Prisma Social revista de ciencias sociales , No. 54
Julio 2026 e-ISSN 1989-3469. pp 406-424
DOI: https://doi.org/10.65598/rps.6079

Media Competence of University Faculty in Hispanic Higher Education: Scientific Dissemination Practices on Social Media
Study on scientific dissemination in social media

Competencia mediática del profesorado universitario en la educación superior hispana: prácticas de divulgación científica en redes sociales digitales

Dieter Reynaldo Fuentes-Cancell, Odiel Estrada-Molina, Mónica Gutiérrez-Ortega
Universidad de Valladolid, España

KEYWORDS
Media competence
Higher education
Scientific dissemination
Social media
University teachers

ABSTRACT
This study examines university faculty media competence for scientific dissemination on social media within the context of Hispanic higher education. Framed by the challenges of digital internationalization and the visibility of knowledge produced in Spanish, the study adopts a quantitative exploratory-descriptive design. A total of 60 active faculty profiles (35 on LinkedIn and 25 on X) were analyzed, selected from publicly accessible accounts with verifiable scientific dissemination activity, using three validated instruments structured across six dimensions of media competence. The results indicate predominantly initial to intermediate competence levels (A2–B1). LinkedIn shows more consistent development, particularly in the Language, Interaction, and Ideology and Values dimensions. In contrast, performance on X is more irregular, with notable weaknesses in the Technological and Aesthetic dimensions. Across both platforms, ethical and communicative responsibility emerges as a consolidated strength, whereas strategic planning, multimodal design, and advanced technological use remain limited. The study proposes an operational model for analyzing media competence through real scientific dissemination practices, contributing to current debates on academic visibility and the international positioning of research produced in Spanish.

PALABRAS CLAVE
Competencia mediática
Educación superior
Divulgación científica
Redes sociales digitales
Profesores universitarios

RESUMEN
Este estudio examina la competencia mediática del profesorado universitario para la divulgación científica en redes sociales digitales dentro del contexto de la educación superior hispana. Enmarcado en los desafíos de la internacionalización digital y la visibilidad del conocimiento producido en español, el trabajo adopta un diseño cuantitativo de alcance exploratorio-descriptivo. Se analizaron 60 perfiles activos de profesorado (35 en LinkedIn y 25 en X), seleccionados a partir de cuentas públicas con actividad verificable de divulgación científica, mediante tres instrumentos validados estructurados en seis dimensiones de la competencia mediática. Los resultados muestran niveles predominantemente iniciales e intermedios (A2–B1). LinkedIn presenta un desarrollo más consistente, especialmente en Lenguaje, Interacción e Ideología y Valores. En contraste, X evidencia un desempeño más irregular, con debilidades en las dimensiones Tecnológica y Estética. En ambas plataformas, la responsabilidad ética y comunicativa constituye una fortaleza consolidada, mientras que la planificación estratégica, el diseño multimodal y el uso avanzado de herramientas tecnológicas son limitados. El estudio aporta un modelo operativo para analizar la competencia mediática en prácticas reales de divulgación científica, contribuyendo al debate sobre visibilidad académica e internacionalización del conocimiento en español.

RECEIVED: 03/03/2026
ACCEPTED: 05/24/2026

How to cite this article: (APA 7ª)
Fuentes-Cancell, D.R., Estrada-Molina, O., Gutiérrez-Ortega, M. (2026). Media Competence of University Faculty in Hispanic Higher Education: Scientific Dissemination Practices in Social Media. *Prisma Social revista de ciencias sociales*, *54*, 406-424. https://doi.org/10.65598/rps.6079

1. Introduction

The digital transformation of higher education has intensified the need for university faculty to develop media competence that integrates critical, expressive, and technological capacities within open digital environments. Beyond the instrumental mastery of technologies, contemporary academia increasingly demands a faculty profile capable of actively participating in the circulation of scientific knowledge, engaging with diverse audiences, and communicating research findings in an ethical, intelligible, and socially relevant manner (Gil-Fernández et al., 2019; Gende, 2021). In this regard, the EDUCAUSE Horizon Report (2025) highlights the urgency of fostering critical digital literacy and advanced content production skills as key components of current teaching practices.

Scientific dissemination on social media constitutes a significant space for academic visibility and knowledge transfer. Open platforms such as LinkedIn and X facilitate the sharing of research outputs, the strengthening of professional networks, and the expansion of science's societal reach (Aguaded et al., 2022; Gil & Guallar, 2023; Marcelo-Martínez et al., 2023). However, multiple studies consistently indicate that university faculty make limited and uneven professional use of these platforms, particularly in relation to the development of media competence across dimensions such as language, technology, interaction, and content production (Froment et al., 2022; Martín-Gutiérrez et al., 2024; Moreno et al., 2024).

Although recent research has highlighted the educational and communicative potential of platforms such as LinkedIn, X, YouTube, and TikTok (Gallego et al., 2023; Martin Neira et al., 2023; Estrada-Molina & Fuentes-Cancell, 2024), significant gaps remain. Most studies rely on self-reports or faculty perceptions, without incorporating validated instruments or conducting systematic analyses of the content actually posted. Furthermore, comparative analyses between platforms governed by distinct communicative logics, such as LinkedIn, oriented toward academic identity construction, and X, centered on public conversation, remain scarce, despite their growing relevance in scientific communication.

Within this context, a clear research problem emerges: although social media constitute relevant environments for scientific dissemination and knowledge visibility, their professional use by university faculty remains uneven and weakly articulated. This situation is characterized by a limited appropriation of platforms such as LinkedIn and X, as well as by the insufficient development of the critical, technological, and expressive dimensions of media competence required to communicate scientific knowledge effectively in open digital environments.

This study advances the field by proposing an operational model for analyzing university faculty media competence based on observable scientific dissemination practices in real digital environments. Unlike previous research primarily grounded in self-reported data or perceptions, this approach enables a situated understanding of how media competence is enacted across different social media platforms. In addition, the comparative analysis of LinkedIn and X provides insights into how platform-specific communicative logics shape the development and expression of media competence in higher education contexts.

1.1 Contextual Theoretical Framework: Knowledge Circulation, Open Science, and Media Competence

The international visibility of research produced in Spanish speaking contexts continues to be shaped by digital and institutional gaps that affect the production, dissemination, and internationalization of scientific knowledge (Valdivieso et al., 2021). Numerous studies have noted that universities in Spain and Latin America face structural difficulties in competing within global academic ecosystems, due both to limitations in their digitalization processes and to their dependence on evaluation, indexing, and ranking systems largely governed by Anglo American linguistic and bibliometric criteria (De Filippo et al., 2017; Luque Martínez et al., 2025).

Within this context, social media emerge as strategic spaces for open science, offering opportunities to broaden the circulation of knowledge produced in Spanish and to enhance its international visibility. However, the effective use of these environments requires the development of advanced media competence, enabling university faculty to communicate science in ways that are critical, ethical, and aligned with the logics of digital ecosystems (Castillo & Powell, 2018).

From a critical perspective, the circulation of scientific knowledge cannot be understood as a neutral process, but rather as a phenomenon shaped by linguistic, media-related, and geopolitical dynamics. Research produced in Spanish has historically exhibited lower visibility within international scientific communication circuits, which are dominated by English and by specific narrative, technological, and symbolic standards (Niño-Sandoval et al., 2023). This inequality does not respond solely to criteria of academic quality, but also to asymmetries in modes of dissemination, indexing, and knowledge circulation, which place science developed in Spanish-speaking contexts in peripheral positions within global digital ecosystems (Suazo-Galdames et al., 2025; Victorino et al., 2024).

In this context, social media emerge simultaneously as spaces of opportunity and tension for open science. On the one hand, they facilitate direct communication with transnational academic communities and non specialized audiences; on the other hand, they reproduce algorithmic, competitive, and visibility driven logics that require specific competences in order to be understood and used strategically (Chinnasamy & Pandi, 2025). From this perspective, university faculty media competence plays a central mediating role between scientific production and its public circulation, as it involves not only technical skills but also critical, ethical, and expressive capacities to adapt scientific discourse to the languages, formats, and dynamics characteristic of social media (Said Hung et al., 2024).

At the conceptual level, media competence, structured into six dimensions according to Ferrés and Piscitelli (2012), and teaching digital competence, as defined in the INTEF Reference Framework (2022), converge in emphasizing the need to equip faculty with the tools required to analyze and produce messages across multiple languages, to interact critically in digital environments, and to communicate knowledge in ethical and accessible ways. Despite this convergence, the literature reveals a scarcity of studies examining how these competences are expressed through real and observable practices of scientific dissemination on social media.

1.2 Objective of the Study

Within this framework, the aim of this study is to examine how the expressive dimensions of university faculty media competence are manifested through their scientific dissemination practices on social media, understood as key environments for the public circulation of knowledge. Specifically, the study analyzes the six dimensions of media competence as reflected in posts published on LinkedIn and X, and compares the competence levels attained (A1 to C2) in order to identify patterns of use, strengths, and areas for improvement from a cross sectional perspective.

2. Methodology

2.1. Design

A quantitative approach with an exploratory descriptive scope was adopted (Hernández Sampieri et al., 2014), appropriate for examining an emerging phenomenon such as university faculty media competence on social media through the application of three previously validated constructs. The study followed a non experimental, cross sectional design based on the documentary analysis of public profiles on LinkedIn and X. This strategy enabled the identification of observable indicators of media competence related to professional visibility, the frequency and type of posts, interaction with other academic actors, and the use of communicative resources oriented toward scientific dissemination.

Based on the evidence gathered from these profiles, methodological triangulation was implemented both at the level of information sources and in the analytical process. Three researchers independently conducted the analysis, thereby strengthening the reliability of the findings, as well as the interpretative validity and internal coherence of the study, while incorporating a critical and plural analytical perspective.

2.2. Context and Study Population

The study was conducted at a Spanish public university with a long standing tradition in teacher education, comprising four Faculties of Education distributed across different campuses and cities: Valladolid, Palencia, Segovia, and Soria. All four faculties offer degree programs in Early Childhood Education, Primary Education, and related fields, and share a homogeneous organizational structure, with between five and six active departments per campus. This configuration facilitated internal comparison and the identification of common patterns in the academic use of social media.

The total study population consisted of 177 faculty members affiliated with these departments during the November to December 2024 period: 87 at Valladolid, 28 at Palencia, 33 at Segovia, and 29 at Soria. Collectively, the four campuses comprised 21 departments, with an approximate average of eight faculty members per department, reflecting a balanced and comparable academic structure across units.

Faculty members represented a broad disciplinary spectrum typical of Faculties of Education, including Education Sciences, Psychology, Sociology, Language and Literature, Specific Didactics, and Arts Education. This disciplinary diversity was particularly relevant to the aims of the study, as it enabled an interdisciplinary and contextualized analysis of academic presence on social media.

2.3. Sample and Selection

The sample selection process was conducted in four complementary phases. First, public faculty profiles on LinkedIn and X were manually identified. On LinkedIn, 64 profiles were located (36.1% of the total population), of which 35 (19.7%) showed relevant scientific dissemination activity. On X, 78 profiles were identified (44.1%), with 25 (14.1%) presenting verifiable academic posts. The presence of inactive profiles was high on both platforms: 29 faculty members on LinkedIn (45.3% of those with an account) and 53 on X (67.9%), indicating an irregular use of both platforms across the faculty as a whole.

These 70 faculty members with significant activity constituted the final sample for the analysis of media competence. Their distribution across campuses was relatively balanced: 26 active faculty members at Valladolid, representing 29.8% of the total faculty at that campus; 10 at Palencia, representing 35.7%; 12 at Segovia, representing 36.3%; and 7 at Soria, representing 24.1%. In addition, academic activity was identified in 13 departments on LinkedIn and in 11 departments on X, indicating a distributed academic presence rather than a concentration in specific disciplinary areas. Table 1 (Supplementary Material) provides the full distribution by campus and department, while Table 1 presents a synthetic summary.

Table 1.
Synthetic Distribution of the Population and Sample by Campus

Campus	No. of departments	Total population	Active profiles on LinkedIn	Active profiles on X
Valladolid	6	87	13	13
Palencia	5	28	7	3
Segovia	5	33	6	6
Soria	5	29	5	2
Total	**21**	**177**	**35**	**25**

Source: Authors' own elaboration (2026)

The sample was defined as open, dynamic, and self selected, as it depended on the public visibility of faculty members on the social media platforms analyzed. Although the initial population

comprised 177 faculty members, only those with verifiable activity on LinkedIn or X during the previous 12 months were included. This approach is consistent with prior research on academic digital footprints, which indicates that only a proportion of faculty maintain an active presence oriented toward scientific dissemination.

To ensure transparency, explicit inclusion and exclusion criteria were applied. Profiles lacking research related posts or evidence of recent academic interaction were excluded. The potential presence of self selection bias, associated with faculty members exhibiting higher levels of digital competence or a stronger predisposition toward academic visibility, is acknowledged. However, this limitation is mitigated through comparative analysis across campuses, departments, and platforms, allowing the findings to be interpreted within a realistic institutional context.

The resulting sample configuration is appropriate for the objectives of the study, as it enables a situated analysis of effective scientific dissemination practices and of the expression of media competence in digital environments that faculty members use voluntarily and actively.

2.4. Techniques and Instruments

To assess university faculty media competence, three complementary instruments were employed, developed on the basis of the INTEF Digital Teaching Competence Framework (MRCDD 2.2; INTEF, 2022) and the media literacy model proposed by Ferrés and Piscitelli (2012). The first instrument consisted of a general assessment matrix, which demonstrated adequate reliability levels (α = 0.84–0.89; ω = 0.86–0.91). The second instrument was a documentary analysis template designed for LinkedIn, structured into six dimensions and 28 indicators, and validated through expert review (n = 30) and exploratory factor analysis (α = 0.89; ω = 0.90; R^2 = 78.8%). The third instrument replicated this structure for X and yielded comparable values (α = 0.91; ω = 0.93; R^2 = 78.2%). All instruments and detailed matrices are provided as Supplementary Materials to this article and are available in open access.

Competence levels were determined using an A1–C2 scale adapted from the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR), for which specific descriptors were developed and included in the supplementary material. This scale made it possible to establish comparable progressions across platforms and to facilitate the interpretation of the results.

2.5. Procedure

Data collection and analysis followed an integrated methodological sequence (Figure 1). First, public faculty profiles on LinkedIn and X were manually identified, applying the established inclusion and exclusion criteria. The analysis templates were prepared based on the supplementary materials corresponding to each platform.

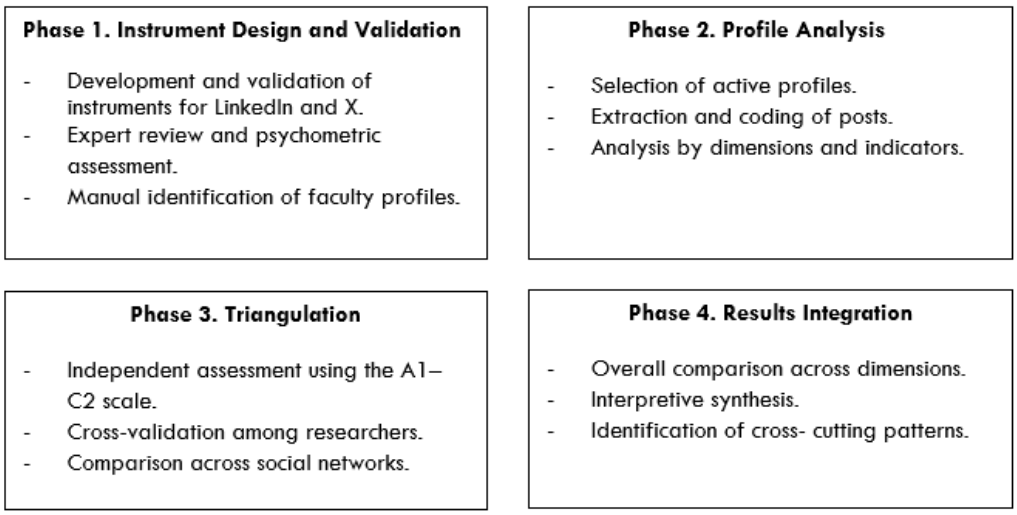
Subsequently, three researchers independently analyzed the scientific dissemination activity of the selected profiles, applying the indicators defined in the LinkedIn and X instruments and assigning A1 to C2 levels according to the descriptors provided in Supplementary Material II. Discrepancies among evaluators were resolved through analytical triangulation, resulting in the consolidation of a shared database with scores by dimension, indicator, and platform.

To ensure consistency in the coding process, each indicator was assessed using predefined operational descriptors associated with the A1–C2 competence levels, as detailed in the supplementary materials. These descriptors established explicit scoring criteria for the evaluation of all profiles. The coding procedure involved an initial independent assessment by each researcher, followed by calibration sessions in which discrepancies were systematically discussed and resolved through consensus. This process enhanced inter-rater reliability and ensured consistency in the assignment and interpretation of media competence levels across both platforms.

Finally, a comparative synthesis of the results obtained on LinkedIn and X was conducted, integrating competence levels and the patterns identified within each dimension. This procedure

ensured consistency across instruments, supplementary materials, and empirical analysis, and facilitated the replicability of the study through the use of the open access resources provided. In this research, the process of instrument design and validation was completed prior to data collection and constitutes the methodological foundation of the study. The present article focuses exclusively on the empirical analysis of faculty activity on social media; therefore, information related to instrument construction and validation is included solely as methodological support and does not form part of the results analysis.

Figure 1.



Overview of the methodoloical procedure. *Source:* Authors' own elaboration (2026)

The study was approved by the Ethics Committee of the University of Valladolid. Only publicly available data from social media profiles were analyzed, without collecting private information or identifying individual faculty members. Anonymity and confidentiality were ensured throughout all stages of the study.

3. Results

3.1. Faculty Presence on social media

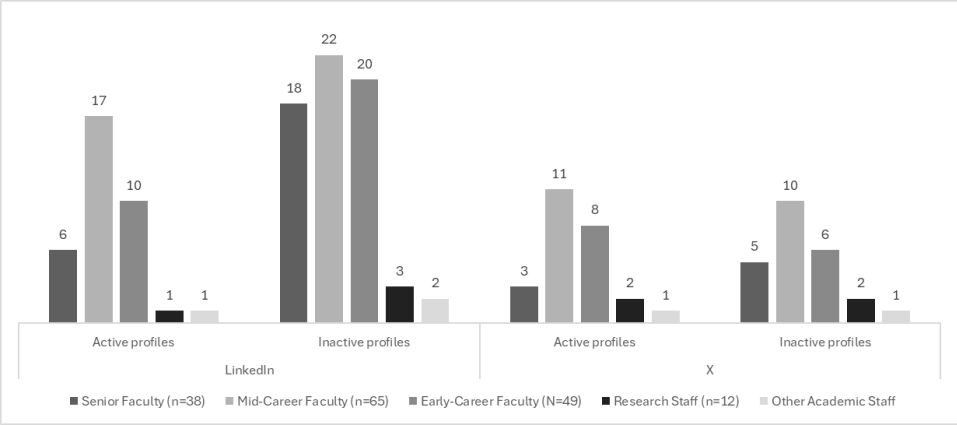
Of the 177 faculty members analyzed, 35 maintained recent scientific dissemination activity on LinkedIn. Most of these profiles corresponded to early-career faculty, followed by mid-career faculty and Lecturer/Adjunct staff. On X, 25 profiles with dissemination activity were identified, along with 24 accounts showing limited participation.

Regarding disciplinary distribution, active presence on LinkedIn was concentrated in Pedagogy, followed by Psychology and Didactics of Artistic Expression. A similar pattern was observed on X, although with a higher number of profiles lacking relevant posts.

From a gender perspective, the faculty population consisted of 108 women (61.8%) and 69 men (38.9%). On LinkedIn, 15.3% of women showed dissemination activity, compared to 4% of men. On X, activity levels were lower for both groups: 5.1% of women and 7.9% of men. For both genders, participation was highest in Pedagogy and Psychology, whereas artistic-expressive fields and experimental sciences showed the lowest representation.

From an overall perspective, the average scores obtained across each dimension reveal systematic differences between LinkedIn and X. Figure 2 synthesizes these initial variations and provides context for the detailed analysis presented below.

Figure 2.



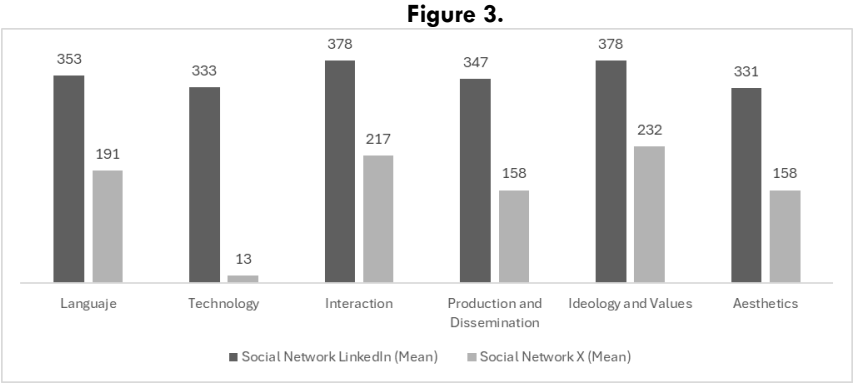
Faculty activity levels on LinkedIn and X by professional category Source: Authors' own elaboration (2026)

3.2. Results by Dimensions of Media Competence

The results are presented according to the six dimensions that structure university faculty media competence (Language, Technology, Interaction, Production/Dissemination, Ideology and Values, and Aesthetics), integrating the indicators applied to LinkedIn (ID.35–ID.62) and X (ID.63–ID.87). This dimensional analysis makes it possible to identify common patterns and divergences in the academic use of both platforms, as well as to assess the level of media competence attained in each domain using the A1–C2 progression scale. The combination of quantitative and qualitative evidence allows for an accurate examination of how faculty implement their media-related skills in actual contexts of scientific dissemination.

From an overall perspective, the average scores obtained in each dimension reveal systematic differences between LinkedIn and X. Figure 3 synthesizes these initial variations and provides context for the detailed analysis presented below.

Figure 3.



Comparison of average media competence scores on LinkedIn and X by evaluated dimensions. Source: Authors' own elaboration (2026)

3.2.1 Dimension 1. Language

In the linguistic domain, clear differences were observed between platforms, with a more consolidated performance on LinkedIn. On this platform, faculty members reached intermediate levels in the production of scientific posts aimed at enhancing the visibility of academic activities and research results (ID.35), as well as in the use of LinkedIn Stories to disseminate events and training activities (ID.36). The writing of short-form articles using an accessible register appropriate to the professional context also showed moderate development (ID.37). At the analytical level,

several profiles were able to identify relevant scientific communities (ID.38) and specific posts aligned with their research interests (ID.39), although the synthesis of research results through combinations of text and images or graphics was less frequent (ID.40). These trends were reflected in the average scores, which were relatively high on LinkedIn (ID.35, $\bar{X} = 3.65$; ID.37, $\bar{X} = 3.44$; ID.39, $\bar{X} = 3.71$; ID.40, $\bar{X} = 3.65$) compared to those obtained on X.

On X, performance was noticeably more limited. The development of explanatory threads on scientific research presented widespread difficulties (ID.63, $\bar{X} = 1.94$), and the selection of strategic hashtags to optimize dissemination showed low levels of development (ID.64). Although some faculty members composed brief messages consistent with the academic environment (ID.65), the integration of visual elements into the discourse was scarce. From an analytical perspective, some progress was observed in the identification of content of scientific interest (ID.67) and in adapting messages to the platform's formal constraints (ID.68, $\bar{X} = 1.85$), while active participation in digital scientific communities remained very limited (ID.66).

Overall, the results suggest a more consolidated linguistic competence on LinkedIn, where faculty demonstrate greater capacity to structure academic discourse and contextualize scientific content. On X, the brevity of the format and the accelerated dynamics of interaction appear to constrain the implementation of this dimension, resulting in more fragmented and less elaborated messages. The overall progression in the Language dimension was situated primarily between A2 and B1 levels, with a few isolated cases of advanced performance on both platforms.

3.2.2. Dimension 2. Technology

Technological performance revealed marked contrasts between platforms, with a more consolidated presence on LinkedIn and substantially lower results on X. On LinkedIn, the use of multimedia resources to complement posts reached a moderate level (ID.41, $\bar{X} = 3.13$), although it remained far from a comprehensive use of the platform's expressive affordances. Participation in live events through LinkedIn Live was limited (ID.42), and the use of automation or content scheduling tools was virtually absent (ID.43). The use of analytical features, such as LinkedIn Analytics, was only sporadic (ID.44, $\bar{X} = 3.06$). Nevertheless, some faculty members demonstrated greater proficiency in identifying and managing strategic professional connections within the network (ID.45).

On X, technological performance was notably lower. The use of multimedia resources was limited (ID.69), and participation in synchronous tools such as Twitter Spaces was very scarce (ID.70). Automation through platforms such as TweetDeck or Buffer showed one of the lowest values across all indicators (ID.71, $\bar{X} = 0.81$), while the use of Twitter Analytics was also minimal (ID.73, $\bar{X} = 0.83$). The only indicator with a relatively acceptable performance was the organization of thematic account following (ID.72). In addition, understanding of the platform's algorithm, key to optimizing the visibility of academic communication, was limited (ID.74).

Overall, the technological dimension reflects a predominantly functional use of each platform, centered on basic operations and characterized by very limited mastery of advanced tools, particularly on X. LinkedIn enables a more stable technological —although still incomplete, use, whereas X requires higher levels of technical competence that most faculty members do not master. As a whole, this dimension was situated mainly at A2–B1 levels on LinkedIn and close to A1–A2 values on X, revealing structural shortcomings in the integration of multimedia resources, automation, analytics, and content optimization strategies for scientific dissemination.

3.2.3. Dimension 3. Interaction

The analysis of interaction reveals a clear contrast between platforms. On LinkedIn, a more mature use oriented toward academic participation was observed, whereas on X interactions tended to

be sporadic and less structured. On LinkedIn, engagement with others' posts through comments providing academic contributions reached high values (ID.47, $\bar{X}$ = 4.13), ranking among the highest-scoring indicators across this dimension. A moderate presence was also recorded in specialized debates within professional groups (ID.48, $\bar{X}$ = 3.65), along with occasional participation in collaborative initiatives generated on the platform (ID.49). From an analytical perspective, faculty members demonstrated the ability to identify influential profiles (ID.51) and high-impact posts within their fields of expertise (ID.52, $\bar{X}$ = 3.92), suggesting an interaction pattern oriented toward building academically meaningful professional communities.

On X, interaction showed a more limited and uneven development. Although some faculty members were able to identify scientific audiences relevant to their messages (ID.77) and recognize trends in the educational field (ID.78, $\bar{X}$ = 2.25), active participation in academic debates was low (ID.75), as was the promotion of interuniversity or interdisciplinary collaborations (ID.76, $\bar{X}$ = 2.15). Difficulties were also observed in the analysis of threads which were widely commented by colleagues (ID.79) and in the critical assessment of the quality of generated interactions (ID.80), suggesting a more reactive and less deliberate use of the platform.

LinkedIn emerges as an environment that facilitates more sustained academic interactions, supported by the identification of key referents, the monitoring of thematic discussions, and participation in professional networks. On X, by contrast, a pattern of superficial and discontinuous interaction predominates, shaped by the platform's rapid and competitive logic, which tends to constrain the development of meaningful academic exchanges. Progression within this dimension was situated mainly at B1 to B2 levels on LinkedIn, compared to A2 to B1 on X.

3.2.4. Dimension 4. Production and Dissemination

The production and dissemination of academic content showed an uneven degree of development across platforms, with moderate performance on LinkedIn and clearly limited performance on X. On LinkedIn, the dissemination of research results through posts about projects, scientific activities, or educational breakthroughs was frequent (ID.53), indicating a willingness to maintain an academic presence on the platform. Likewise, widespread respect for intellectual property was observed (ID.54), an aspect that appears relatively well established among faculty members. However, the ability to select diversified communicative formats adapted to different audiences showed an intermediate degree of development (ID.56, M = 3.42), suggesting that although the platform is used to share academic content, semiotic diversification remains limited.

The situation on X was more constrained and heterogeneous. Although faculty members consistently respected copyright (ID.81, M = 2.08), the production of original materials, such as graphics, infographics, structured threads, or outreach videos, was very limited (ID.82, M = 1.02). Editorial planning also exhibited notable shortcomings: most profiles lacked a clear strategy regarding formats, posting schedules, or audience segmentation (ID.83, M = 1.63), resulting in sporadic and discontinuous posts.

Overall, the results indicate that LinkedIn functions as a more stable space for academic dissemination, although faculty tend to rely on conventional and weakly diversified formats. On X, the platform's rapid temporality and the lack of sustained planning lead to a predominantly informational and reactive use, with little original content aimed at disseminating scientific knowledge. In terms of progression, this dimension was positioned mainly at B1 levels on LinkedIn and between A1–A2 levels on X, highlighting the need to strengthen expressive, multimodal, and strategic design competencies for scientific communication in digital environments.

3.2.5. Dimension 5. Ideology and Values

The Ideology and Values dimension was the most robust in the analysis, showing consistent development on both LinkedIn and X. On LinkedIn, posts were characterized by an ethical and

inclusive approach (ID.57), accompanied by responsible practices in the selection and dissemination of scientific content (ID.58). A critical assessment of shared material was also observed (ID.59), along with an explicit promotion of academic and social values, such as critical thinking, equity, and professional responsibility, reflected in high scores (e.g., ID.57, $\bar{X} = 4.04$; ID.60, $\bar{X} = 4.06$). These results indicate that, although faculty members do not always fully exploit the platform's expressive and technological resources, they do maintain well-established ethical criteria aligned with the demands of scientific dissemination.

On X, although overall performance was more moderate, relevant strengths were also identified. Active faculty members demonstrated ethical sensitivity in message construction (ID.84) and responsibility in the selection of the content they disseminated (ID.85). Source verification and the promotion of corroborated information were frequent practices (ID.86, $\bar{X} = 2.19$), suggesting a critical stance even within a more dynamic and volatile environment. In some cases, posts highlighted content with significant social or scientific impact (ID.87), reinforcing the use of the platform according to criteria of rigor and responsibility.

This dimension represents the most consolidated area of faculty competence across both platforms. In contrast to the limitations observed in technological, aesthetic, or advanced production skills, ethical criteria and communicative responsibility appear as firmly embedded elements of faculty digital practices. Progression within this dimension was situated primarily at B2 to C1 levels on LinkedIn and B1 to B2 levels on X, revealing a stable competence base that may serve as a foundation for strengthening other areas of media competence.

3.2.6. Dimension 6. Aesthetics

The Aesthetics dimension was the least developed overall, showing clear differences between platforms and particularly low performance on X. On LinkedIn, a few isolated cases were identified in which faculty members employed visual designs consistent with their professional identity (ID.61) or produced original posts aimed at fostering academic interaction through clear and carefully crafted presentation (ID.62). However, these examples were in the minority and did not represent a widespread trend; most profiles showed restricted use of advanced visual resources, placing this dimension at modest levels (ID.61, $\bar{X} = 3.25$).

On X, performance was even lower. Although isolated attempts were observed to generate posts capable of stimulating academic dialogue, the incorporation of high-quality visual elements, such as images, infographics, diagrams, or interactive resources, was very scarce (ID.82, $\bar{X} = 1.02$). Narrative and visual coherence of messages was limited, and this dimension reached some of the lowest scores in the analysis (ID.87, $\bar{X} = 1.38$). The combination of the platform's rapid communication dynamics, its high expressive competition, and the absence of a prior culture of digital design among faculty members appears to have shaped this performance.

Overall, the Aesthetics dimension is characterized by incipient development. On both LinkedIn and X, conventional text-based formats predominated, with limited integration of graphic elements that could enhance the accessibility or impact of scientific communication. These results place performance at A2–B1 levels on LinkedIn and A1–A2 levels on X, highlighting the need to strengthen competences related to communicative design and visual presentation in scientific dissemination through social media.

3.3. Integrated Analysis of Media Competence

The multidimensional analysis of media competence revealed a fragmented competence profile, with systematic differences between platforms and an uneven development of expressive, technological, and ethical components. LinkedIn emerged as the environment in which faculty members demonstrated a more stable performance, with predominantly B1–B2 levels in Language, Interaction, and Production/Dissemination, as well as a more coherent use of available resources

for academic communication. In contrast, X showed lower scores across most indicators and a greater concentration at A1–A2 levels, particularly in the Technological and Aesthetic dimensions, where the most pronounced limitations were observed.

Despite these differences, the Ideology and Values dimension emerged as the most consistent area across both environments. On both LinkedIn and X, practices related to source verification, communicative responsibility, and alignment with professional and ethical values were identified, reaching B2–C1 levels on LinkedIn and B1–B2 levels on X. This strength suggests that, although faculty members exhibit shortcomings in expressive and technological skills, they uphold solid ethical criteria when selecting, producing, and disseminating scientific content.

By contrast, Aesthetics and Technology appeared as the most limited areas of development. The integration of visual resources, planning of communicative design, and advanced use of analytical or automation tools were infrequent on both platforms and particularly deficient on X. A predominance of text-based posts limited multimodal diversification, and insufficient exploitation of platform-specific functionalities were observed.

The patterns identified confirm a functional but weakly systematized media competence, in which faculty members tend to position themselves as active content consumers rather than strategic producers. LinkedIn is used primarily to consolidate professional identity and disseminate academic achievements, whereas X is employed in a less structured manner, with lower continuity and higher expressive demands. The combination of ethical strengths and technological and aesthetic weaknesses points to the need for targeted training that articulates pedagogical criteria, digital literacy, and communicative design strategies for scientific dissemination.

4. Discussion

This study analyzed the situated expression of dimensions of university faculty media competence through specific practices of scientific dissemination developed on LinkedIn and X, understood as communicative contexts in which observable media-related dimensions are manifested. These findings suggest that media competence is better understood as a relational construct shaped by platform-specific communicative conditions. The results reveal a heterogeneous competence profile shaped by platform-specific affordances. This supports the view that media competence is not a stable trait, but a progressive and context-dependent process (Valencia-Oliveros & Martín-Gutiérrez, 2024). In this sense, the empirical findings provide observational evidence supporting prior theoretical approaches that emphasize the need to analyze media competence in relation to specific digital environments and actual practices.

The diversity observed across profiles should not be interpreted as evidence of a structural gap between faculty groups. Rather, it reflects differentiated forms of appropriation associated with professional trajectories, disciplinary cultures, and varying levels of familiarity with digital environments. This interpretation aligns with previous studies identifying differentiated patterns of social media use according to academic age and career stage. Early career faculty tend to use these environments to enhance the visibility of their scholarly output and to build academic networks, whereas senior faculty members employ them more selectively and strategically, primarily to reinforce their professional reputation (Gil & Guallar, 2023; Micaletto Belda & Martín Herrera, 2023).

Although the present study does not include inferential subgroup analyses, the descriptive patterns suggest variations by disciplinary area and gender, such as a more active presence of women in Pedagogy on LinkedIn or of faculty from Psychology and Sociology on X. These differences should be interpreted with caution given the exploratory nature of the design and the absence of inferential testing, although they remain consistent with dynamics previously documented in research on the academic use of social media.

The comparative analysis of LinkedIn and X reveals clear differences in the appropriation of both platforms, reinforcing findings in the literature regarding the influence of each platform's communicative logics on scientific dissemination practices. LinkedIn emerges as an environment in which the expression of media competence is more stable, with better performance in Language, Interaction, and Ideology and Values, and predominantly intermediate levels, situated between A2 and B1. Its professional orientation, lower immediacy pressure, and more static content structure appear to facilitate a relatively systematic academic use. This use is aligned with its function as a space for academic identity construction. By contrast, X emerges as a more demanding environment in narrative and technological terms. Format brevity, rapid communication dynamics, and high discursive competition constrain the deployment of advanced practices, particularly in Technology, Production and Dissemination, and Aesthetics. This interpretation is consistent with studies that highlight the complexity of X as an environment for scientific dissemination, in which only a portion of faculty achieve strategic and effective uses (Estrada-Molina & Fuentes-Cancell, 2024; Howoldt et al., 2023; Huang et al., 2019).

Beyond the specificities of each platform, the most relevant cross-sectional pattern is the gap between a firmly established ethical component and clearly underdeveloped technological and aesthetic dimensions. Ideology and Values reached observed performance levels between B2 and C1 on LinkedIn, and between B1 and B2 on X, with practices of source verification, communicative responsibility, and promotion of rigorous content confirming the centrality of ethical commitment in digital academic activity (Nordin et al., 2020). This result reinforces prior arguments suggesting that university faculty possess consolidated ethical criteria in scientific communication. However, they encounter greater difficulties in translating these principles into visual, technological, and narrative communication strategies adapted to open digital environments. The limited integration of multimodal resources, the scarce use of analytical or automation tools, and the absence of systematic editorial planning place Technology and Aesthetics at levels between A1 and A2 on X, and between A2 and B1 on LinkedIn, thereby limiting the dissemination potential of these platforms.

Within this framework, the results can be interpreted in light of what the literature has described as a digital internationalization gap affecting educational research produced in Spanish. As previous studies have noted, Spanish speaking universities face structural difficulties in positioning their scientific output within global academic circuits, shaped by linguistic, institutional, and media related factors. The findings of the present study empirically substantiate these dynamics. Although faculty actively participate on social media, the uneven development of media competence constrains the capacity of these environments to amplify the international visibility of scientific knowledge produced in Spanish. In this sense, social media do not function merely as complementary dissemination channels, but as strategic spaces for open science whose impact depends on the critical, expressive, and technological mastery of those who use them.

From a broader perspective, the results can also be understood within the framework of a Hispanic media ecology, characterized by a less established tradition of systematic scientific dissemination through social media, particularly in the field of Education Sciences. Unlike other academic contexts, Spanish speaking faculty face specific challenges related to the absence of clear institutional incentives, limited formal training in digital scientific communication, and the persistent tension between traditional models of academic production and increasing demands for public knowledge visibility. These institutional and cultural conditions, widely discussed in the literature, help explain the fragmented and non strategic use of platforms such as LinkedIn and X, as well as the observed differences in the development of expressive dimensions of media competence.

In this context, LinkedIn is used primarily as a curricular extension and a space for professional visibility, whereas X is employed mainly as an environment for information consumption, with still incipient levels of original scientific production. Media competence is expressed in these practices in a functional yet weakly systematized manner. Faculty members act responsibly in the selection and dissemination of content, but rarely as strategic producers of messages that integrate planning, multimodal design, and intensive use of platform specific tools.

This pattern reinforces the need, highlighted in the literature, to move beyond basic critical literacy toward training models that coherently integrate expressive, technological, ethical, and aesthetic dimensions of media competence within actual contexts of scientific dissemination.

In this sense, university faculty media competence, when expressed through concrete practices of scientific dissemination on social media, not only enhances the quality and reach of such dissemination, but also constitutes a key factor in addressing the epistemological marginality that has historically affected science produced in Spanish. In doing so, it contributes to more open, equitable, and internationally visible forms of academic communication, particularly relevant for Spanish speaking universities.

4.1 Limitations

This study presents several limitations derived from its exploratory and descriptive design. First, the analysis is limited to a single Spanish public university, which prevents the extrapolation of the results to other institutional contexts. Nevertheless, the inclusion of the entire faculty with teaching responsibilities in the Faculties of Education across its four campuses provides a solid internal representation consistent with the objectives of the study.

Second, the research focused exclusively on two social media platforms, LinkedIn and X, selected due to their relevance in academic communication. The exclusion of other platforms with a strong audiovisual orientation, such as Instagram, YouTube, or TikTok, restricts the understanding of emerging forms of scientific dissemination that may exhibit different competence patterns. Consequently, the findings are not statistically generalizable, although they may be analytically transferable to contexts with similar institutional and digital characteristics.

Another limitation concerns the nature of the analysis, which was based on publicly available profiles with verifiable activity. This approach may introduce self selection biases, as faculty members who are more active or possess higher levels of digital literacy are more likely to maintain open and regularly updated profiles. In addition, the study does not incorporate in depth qualitative techniques, such as cognitive interviews, focus groups, or analyses of digital trajectories, which would allow for a deeper understanding of the motivations, tensions, and barriers influencing the academic use of these platforms.

4.2 Future Lines of Research

Among the limitations of the study, it should be noted that the indicators used to analyze the expression of faculty media competence are interpreted on the basis of situated practices within a specific institutional and cultural context. In this regard, possible semantic and contextual variability in media competence indicators should be considered when applied across different Spanish speaking international contexts, where communicative traditions, institutional policies, and academic cultures may differ. This issue does not invalidate the results obtained, but it calls for caution in their direct transferability and reinforces the need for processes of contextual adaptation and calibration in future comparative studies.

In light of these limitations, several lines of future research are proposed. First, the analysis could be extended to universities of different types, including public, private, and international institutions, and to a wider range of disciplinary areas in order to identify comparative patterns in the expression of media competence. In addition, it would be relevant to incorporate emerging social media platforms with a strong audiovisual component, as well as to examine hybrid environments in which formal and informal scientific communication converge. From a

methodological standpoint, the adoption of mixed approaches is recommended, combining profile analysis with interviews, reflective journals, or social network analysis, in order to capture the experiential and relational dimensions of academic engagement on social media.

Finally, in line with international research highlighting the role of social media in academic visibility and knowledge circulation (dos Santos Claro, 2024; Howoldt et al., 2023; Huang et al., 2019), the findings reinforce the need to integrate media competence into university teacher education. The design of differentiated training pathways according to platform and competence level from A1 to C2 is proposed, with particular attention to scientific narrative, visual design, automation, content curation, and the strategic use of metrics. It is also suggested that the competence descriptors developed be included as supplementary materials in order to facilitate the replicability and analytical transferability of the model to other educational contexts.

4.3 Practical Implications

The study's findings highlight the relevance of developing specific training strategies to strengthen faculty media competence in digital contexts. In line with recent educommunication proposals (dos Santos Claro, 2024; Buzón et al., 2019), it is advisable to design differentiated learning pathways for each social media platform, so that training responds to the expressive, technical, and narrative demands of environments such as LinkedIn and X. This approach would make it possible to tailor interventions to the discursive genres characteristic of each platform and to the different levels of competence progression identified.

It is also considered a priority to incorporate training experiences focused on visual design and the construction of accessible scientific narratives, with the aim of reinforcing the Aesthetic dimension and improving the legibility of dissemination content. The limited multimodal diversification observed indicates that faculty members require opportunities to experiment with creative formats, such as infographics, short videos, or structured threads, that facilitate understanding and broaden the social reach of research.

Likewise, training should include the strategic use of automation tools, content curation, and metrics analysis. Mastery of resources such as LinkedIn Analytics or advanced management of thematic lists on X can contribute to optimizing dissemination, gaining a better understanding of audiences, and making informed decisions regarding communicative planning. The absence of these practices in the analyzed sample suggests substantial room for improvement in the Technological dimension.

Finally, building communities of practice among faculty members emerges as a particularly promising avenue for the situated development of media competence, fostering the exchange of models, experiences, and resources (Zapata & Vera, 2018). The cross-sectional integration of media competence into initial and continuing teacher education, articulating assessment systems aligned with A1–C2 levels, can help consolidate a more critical, ethical, and competent faculty profile in scientific communication, capable of operating effectively in open digital environments and of strengthening a more inclusive, reflective, and socially relevant academic culture.

Universities, particularly within Spanish-speaking institutional contexts, can play an active role by facilitating resources, guidelines, and protocols for scientific dissemination on social media. This includes promoting good practices, establishing recommendations on academic digital identity, and supporting initiatives that project research and teaching toward broad and diverse audiences, in

line with the specific challenges of visibility and internationalization faced by science produced in Spanish.

These practical implications reinforce the need to conceive media competence as a structural component of the contemporary faculty profile. Strengthening this competence will contribute to improving the quality of scientific communication, fostering academic participation in digital environments, and consolidating a more open, critical, and socially engaged university culture.

5. Conclusions

This study made it possible to characterize the situated expression of university faculty media competence through scientific dissemination practices developed on LinkedIn and X. The results show that media competence does not constitute a homogeneous trait, but rather a progressive construct that depends on the communicative contexts in which it is implemented. Media competence appears fragmented, with predominant levels ranging between A2 and B1, alongside a set of isolated advanced performances.

From a comparative perspective, LinkedIn emerged as the platform in which media competence was expressed more consistently, particularly in the Language, Interaction, and Ideology and Values dimensions. The platform facilitates structured communicative practices oriented toward academic visibility and the establishment of professional networks. By contrast, competence expression on X was more irregular, with low scores in the Technological and Aesthetic dimensions and an overall level situated between A1 and A2. The dynamic, brief, and highly competitive nature of X's communicative environment appears to constrain the systematization of sustained scientific dissemination practices.

Across both social media platforms, the Ideology and Values dimension appeared as the most consolidated area of competence, demonstrating stable ethical criteria, communicative responsibility, and content verification practices. This strength contrasts with the difficulties observed in the integration of visual resources, the automation of communicative processes, and the strategic use of analytical tools, dimensions that are central to effective scientific dissemination in open digital environments.

The findings suggest that faculty members use these platforms for differentiated purposes: LinkedIn as a space for professional projection and academic dissemination, and X as an environment for rapid information exchange, where scientific dissemination tends to adopt more sporadic and less elaborated formats. This distinction reveals usage patterns shaped by professional trajectories, disciplinary cultures, and levels of familiarity with each platform.

At the institutional level, the results highlight the need to promote specific training strategies aimed at strengthening critical areas of media competence, particularly the Technological and Aesthetic dimensions, as well as narrative capacities related to scientific communication. Progress toward training pathways organized by competence levels from A1 to C2 and adapted to the expressive nature of each social media platform is recommended.

The study offers an operational model for analyzing the situated expression of university faculty media competence in actual contexts of digital scientific dissemination. Although limited to a single university, the findings provide relevant guidance for faculty professional development and for the construction of a more critical, ethical, and socially engaged digital academic culture,

particularly within Spanish speaking institutions, where structural challenges related to scientific visibility and the internationalization of knowledge produced in Spanish persist.

6. Acknowledgments

Dieter Reynaldo Fuentes Cancell has received funding through the 2024 UVa Pre-Doctoral Contracts Call, co-funded by Banco Santander.

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