensions and observe possible correlations between them.
- c. Compare results with those referenced in the White Paper on Communication Degrees (Aneca, 2005) so to observe possible changes in the relevance granted to competencies evaluated in both studies.

To respond to these objectives, we designed a survey where we asked to evaluate the level of relevance granted to competencies related to the practice of professions linked to audiovisual communication. The use of survey is adequate for the study's objectives since it provides a structured group of data that allowed to describe and compare the features of the different cases in a quantitative manner and using statistical techniques (de Vaus, 2002). In this sense, the survey provided numeric values associated to different degrees of relevance that allowed the calculation of means, standard deviations, modes, medians and correlations between variables.

The competencies definition process for the survey consisted of an update and simplification of competencies included in the White Paper on Communication Degrees (Aneca, 2005). Thus, descriptions were shortened to make reading more agile and avoiding possible withdrawals from respondents; skills were grouped into new competencies; and new aspects were added to already existing competencies in order to adapt them to the current context, for instance including digital platforms or interactive multimedia. Moreover, there were added other competencies not considered by the White Paper and that the field's literature deems relevant, for instance the ability for using critical thinking, values education or competencies related to documentation and web usability. In total, 62 competencies were evaluated for the practice of professions linked to audiovisual communication.

Besides, these competencies were grouped into four competency dimensions, the same we can find in the White Paper: disciplinary competencies (related to knowledge), professional competencies (related to the ‘know how’), academic competencies (referring to necessary skills for doing research in audiovisual communication) and specific competencies (other competencies of more transversal nature that are not exclusively related to audiovisual communication professions). This way, the comparability with results of said study was ensured, at least regarding these dimensions, and additionally there were obtained some results of more global character, making the analysis easier as well as fulfilling the second specific objective suggested.

In order to determine the relevance granted to competencies included in the survey, each competency was evaluated using a 1 to 5 scale, whereas 1 means that the competency is not important at all, 2 means that it is somewhat important, 3 means that it is moderately important, 4 means that it is very important and 5 means that it is extremely important. The competencies were presented in four buckets corresponding to the four competency dimensions, in a formulary created with Google Forms. The survey was sent electronically to the Spanish faculties of communication so that they could forward it among students and professors, and was also distributed to associations of producers, directors and audiovisual scriptwriter and producer agencies, with a request to forward it to their members and employees. Whenever possible, it was sent to individuals in this professional field whose emails are public. We tried to cover a wide spectrum of professional profiles and subsectors representative of the collective object of study: directors, film-makers, producers, scriptwriters, film editors, sound technicians, managers and editors in the cinematography business as well as radio-television and digital business, as well as teachers and students. Nevertheless, considering the way respondents were contacted, we cannot talk in this case about a completely randomized nor stratified sampling system, therefore the calculation of the results’ error margin is not applicable.

The survey, available during May and June 2017, could be filled in a completely anonymous manner, because respondents’ personal data -beyond their profession- were not collected, Respondents were informed about study objectives and received guarantees regarding the storage and management of data. A total of 68 individuals completed the survey, of which 41 were professionals of the sector and 27 were students and university professors. The diversity of professional profiles among respondents was quite high, because we got responses from all subsectors (radio-television, cinematographic, multimedia and digital) and from individuals performing tasks in different stages of the value chain and with different levels of responsibility. Results were analyzed with the IBM SPSS Statistics program (Castañeda, Cabrera, Navarro and De Vries, 2010).

3. Results

3.1. Relevance granted to competencies

In general, we can say that all competencies included in the survey were evaluated very positively by professionals, teachers and students of audiovisual communication. Thus, none of them was scored with less than a mean value of 3 – that is, all competencies were at least considered as moderately important. Besides, in most cases, the most common response was a “very important” or a “extremely important”. However, differences found are detailed as follows.

Regarding the nineteen disciplinary competencies considered, in average all of them were considered at least as moderately important. Furthermore, in all of them the median was equal or superior to 3 in a 1 to 5 scale, which means that more than 50% scored with “approved”. In general, we observe that disciplinary competencies were evaluated positively, but without reaching so elevated scores as the ones found in other competency dimensions. The disciplinary competency valued the least by professionals and students of audiovisual communication was one regarding the knowledge of economic and social aspects of companies (mean of 3.06, with a standard deviation of 1.16, becoming the least valued competency in the survey), while the competency perceived as most important was the one related to the correct use of native languages and English (mean of 4.40, with a standard deviation of only 0.87, which means it was considered between very and extremely important). The competency with more disparity in responses is related to the knowledge of evolution and the social impact of information and communication technologies, with a standard deviation of 1.20 points compared to the average score of 3.81. Competencies directly linked with the creation and production of audiovisual products, for instance “To know the organizational structures and to apply the techniques, processes of creation, production and audiovisual dissemination in their different phases” or “To know and apply the resources, methods and procedures to build and analyze audiovisual stories” were also considered highly important, the contrary compared to competencies related with theoretical knowledge of the field or other competencies closest to the advertisement and public relations’ field.

Table 1. Level of importance granted to disciplinary competencies

	Mean	Standard deviation	Median	Mode
To know the historic evolution, processes, theories and psychological models of communication.	3.16	1.09	3	4
To use native languages and English applied to the sector correctly.	4.40	0.87	5	5
To know the historic, political, economic, cultural and aesthetic parameters of societies and their influence on communication.	3.71	1.13	4	5
To know the structure of communication media and their main platforms and formats.	3.19	1.18	3	3
To know the ethics and professional deontology as well as the juridical framework of the sector.	3.87	1.13	4	5
To know the theories about advertisement, public relations and corporate communication.	3.13	1.17	3	3
To know the evolution and social impact of contemporary information and communication technologies.	3.81	1.20	4	5
To know advertisement processes, organizational structure, functioning and management of the communication company.	3.46	1.16	3	3

To know the history, evolution and social relevance of photography, cinema, radio, television and Internet.	3.93	1.12	4	5
To evaluate the corporate status of an organization and to know and design communication strategies.	3.57	1.08	4	3
To know the organizational structures and to apply the techniques, processes of creation, production and audiovisual dissemination in their different phases.	4.32	0.78	4.5	5
To know the marketing processes and its specific techniques: positioning, segmentation, analysis and efficacy measuring procedures.	3.37	1.20	3	3
To know and apply the resources, methods and procedures to build and analyze audiovisual stories.	4.38	0.81	5	5
To know and use specific softwares and apply the new digital technologies to the sector.	4.10	0.90	4	5
To know the economic and social aspects of advertisement and public relations agencies: juridical, tax, business relations, market, funding aspects.	3.06	1.16	3	3
To know how a communication department works, its management and administration of knowledge and intangibles.	3.56	1.14	4	3. 4. 5
To know the methods and techniques of research and analysis of the sector.	3.59	1.16	4	4
To know the structure of advertisement media: characteristics, typologies and issues.	3.19	1.18	3	3
To know the methods of the creative thinking (schools, methods and techniques), messages elaboration processes and their analysis.	3.69	1.10	4	4

Source: authors' own creation

On the other hand, out of the 21 professional competencies included in the survey, nine obtained average scores above 4, that is, that they were considered more than very important, and in four of them, more than 50% of respondents granted them the maximum importance, a fact evincing the interest this kind of competencies generate. “To learn in an autonomous manner and adapt to changes” obtained the most elevated mean not only in the competencies area but also in the survey’s global score: 4.69 points, with a standard deviation of 0.60, which means that respondents granted the maximum importance almost unanimously; but there also outstands the score of other competencies more directly linked with the professional practice of audiovisual communication, like “To write texts, beat sheets or scripts fluently” (mean: 4.49; standard deviation: 0.76) or “to think, plan and perform communicative projects” (mean: 4.49; standard deviation: 0.84). To program and optimize websites

was the competency valued the least by respondents, with a mean score of 3.21, although in this case there was a lot of disparity in scores (standard deviation for this competency was 1.28 points compared to the mean). In general, standard deviations in scores of professional competencies were more elevated than in other competency areas, which can be explained by the broad variety of professional profiles linked to audiovisual communication, a fact that, at the same time, could have caused disparities in scores of competencies that can be very relevant for specific job positions but not so relevant for the rest (for instance, “capacity to reproduce the sound environment of an audiovisual production” [mean: 3.71; standard deviation:1.25] or “to use animation and special effects techniques” [mean: 3.44; standard deviation: 1.21]).

Table 2. Level of importance granted to professional competencies

	Mean	Standard deviation	Median	Mode
To apply the communicative techniques in the different media and multimedia interactive platforms.	4.21	0.97	4	5
To design the formal and aesthetic aspects in written, graphic, audiovisual and digital media.	4.10	0.98	4	5
To think, plan and perform communicative projects.	4.49	0.84	5	5
To strategically manage the corporate image of a company, adding value to its products and services.	3.57	1.16	4	4
To recover, analyze and process information in order to disseminate it.	3.93	1.01	4	5
To use data and statistics in a correct manner.	3.51	1.24	4	4
To learn in an autonomous manner and adapt to changes.	4.69	0.60	5	5
To create and conduct the complete film-making process of audiovisual productions.	4.22	1.00	5	5
Adjust the intensity and quality of sound, light and color during the creation process.	3.87	1.08	4	4
To write texts, beat sheets or scripts fluently.	4.49	0.76	5	5
To create, develop and supervise graphic elements, images or texts in a creative manner.	4.07	0.94	4	5
To organize and manage technical resources.	3.87	0.84	4	4
To search, select and systematize any kind of audiovisual document in a database.	3.62	1.05	4	4
To analyze structures, contents and styles of television and radio-television programs.	3.66	1.14	4	4

To assemble sound and visual productions based on an idea using the needed narrative and technological techniques.	4.15	0.97	4	5
Capacity to reproduce the sound environment of an audiovisual or multimedia production based on the text and story's intention.	3.71	1.25	4	5
To attend and advise the client, aiding continuously before, during and after the performance of communication actions.	3.63	1.24	4	5
To establish a communication plan: objectives, target public, strategies and budget monitoring.	3.99	1.09	4	5
To create content for different platforms and control the continuity of narrative discourse through them.	4.15	0.87	4	4.5
To use animation and special effects techniques.	3.44	1.21	4	4
To program and optimize websites (SEO and SEM).	3.21	1.28	3	4

Source: authors' own creation

The group of ten academic competencies shows very similar scores between them, ranging from 3.60 points of “to know the didactics of information and communication disciplines” (standard deviation: 1.05) and the 4.31 points of “to expose research results in an oral, written, audiovisual or digital manner adequately” (standard deviation: 0.97). Thus, even though we do not find poorly scored competencies, respondents did not position academic competencies amongst the most relevant ones for audiovisual communication professionals either.

Table 3. Level of importance granted to academic competencies

	Mean	Standard deviation	Median	Mode
To know the theories, methods, languages and problems of audiovisual communication.	3.93	0.98	4	4.5
To identify relevant research themes, define them and use sources properly to contribute to the knowledge in the area of communication.	3.88	1.15	4	5
Capacity to adapt to organizational objectives and culture.	4.22	0.96	4.5	5
To structure complex knowledge in a coherent manner and know how to connect it with other disciplines.	4.12	0.99	4	5
To expose research results in an oral, written, audiovisual or digital manner adequately.	4.31	0.97	5	5

To know how to evaluate mediatic productions.	3.94	0.91	4	4
To know the didactics of information and communication disciplines.	3.60	1.05	4	4
To understand and interpret a complex communicative environment in a critical manner.	3.99	1.10	4	5
To search and manage information in a digital environment.	4.16	0.99	4	5
Assume the leadership in projects needing human and budget resources, managing them efficiently and assuming the principles of social responsibility.	4.16	1.03	4.5	5

Source: authors' own creation

Finally, we find the most elevated scores in the group of specific competencies. Almost all of them were evaluated as very important by more than 50% of respondents. “Perspicacity, inventiveness and creativeness allowing to find efficacious solutions to unprecedented problems” obtained the best score (4.65; standard deviation: 0.59), and “Interdisciplinary knowledge applied to the creation of communicative messages” the worst, although it kept being a competency valued positively as mean (4.12 points; standard deviation: 0.94). Like the case of academic competencies, mean scores for the group of these twelve specific competencies were rather homogeneous (always above “very important”), therefore, we can state that globally it is a set of competencies considered as highly relevant. Likewise, the standard deviation in all cases was inferior to 1, which indicates an elevated level of agreement in interviewees' responses.

Table 4. Level of importance granted to specific competencies

	Mean	Standard deviation	Median	Mode
Egalitarian awareness about people, nations, cultures and respect for international human rights.	4.41	0.88	5	5
To convey knowledge and progresses to the non-specialized majority in an understandable and efficacious manner.	4.35	0.79	4	5
To adapt to technological, business or work organigram changes.	4.35	0.86	5	5
To work as a team in different environments, communicate own ideas and integrate into a common project destined to obtaining results, without losing autonomy, maintaining the identity and values of your own.	4.62	0.75	5	5
To make decisions under uncertainty situations, taking risks and responsibilities.	4.53	0.78	5	5

Self-evaluation in a critical manner and to correct mistakes made.	4.60	0.65	5	5
Perspicacity, inventiveness and creativeness allowing to find efficacious solutions to unprecedented problems	4.65	0.59	5	5
Capacity of analysis, synthesis and critical judgement. To know how to relate causes and effects.	4.59	0.67	5	5
To know how to manage time, and organize tasks.	4.50	0.72	5	5
Act in freedom and with responsibility, assuming ethical references, consistent values and principles.	4.51	0.91	5	5
Capacity for the objective analysis of reality and obtaining valid considerations.	4.31	0.87	5	5
Interdisciplinary knowledge applied to the creation of communicative messages.	4.12	0.94	4	5

Source: authors' own creation

3.2. Analysis per competency dimensions

After the individual analysis of the competencies included in the survey, we grouped and integrated these competencies in the four already mentioned dimensions (disciplinary, professional, academic and specific competencies) to better evaluate their global relevance and the possible correlations between them. Each dimension is the result of the aggregation of scores given by respondents to each one of the competencies belonging thereto and the reconversion of those resulting scores into a 1 to 5 scale, to keep the coherence with the analysis of individual competencies and to guarantee the comparability among dimensions.

Regarding disciplinary competencies, the global mean score was 3.88 points, with a standard deviation of 0.89. Although it is a good result, these kinds of competencies were globally considered as less relevant for occupation performance among respondents of the field of audiovisual communication. Secondly, professional competencies had a mean score of 4.15 (standard deviation: 0.65) and academic competencies with a 4.22 (standard deviation: 0.91); that is, both with a consideration slightly superior to “very important”. Moreover, we observe that even though academic competencies did not obtain so elevated scores individually as found in other dimensions, when the score is considered globally, it surpasses the score obtained by professional competencies, a fact that could be explained due to the absence of academic competencies among the worst valued. This way, even though academic competencies are clearly not considered as the most important, the aggregated results evidence their relevance for professionals and students of audiovisual communication. Finally, just as it was suspected in the individual analysis of competencies, specific competencies are considered as most relevant by respondents, with a mean of 4.71 over 5 (that is, with a global evaluation very close to “very important”) and a standard deviation of only 0.62.

Table 5. Level of importance granted to the four competency dimensions

	Mean	Standard deviation	Median	Mode
Disciplinary competencies	3.88	0.89	4	4
Professional competencies	4.15	0.65	4	4
Academic competencies	4.22	0.91	4	5
Specific competencies	4.71	0.62	5	5

Source: authors' own creation

The Kolmogorov-Smirnov test for the four dimensions has a statistical significance below 0.05, therefore we can say that it does not have a normal distribution. With this assumption, and considering the reduced sample size and the ordinal nature of variables, we correlated the four dimensions using Kendall's Tau-b coefficient, which shows how all of them correlate positively; that is, that respondents that globally evaluated the competencies of one dimension positively, evaluated the competencies of others positively as well, and vice versa. All correlations were statistically significant. Specifically, the higher correlations produced between professional and academic competencies ($r=0.580$; $p=0.000$) and between disciplinary and professional competencies ($r=0.555$; $p=0.000$). The weakest correlation was between disciplinary and specific competencies ($r=0.330$; $p=0.003$).

Table 6. Normality tests of the four competency dimensions (Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test)

	Normality test (Kolmogorov-Smirnov)
Disciplinary competencies	0.244 ($p=0.000$)
Professional competencies	0.310 ($p=0.000$)
Academic competencies	0.289 ($p=0.000$)
Specific competencies	0.461 ($p=0.000$)

Source: authors' own creation

These results evidenced that the evaluations of the different competency dimensions do not cause detriment between them, instead respondents consider that all of them are complementary, especially in the case of evaluations of professional competencies regarding disciplinary and academic competencies.

Table 7. Correlations among the four competency dimensions (Kendall’s Tau-b coefficient)

	Disciplinary competencies	Professional competencies	Academic competencies	Specific competencies
Disciplinary competencies	1	0.555 (p=0.000)	0.410 (p=0.000)	0.330 (p=0.003)
Professional competencies		1	0.560 (p=0.000)	0.367 (p=0.001)
Academic competencies			1	0.418 (p=0.000)
Specific competencies				1

Source: authors’ own creation

3.3. Comparison with results of Audiovisual Communication in the White Paper

Even though the competencies evaluated in the White Paper on Communication Degrees (Aneca, 2005) do not completely coincide with the ones included in this research, as was already explained in the methodological section, the White Paper did suggest the distinction between disciplinary, professional, academic and specific competencies, therefore the comparison between the importance granted globally to these four competency dimensions by the respondents of the audiovisual communication field in said White Papers and in the present research is appropriate. [1]

A first relevant difference is linked to the ranking by relevance: if on the year 2005 the least valued competencies were professional competencies, in the survey made in 2017, the least valued were disciplinary ones, as has already been confirmed. Besides, the group of disciplinary competencies were the only ones that obtained a lower score compared to those of the White Paper, while both professional and specific competencies, and to a lesser extent, academic competencies, were better scored in this study’s survey.

Table 8. Importance granted to the four competency dimensions compared with results of the White Paper on Communications Degrees

	Mean score of Audiovisual Communication in the White Paper on Communication Degrees (2005)	Mean score in our study (2017)
Disciplinary competencies	3.97	3.88
Professional competencies	3.69	4.15
Academic competencies	4.07	4.22
Specific competencies	4.29	4.71

Source: authors’ own creation

We must also highlight some issues regarding specific competencies that did appear in both studies. For instance, the correct use of native languages and English was a competency considered as very important in both cases, with a mean score of 4.17 in the White Paper and 4.40 in this survey. On the other hand, there is a loss of relevance of competencies such as “To know the history, evolution and social relevance of photography, cinema, radio, television and Internet” (4.13 in the White Paper and 3.93 in this study), and a noticeable increase of the relevance granted to competencies such as “To write text, beat sheets or scripts fluently” (from 3.73 to 4.49), “Self-evaluation in a critical manner and to correct mistakes made” (from 4.27 to 4.60) or “To making decisions under situations of uncertainty, taking risks and responsibilities” (from 4.14 to 4.53). Although we will delve more about it in the conclusions, these data seem to indicate that in the last decade there has been a change towards a greater interest towards competencies of more pragmatic and attitudinal nature.

4. Discussion and conclusions

The analysis of the relevance granted by professionals, teachers and students to competencies related to audiovisual communication indicates, in first place, that there is no competency included in this study that is considered, as mean, as not at all or scarcely important. In this sense, we must outstand the adaptation of all of them to what, in a generalized manner, demand the present and future professionals of the sector. However, despite this positive global evaluation, there are noticeable differences observed between competency dimensions, being the competencies of more pragmatic, instrumental and procedural nature [2] best valued compared to competencies related with the field’s theoretical and substantive knowledge [3]. Thus, for instance, issues such as knowledge of English or the capacity to adapt to new situations are considered among the most important, while other aspects such as knowing communication theories and models or knowing the structure of media are among the lower scores competencies.

This situation could be explained at least by two phenomena. First, due to the fact that the European Higher Education Area (EHEA, EEES in Spanish) is completely developed in the university studies on communication, with different classes already educated in this system already integrated in the labor market. The EEES model bet on orienting education towards economic profitability and the business progress of knowledge (Ballesteros Carrasco, Franco Romo and Pedro Carañana, 2012), which was translated, for the audiovisual communication studies, on demands to prioritize those competencies of easier connection with specific skills required by the labor market, as manifested in the review of literature about this issue. In this sense, results of this study would reflect the complete assumption of the EEES model among professionals, teachers and students, in a context of technological change, work precarity and high competitiveness in the labor market where professionals have even more incentives to be pragmatic and value competencies evincing their versatility, self-sufficiency and polyvalence (in fact, adapting to changes was the best scored competency in the survey) [4]. Furthermore, the differences observed in the comparison with results presented in the White Paper (Aneca, 2005) reinforce this rationale. Thus, twelve years ago the disciplinary competencies were better valued and, as a difference, professional and specific competencies obtained worst scores in general.

Secondly, we must consider that the field of audiovisual communication includes a great diversity of professional profiles with associated specific competencies, a fact that in a survey targeted to all the population related to the discipline, necessarily causes that, despite only a few grant them a lot of importance, they are not competencies considered so relevant by the majority. For instance, this would be the case of competencies such as the ones related to the management of the corporate image; the use of data and statistics; the search, selection and systematization of audiovisual documents; or the programming and optimization of websites. In any case, this would be a fact that could also have influenced in a higher score obtained globally by competencies of more transversal nature, which considering their characteristics, involve all professional profiles to a higher extent.

However, we must highlight that, considered globally, analyzed competencies do not produce detriment between them, that is, in general those respondents that best evaluate a certain type of competencies, also tend to offer a high score to the rest, and vice versa. This evidences that it is a mistake to contrast disciplinary and professional competencies, academic and/ or specific competencies. These results suggest instead that the traditional disjunctive between theoretical and practical knowledge and between knowledge competencies and attitudinal type competencies has no sense, and that a greater emphasis on these practical and attitudinal competencies in the educational offer in audiovisual communication doesn't necessarily need to inevitably lead to the outcast of knowledge competencies in the study programs.

Finally, we must specify that what we have exposed so far are results that must be mandatorily defined as temporary, especially considering the reduced size of the sample from which they were obtained. Therefore, it seems evident new researches are necessary allowing not only to continue their confirmation, but also to delve into some aspects we couldn't manage in a deeper manner because they were not directly linked with objectives pursued, such as the implications for the audiovisual communication sector and for professionals' education regarding the existence of a great diversity of profiles needing very specific competencies.

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Dates:

- Onset of research: 7/9/2015
- Completion of research: 31/12/2017

5. Notes

[1] We should consider that the survey, in which the White Paper was based on, presented possible scores in a 0 (not important at all) to 4 (very important) scale, while in this study we used a 1 to 5 scale instead. To compare means we added a point to scores reported in the White Paper.

[2] Most of them classified as specific or professional competencies, according to the categorization suggested in Aneca (2005) and used in this research.

[3] Most of those classified as disciplinary competencies based on the categorization suggested in Aneca (2005) and used in this research.

[4] Those competencies are linked with the idea of “I entrepreneur” developed by Rose (1998), whereas, in a context of neoliberal governmentality, individuals freely assume the responsibility of molding their lives showing initiative and strategically choosing the behavior and sacrifices that will help them improve.

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