



## A bibliographic study of public relations in Spanish media and communication journals, 2000–2012



María Isabel Míguez-González\*, Xosé Manuel Baamonde-Silva,  
Juan Manuel Corbacho-Valencia

Department of Audiovisual Communication and Advertising, University of Vigo, Spain

### ARTICLE INFO

#### Article history:

Received 23 April 2014

Received in revised form 14 July 2014

Accepted 1 August 2014

#### Keywords:

Public relations research

Spanish media and communication journals

Impact factor

### ABSTRACT

This study analyses the trends and visibility of research on public relations in the most relevant Spanish media and communication journals between the years 2000 and 2012. Bibliometrics and content analysis are used to show the reduced presence of articles on public relations in these publications. A trend towards gender parity in authorship is confirmed in the sample, as well as a plurality of universities and a variety of research themes. The study also proves preference for generic questions rather than for specialised topics. Another finding is that almost one fourth of the specific articles on this discipline do not contain the term “public relations”. This can hint towards the need to have a specific high-impact publication on public relations to bring together and provide visibility to the contributions of researchers in this field.

© 2014 Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

### 1. Introduction

Scientific communication is a key step in the generation of knowledge. As [Masip \(2011\)](#) argues, “researchers must disseminate their ideas, show them in public debate and subject them to peer review, so that their theories are accepted or rejected by the academic community”, and so that, if the case arises, they are legitimised as useful research and can contribute to the progress of societies.

Academic communication can be channelled through different media. One of these channels are scientific journals, which, since they first appeared in the first half of the 17th century ([Castillo-Esparcia, 2011a: 137](#)) have been the most important discussion forum for the research community.

[Castillo-Esparcia \(2011a: 150\)](#) mentions several reasons motivating researchers to publish in scientific journals. Communication (to make the work known), funding (through publication the financial support of a body of whichever kind is justified), or prestige are some of the reasons mentioned. Others are reasons related to their academic career and financial rewards in terms of research productivity. At least in the Spanish case, these last two factors have greatly influenced the relevance that scientific journals have acquired in fields such as the Social Sciences and the Humanities, where monographs used to be the preferred form of publication ([Masip, 2011](#)).

In this sense, we should highlight that faculty and researchers of Spanish universities have to comply with the criteria of different accreditation and assessment agencies in order to make progress in their academic career, or to obtain

\* Corresponding author. +34 986802032.

E-mail addresses: [mabelm@uvigo.es](mailto:mabelm@uvigo.es), [miguezgonzalez@gmail.com](mailto:miguezgonzalez@gmail.com) (M.I. Míguez-González), [xbaamonde@uvigo.es](mailto:xbaamonde@uvigo.es) (X.M. Baamonde-Silva), [jmcorbacho@uvigo.es](mailto:jmcorbacho@uvigo.es) (J.M. Corbacho-Valencia).

financial rewards linked to research quality. When analysing the research activities of an individual, both the ANECA (Spanish Agency for Quality Assessment and Evaluation), as well as regional quality agencies or CNEAI (Spanish Commission for the Assessment of Research Activities, in charge of granting six-year bonuses), pay special attention to the articles published in scientific journals of proven prestige. Therefore, publishing in such journals becomes a priority for researchers in all fields, as described by Giménez-Toledo and Alcaín-Partearroyo (2006):

“The decision where to publish research outcomes is one of the most important concerns of Spanish faculty and researchers. In the past, this decision was either randomly made or due to subject matter and personal preference for some journals, but it has now become more of a planned exercise, so that the personal CV is assessed in a better light. Spanish assessment agencies have slowly developed their criteria to assess scientific publications.” (Giménez-Toledo & Alcaín-Partearroyo, 2006: 107).

Publications of proven prestige are those that are indexed in databases whose inclusion criteria guarantee, in principle, the quality of such a publication.

Some such criteria, necessary for the journal to be included in the database, are purely formal (periodicity, publication norms for the authors, etc.) Others have to do with the selection procedures for articles, generally based on peer review that should guarantee the quality of scientific knowledge published in them. However, the criteria that defines not only inclusion, but the importance of a publication in a particular database, has to do with its impact factor, as described by Garfield (1998, 2003) for publications in science and psychology.

Thus, researchers must not only strive for a publication that adapts to their field of study according to specialisation, but they must also look for a publication with a high-impact index, which means, as Baladrón-Pazos and Correyero-Ruiz (2012: 35) indicate, “a key factor in the demand of some publications against others”.

In the specific case of public relations, we should highlight that until the year 2011, Spain had a single medium for publication in this field – the proceedings of the annual or two-yearly conferences organised by the Association of Public Relations Researchers (AIRP). Since its inception in 2004, the AIRP has worked hard for the visibility of the discipline, and it has also advocated for the use of the term “public relations”, in clear decline in Spain (Arceo Vacas, 2005; Urzáz & Fernández del Castillo, 1997; Xifra, 2005). The association demands, for example, the use of this term in all texts submitted to the conferences they organise.

Taking the experience of AIRP into account, a group of lecturers at Málaga University, members of the association, created the Institute for Public Relations Research (IIRP) with the aim of bringing together “research and studies that contribute to an improvement of the knowledge and practice of this discipline” (Castillo-Esparcia, 2011b). They started publishing the *Revista Internacional de Relaciones Públicas* in 2011. This is the only scientific publication in Spain for this subject matter. However, as it was recently created (2012), it does not have a strong impact factor, neither has it been considered for the widely accepted databases.

Therefore, researchers in this field who want to disseminate their outcomes in high-impact scientific journals must go for international publications listed in the Journal Citation Reports (JCR), such as *Public Relations Review*, or Spanish journals in the field of media and communications included in the IN-RECS (impact index of Spanish journals for the Social Sciences, drafted until 2011 by the research group EC3 of the University of Granada), or they can also go for journals with a high H index according to Google scholar Metrics. While such publications may not have so much repercussion as international publications, at least they create space for more concrete or specific topics that may be of interest for the development of a field in a particular country.

A clear example of the concern in the field of media and communication studies around scientific journals and their impact is the publication of studies analysing different aspects of this topic. In this sense, we could mention recent international works related to bibliometrics and focusing on aspects such as citation analysis, impact factors or the national diversity of publications (Beatty, Feeley, and Dodd, 2012; Feeley, 2008; Lauf, 2005; Park & Leydesdorff, 2009). We can also quote several bibliometric studies specifically for public relations, such as the ones by Pasadeos and Renfro (Pasadeos & Renfro, 1989, 1992; Pasadeos, Berger, & Renfro, 2010; Pasadeos, Renfro, & Hanily, 1999) or those by Morton and Lin (1995), Ye and Ki (2012) or Kim, Choi, Reber, and Kim (2014).

In the Spanish scenario, in comparison to the field of media and communication studies in general, there are several relevant bibliometric or content analysis studies around what is published in scientific journals (Castillo-Esparcia & Carretón Ballester, 2010; Castillo-Esparcia, Rubio, and Almansa, 2012; Fernández-Quijada, 2011a, 2011b; Martínez Nicolás & Sáperas Lapiedra, 2011). Such studies go deeper into the role of these publications and that of assessment and accreditation agencies in their development (Castillo-Esparcia, 2011a; Masip, 2011). They also analyse the development or situation of particular journals (Colle, 2009; Roca-Correa & Pueyo-Ayhan, 2012), or perform forecasts, such as those by Baladrón-Pazos and Correyero-Ruiz (2012).

However, there are hardly any more specific studies looking into the concrete situation of the discipline of public relations in Spanish media and communication journals. In this sense, we can find an approximation to this subject in Míguez-González (2011), with an analysis of the public relations articles published in the ten highest ranking journals in INRECS between 2008 and 2010.

The goal of this study is, precisely, to expand this above-mentioned study and to present an overview of the situation of public relations in the most important Spanish media and communications journals of the 21st century.

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/138814>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/138814>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)