

English Concurrent Mixed-methods Model for Studying Institutional Communication on LinkedIn

Modelo de metodología mixta concurrente para el estudio de la comunicación institucional en LinkedIn

María Elena Valiela Vidal. Universidad de Nebrija (España)

Elena Valiela is a university lecturer and executive education specialist at the business school EAE Business School in Madrid. She is a doctoral candidate in ‘Innovation in Digital Communication and Media’, and holds master’s degrees in Human Resources and Leadership (Nebrija University), Strategy and Project Management (IE Business School), and European Film Studies (University of Exeter). She also holds a bachelor’s degree in European Film Studies from the University of Exeter in the United Kingdom.
ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0009-0008-4333-1922>

Article received: 15/03/2026 – Accepted: 21/04/2026

Abstract:

This article presents a concurrent mixed-methods framework for studying institutional communication on LinkedIn, conceived as a general, replicable model that can be applied to different types of organizations. The design combines, within a single scheme, a quantitative content analysis of posts (frequency, formats, topics and engagement) and a qualitative component based on semi-structured interviews focused on the management of professional networks, which makes it possible to systematically connect observable practices on the platform with the strategies and perceptions reported by communication managers. The article details a sampling framework, a functional/institutional thematic coding matrix formulated at an adaptable level of abstraction, and the procedures for data collection, analysis and triangulation (use of NVivo and SPSS, inter-coder reliability). As a stress test of the model, its application to the case of 20 universities located in Madrid is presented, highlighting the advantages, limitations and transferability of this framework to other social networks and institutional settings.

Keywords:

LinkedIn; digital communication; mixed methods; content analysis; Madrid universities.

Resumen:

Este artículo presenta una propuesta de metodología mixta concurrente para el estudio de la comunicación institucional en *LinkedIn*, formulada como un marco general replicable y aplicable a diferentes tipos de organizaciones. El diseño combina, en un mismo esquema, un análisis de contenido cuantitativo de las publicaciones (frecuencia, formatos, temáticas y *engagement*) y un componente cualitativo basado en entrevistas semiestructuradas centradas en la gestión de redes profesionales, lo que permite relacionar de forma sistemática las prácticas observables en la plataforma con las estrategias y percepciones declaradas por sus responsables de comunicación. Se detallan un marco de selección muestral, una matriz de codificación temática funcional/institucional con un nivel de abstracción adaptable y los procedimientos de recogida, análisis y triangulación de datos (uso de NVivo y SPSS, fiabilidad intercodificador). Como prueba de esfuerzo del modelo, se ilustra su aplicación al caso de 20 universidades madrileñas, destacando ventajas, limitaciones y posibilidades de transferencia a otras redes sociales y contextos institucionales.

Palabras clave:

LinkedIn; comunicación digital; metodología mixta; análisis de contenido; universidades madrileñas.

1. Introduction

Research on university communication in social media has focused mainly on generalist platforms such as Facebook, X (Twitter) and Instagram, while LinkedIn, despite its professional relevance, has received comparatively less attention.

Although LinkedIn has historically attracted less attention than networks such as Facebook, X (Twitter) or Instagram, in recent years a specific body of literature has emerged that analyses its institutional and professional uses. Studies such as that of Cestino González (2020), which offers an overview of the communication strategies of Andalusian universities on LinkedIn, or the pioneering work of Bonsón and Bednárová on content analysis in professional networks to measure transparency and corporate social responsibility, demonstrate the platform's potential as an object of research. Likewise, contributions such as those of Zide, Lyons and Rose, focused on personal branding and professional identity, or the methodological approaches of McCorkle and McCorkle to the pedagogical and professional uses of the network, show that this is a field in expansion. In this context, the present study does not proceed from a lack of research, but from the need to propose an integrated mixed-methods framework that systematically articulates the analysis of posts and professional discourses on LinkedIn management in the university sphere.

This network enables universities to project their institutional identity, establish links with students, alumni, companies and other stakeholders, and develop reputation and employability strategies, but its methodological study presents specific challenges: limitations in data access, strong dependence on the institutional context, and the need to

integrate quantitative metrics with qualitative interpretations. From the perspective of platform studies, LinkedIn exhibits usage logics and relational structures that differ from those of networks more oriented towards entertainment, which requires methodological approaches to be adapted to its specific characteristics (Highfield & Leaver, 2016).

In parallel, research into networks with a marked visual component, such as the study by Alcolea Parra, Rodríguez Barba and Núñez Fernández (2020) on the corporate use of Instagram in Spanish private universities, shows how the choice of formats and thematic categories directly influences the construction of institutional identity and levels of interaction, reinforcing the need for robust methodological frameworks to analyse these dynamics across different platforms.

In this context, it is necessary to have solid methodological frameworks that make it possible to systematically analyse both the content published and the strategies articulated by communication managers. This article proposes a mixed-methods design for the study of university communication on LinkedIn that combines, within a single analytical scheme, a structured content analysis of institutional posts and a set of semi-structured interviews with communication managers at those institutions. Rather than presenting the results of a specific case, the aim of this article is to describe, step by step, the procedures of sampling, coding, analysis and triangulation applied in the study of 20 universities in Madrid, so that it may serve as a replicable reference for future research into digital communication on professional networks.

In this sense, the case of universities in Madrid is used in this study as a setting for validating the model, but the proposal is conceived as a general methodological framework for analysing institutional communication on professional networks, applicable to other organisational sectors beyond the university sphere.

2. Proposed concurrent mixed-methods design for the study of LinkedIn

Research on university communication in social media has predominantly relied on quantitative content analysis, focused on counting types of posts, formats and basic interaction metrics. Studies on universities' presence on Facebook or Twitter tend to use descriptive designs based on counting posts and thematic categories, sometimes accompanied by simple statistical tests to compare headlines or periods, but without systematically integrating the perspectives of the professionals who manage institutional communication.

From the perspective of corporate communication, presence on professional networks forms part of broader strategies for managing organisational identity, image and reputation, as outlined in the classic frameworks of institutional communication and public relations (Van Riel, 1997; Capriotti, 2009). Integrating these contributions makes it possible to interpret LinkedIn not only as a channel for disseminating information, but also as a space for building relationships with stakeholders and generating reputational value.

This perspective connects with developments in Excellence Theory in public relations, which places communication at the core of the strategic management of organisations and

emphasises the need to align key publics, corporate objectives and the evaluation of outcomes (Grunig, 1992).

In parallel, recent corporate communication handbooks propose understanding digital channels as part of an integrated system of messages and relationships that runs throughout the organisation, rather than as isolated pieces of informational dissemination (Cornelissen, 2020). Reviews on public relations and social media also stress that these platforms expand organisations' capacity to manage relationships and conversations with multiple publics, while at the same time increasing their exposure to communicative risk due to the open and collaborative nature of digital environments (EBSCO Research Starters, 2016).

In the specific case of LinkedIn, the literature combines two broad methodological approaches. On the one hand, studies that analyse institutional or personal profiles using activity and visibility metrics (number of contacts, followers, posts or reactions), applying content analysis and descriptive or inferential statistics. On the other hand, studies that explore uses, perceptions and expectations of the platform through interviews, focus groups or surveys with students, alumni or university managers, offering a qualitative perspective that is often disconnected from objective posting data.

These approaches have made it possible to identify relevant patterns – such as the prioritisation of institutional content over functional content or the underuse of interactive tools – but they present methodological limitations when analysed separately. Exclusively quantitative designs tend to describe what is published and how often, but offer little information about the strategic decisions underlying these patterns; purely qualitative studies, meanwhile, capture professional discourses effectively but rarely confront them with the actual behaviour of institutional accounts.

Against this backdrop, there is a gap in the literature regarding integrated mixed frameworks that combine systematic analysis of posts and interviews with communication managers within a single research strategy, allowing numerical and narrative data to be triangulated. This article positions itself within that methodological space: it proposes a concurrent design that brings together a structured content analysis organised around a functional/institutional thematic matrix and a set of semi-structured interviews, with the aim of offering the academic community a replicable procedure for studying LinkedIn in the university sphere and, potentially, in other organisational communication contexts.

The proposal is based on a concurrent mixed-methods design, in which the quantitative content analysis of LinkedIn posts is conducted in parallel with a qualitative study using semi-structured interviews with communication managers, integrating both datasets in a final triangulation phase. The central objective is to provide a replicable procedure that makes it possible to relate what universities do on the platform (frequency, formats, themes, engagement) to what their managers say they do (perceived strategies, priorities and constraints).

2.1. Overall design

The proposed design is not limited to the analysis of universities but defines a procedural framework that can be replicated by organisations that use LinkedIn (or other professional networks) as a tool for strategic communication. In this article, universities in Madrid function as a testing ground for this model, but the components of the design (sampling, content analysis and interviews) are formulated in terms that are transferable to other institutional contexts.

The adopted design follows the logic of concurrent mixed methods, in which the collection and analysis of quantitative and qualitative data are conducted in parallel in order to integrate their results in a subsequent phase of joint interpretation (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). In this case, the content analysis of posts and the semi-structured interviews are conceived as two complementary components that make it possible to address, in an integrated manner, both the observable patterns of LinkedIn use and the meanings and strategies attributed to the platform by its managers.

The design used is structured into two complementary components: a) a structured content analysis of the posts published on the official LinkedIn profiles of the selected universities during a defined period and b) a set of semi-structured interviews with institutional communication managers at those same universities.

Both components are planned and implemented concurrently, so that the information obtained in one of them progressively guides further exploration in the other (for example, by adjusting the interview guide on the basis of patterns detected in the posts), and are subsequently integrated through comparative matrices and cross-thematic analysis.

2.2. Sample and units of analysis

The methodology is aimed at organisations that meet at least the following criteria:

1. Active presence on LinkedIn (for example, at least two posts per week on their institutional profile during the period of analysis);
2. Sectoral relevance within a clearly defined geographical area or field of activity;
3. Existence of a professionalised communication structure (department, unit or specific person responsible for digital communication).

As a validation case, this study selects the 20 universities based in the Community of Madrid that meet these requirements, thereby configuring a complete sampling frame of the regional university system. The quantitative corpus consisted of all posts published on the official LinkedIn profiles of these universities over two consecutive weeks (from 5 to 18 May 2025, both inclusive), coinciding with a period of ordinary activity not marked by specific campaigns, in order to capture relatively stable usage patterns.

2.3. Coding matrix and content analysis

The construction of the functional/institutional thematic matrix has been guided by the principles of systematic content analysis, which require the definition of exhaustive and mutually exclusive categories linked to clear research objectives (Krippendorff, 2018). The formulation of dimensions and subcategories follows Neuendorf's (2017) recommendations for the design of coding schemes, paying particular attention to the operational clarity of each code and to the possibility of its application by different coders with acceptable levels of agreement. In this way, the matrix seeks to combine a sufficient level of abstraction to be transferable to different organisational contexts with a degree of precision that allows relevant nuances in university communication on LinkedIn to be captured.

The content analysis is organised on the basis of a functional/institutional thematic matrix that integrates and adapts previous proposals for classifying messages in university communication. This matrix distinguishes, at the first level, between a functional block (related to the provision of services and the core activities of the organisation) and an institutional block (linked to governance, management and external projection), which are in turn subdivided into themes and operational subthemes that can be adapted to each sectoral context.

Each post is coded according to:

- Formal variables: date, university group, main format (text, image, video, podcast, link), interactive resources (polls, mentions, hashtags, events) and engagement metrics (reactions, comments, shares).
- Thematic variables: assignment to one or two subthemes in the functional/institutional matrix, avoiding overcoding and ensuring that each post reflects its main focus.
- Coding is carried out using the qualitative analysis software NVivo, which makes it possible to manage hierarchical categories, calculate frequencies and generate visual outputs (co-occurrence matrices, heatmaps, word clouds) that facilitate subsequent analysis by type of university or teaching model.

In the case of interaction metrics, the decision was taken to work with reactions, comments and shares as basic indicators of engagement, in line with previous studies on university communication in social media (Capriotti et al., 2023). While reactions provide an approximation to the affective or supportive response of the audience, comments imply a higher level of discursive involvement, and shared posts reflect the capacity of content to circulate beyond the institution's immediate community. Although these metrics do not exhaust all the possibilities for measuring engagement on LinkedIn, they are particularly relevant for assessing how universities combine visibility, interaction and dissemination in their institutional communication.

2.4. Semi-structured interviews with communication managers

The second methodological component consists of semi-structured interviews with one institutional communication manager per university, forming a qualitative sample of approximately $n \approx 20$ key informants. The interview guide addresses, among others, the following areas:

- Strategic objectives attributed to LinkedIn within the communication plan
- Criteria for content planning (themes, formats, frequency)
- Use and assessment of the platform's interactive tools
- Indicators used to evaluate results (engagement, reputation, recruitment)
- Perceptions of strengths, limitations and good practices in managing the network

The interviews are preferably conducted online (via video call) and recorded with informed consent for subsequent transcription and analysis. A convenience sampling strategy is recommended, supported by snowball sampling, initiating contact with managers at universities that are more active on LinkedIn and progressively expanding the network of informants.

The interview guide has been designed to focus on the processes involved in managing professional networks rather than on the specific features of the university system. The main areas address: the definition of objectives for LinkedIn presence within the overall corporate communication strategy; content planning (types of messages, balance between functional and reputational information); interaction and reputation management (responses, community engagement, handling of comments); and the use of indicators and analytics for decision-making. These areas can be transferred to any organisation that uses LinkedIn as a tool for institutional communication.

2.5. Analysis procedures and reliability

By applying the same categorical structure to the interview transcripts, the qualitative analysis focuses on management processes (content planning, reputation management, use of metrics) that are common to different types of organisations, thus avoiding a script restricted to the specificities of the university sector. This approach is in line with methodological recommendations for software-assisted thematic analysis, which highlight the potential of tools such as NVivo to systematise coding, cluster themes and facilitate comparisons between participants while maintaining the traceability of the analytical process (Woolf & Silver, 2018).

In the qualitative component, the analysis was structured in phases inspired by Braun and Clarke's (2006) proposal for thematic analysis: familiarisation with the data through repeated reading of the transcripts; initial coding and generation of basic labels; searching for themes by grouping codes into patterns of meaning (for example, "organisational barriers to the use of LinkedIn"); and reviewing and defining the final thematic map. These phases were implemented in NVivo using the functional/institutional matrix as the

initial structure, while allowing for the incorporation of emerging categories as the analytical process advanced.

The transcripts are imported into NVivo and coded using, as a starting structure, the same functional/institutional matrix applied to the analysis of posts, complemented by emerging categories related to strategic planning, perceptions of engagement and use of metrics. This parallelism between the coding of posts and interviews facilitates direct comparison between “what is published” and “what is stated”.

To ensure reliability, the following is proposed:

- Blind double coding of a percentage of units (for example, 10% of posts and 2–3 interviews) and calculation of the Kappa coefficient (> 0.7) to assess inter-coder agreement.
- Iterative revision of the category matrix until satisfactory levels of consistency are achieved.

On the quantitative level, the coded data from the posts were exported to SPSS for statistical processing. Prior to this, the database was cleaned by checking for missing values, detecting possible duplicates and verifying consistency between formal variables (date, type of university, main format) and interaction metrics. The main focus was on nominal variables (type of post, functional/institutional block, format), ordinal variables (engagement ranges) and ratio variables (number of reactions, comments and shares). The analysis included basic descriptive statistics (frequencies, percentages, means and standard deviations) and, as options proposed by the design for future applications of the model, inferential tests such as chi-square or Spearman correlations to explore the relationship between type of content, format and levels of interaction (for example, whether posts with video generate significantly more reactions or comments than text-only posts).

The final phase of the analysis focused on the triangulation of quantitative and qualitative results. To this end, the posting patterns identified in the content analysis (for example, the low use of certain audiovisual formats or the relative prioritisation of institutional over functional content) were compared with the explanations provided by communication managers in the interviews. This comparison was operationalised through matrices that crossed thematic categories with engagement indicators and representative textual excerpts, making it possible to identify consistencies and discrepancies between “what is published” and “what they state they do”. In this way, numerical data on activity and interaction are interpreted in the light of the reasons, perceptions and organisational constraints described by the informants.

2.6. Examples of application

As a stress test of the model, the design has been applied to the case of the 20 universities in Madrid, generating a corpus of 267 posts and a planned set of 20 interviews with communication managers. The purpose of this section is not to present an exhaustive case study, but rather to illustrate succinctly how the methodological framework operates when implemented in a specific organisational context.

The content analysis makes it possible, for example, to identify the prevalence of institutional over functional content, or the dominance of certain audiovisual formats, while the interviews help to interpret why some themes are prioritised over others and how engagement metrics are perceived within each organisation.

These examples are not presented here as exhaustive results, but as concise illustrations of how the proposed methodological framework can guide future empirical research on university communication on LinkedIn and, by extension, on other professional social networks.

3. Discussion

The concurrent mixed-methods design presented here is both in continuity with, and in contrast to, the predominant approaches used in the study of university communication on social media. Much of the previous literature on universities and platforms such as Facebook, X (Twitter) or Instagram has been based on essentially descriptive content analyses focused on counting posts, formats and themes, and supported by basic statistics to compare institutions or periods. These studies have made it possible to map universities' digital presence, but they usually offer only a limited view of internal decision-making processes and of the strategic logic that guides the use of each platform.

This articulation between content analysis and interviews is close to integrated communication approaches, which conceive communication management as a strategic process that coordinates messages, publics and channels in order to build coherent meanings over time (Hallahan, 2007). This conception is in line with studies that analyse the role of social media in strategic communication, underlining their potential to bring together planning, interaction with publics and evaluation of results in organisations of very different kinds (Hassan et al., 2020).

Thus, the methodological model is formulated as a general proposal for combining content analysis and interviews in professional networks, while the case of universities in Madrid is used solely to validate its usefulness and to detect strengths and limitations in a real context. Representative examples of this approach include the works of Cestino González (2020), who descriptively analyses the communication strategies of ten Andalusian universities on LinkedIn on the basis of counts of posts, formats and themes, or the study by Amaral and Correia Santos (2020), focused on the presence of Portuguese universities on social media using activity and visibility metrics. At the opposite end of the spectrum, studies such as those by Aguado Guadalupe (2015) or Cooper and Naatus (2014) rely mainly on interviews and surveys to explore uses and perceptions of the platform among professionals and students, without contrasting these discourses with a systematic analysis of the content published. In contrast to both blocks, the proposed concurrent mixed-methods design explicitly integrates content analysis and interviews within a single analytical framework, allowing the observable behaviour of institutional pages to be compared with the strategies declared by their managers.

In the case of LinkedIn, existing studies tend to split between quantitative designs that explore profiles and activity metrics, and qualitative approaches that gather the perceptions of students, alumni or managers through interviews or surveys. The former make it possible to identify posting patterns and levels of visibility, but barely address the

reasons why certain content or interactive tools are prioritised; the latter provide interpretative richness, although they are seldom contrasted with the observable behaviour of institutional pages. Compared with these approaches, the proposed concurrent mixed-methods design offers a framework in which both types of data are collected and analysed in an integrated manner, facilitating the identification of consistencies and discrepancies between strategic discourse and communicative practice.

From a methodological perspective, combining a functional/institutional thematic matrix with semi-structured interviews offers several advantages. On the one hand, the matrix – adapted from previous classifications of university content – enables granular, comparable coding across studies, moving beyond overly general taxonomies that hinder the identification of nuances by type of university or mode of delivery. In this respect, the work of Capriotti et al. (2023) shows, based on content analyses of universities on Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn, that distinguishing between functional and institutional blocks is particularly useful for identifying the communicative positioning strategies that institutions deploy on social media.

On the other hand, by applying this same category structure to the interview transcripts, a common analytical language is created that facilitates triangulation between what universities publish and what their managers declare as objectives and priorities. This structural parallelism reduces the risk of intuitive interpretations and supports the construction of co-occurrence matrices and cross-analyses that are methodologically consistent.

The proposed design also shares problems with previous research and raises specific challenges that must be taken into account. The manual collection of posts on LinkedIn entails a high workload and is constrained by the platform's limitations on access to historical data, which makes it necessary to restrict analyses to relatively short periods and may introduce temporal biases similar to those detected in studies focused on moments of high academic activity. On the qualitative side, the use of convenience and snowball sampling to recruit communication managers may lead to an over-representation of universities that are more active or more aware of digital management, reproducing constraints already noted in other studies based on expert interviews. The proposal incorporates control mechanisms – inter-coder reliability, triangulation of sources – but recognises that these limits are inherent to the field itself and recommends making them explicit in future applications of the model.

Finally, this mixed methodology opens up possibilities for transfer beyond the specific case of universities in Madrid. The functional/institutional matrix can be adapted to other platforms oriented towards the construction of institutional reputation, such as Instagram or TikTok, incorporating new subcategories linked to emerging formats or to content generated by artificial intelligence. Likewise, the concurrent design combining content analysis and interviews can be replicated in other organisational contexts – hospitals, public administrations, NGOs – that use LinkedIn or other networks to manage their strategic communication, making it possible to compare how logics of posting and professional discourses vary according to sector and institutional culture. In this sense, the main contribution of the proposal does not lie in the empirical results of a particular case, but in offering the communication research community an operational and flexible

framework for studying, with greater methodological depth, the intersection between observable data and declared strategies on professional social networks.

3.1. Possible applications

Despite these constraints, the proposal offers wide possibilities for application in other contexts and on other platforms. The functional/institutional thematic matrix can be adapted to networks with a strong visual component, such as Instagram or TikTok, by incorporating new subcategories that capture emerging formats (reels, stories, short videos) and content generated by artificial intelligence, which would make it possible to compare usage patterns across generalist and professional networks. Likewise, the concurrent design that combines content analysis and semi-structured interviews can be transferred to organisations in other sectors that also use LinkedIn to manage their reputation, facilitating comparative studies on how different institutional cultures integrate the platform into their communication strategies.

Finally, future research could complement this framework with other methodological instruments, such as surveys of students, alumni or partner companies, automated analyses of large datasets using text-mining techniques, or longitudinal studies that track the evolution of communication strategies over longer periods. These extensions would help to overcome some of the limitations identified and to deepen understanding of the capacity of the mixed methodology described here to capture the complexity of university communication on LinkedIn and within the digital ecosystem as a whole.

Beyond the specific case of universities in Madrid, the functional/institutional matrix and the concurrent design combining content analysis and interviews have been deliberately formulated at a level of abstraction that allows their transfer to other types of organisations and platforms, through the adaptation of thematic subcategories and sampling criteria.

3.2. Conclusions

This article has presented a concurrent mixed-methods approach to studying university communication on LinkedIn. The integration of quantitative data drawn from institutional posts with qualitative information obtained through interviews with communication managers makes it possible to systematically relate observable practices on the platform to the strategies and perceptions reported by those who manage these profiles.

The main contribution of the proposal lies in the operationalisation of the functional/institutional framework as a common coding matrix for posts and interviews, which facilitates comparison between content and discourse and opens the door to more robust co-occurrence analyses and triangulation. In addition, concrete procedures for sampling, data collection, coding and inter-coder reliability control are set out, offering the academic community a clearly described protocol that can be audited, replicated and adapted to different research designs.

Taken together, the proposed model helps to overcome the usual fragmentation between studies focused exclusively on quantitative metrics of social media activity and approaches based solely on professional discourses, by integrating both dimensions within a single analytical framework. Although the initial application is illustrated with the case of 20 universities in Madrid, the methodological design goes beyond this setting and can be used as a basis for comparative studies of institutional communication on LinkedIn and other professional social networks, as well as for research in other organisational sectors that need to integrate observable data and declared strategies in the digital environment.

4. Limitations

The proposed mixed-methods approach presents several limitations that need to be acknowledged. First, the content analysis is based on a corpus collected manually over a limited period of time (two consecutive weeks), which entails a possible seasonal bias and makes it difficult to generalise posting and engagement patterns to other moments in the academic calendar (for example, the start of the academic year, admissions periods or specific campaigns). Second, restrictions on access to historical and analytical data on LinkedIn mean that it is only possible to work with information visible on institutional pages, without access to internal metrics on reach or segmentation, similar to other studies that analyse social media from the perspective of the external user. In this regard, developments on social media reputation show that data from social networks make it possible to capture autonomous evaluations of organisations by their publics, complementing traditional corporate reputation metrics (Eisenegger & Imhof, 2013).

From this perspective, the functional/institutional matrix can be read in parallel with frameworks such as Kietzmann et al.'s (2011) "honeycomb", which identifies core functions of social networks (identity, conversations, relationships, reputation) and helps to situate the specific role played by platforms such as LinkedIn within organisations' communication strategies.

This external focus contrasts with approaches centred on the intensive analysis of performance indicators and brand positioning strategies on social media (Buenaño Barreno & Valle Tapuy, 2022; Simancas-González & García-López, 2022), suggesting that future developments of this methodological design could be complemented with internal metrics when institutions are willing to share them.

In the qualitative component, the main limitation lies in the sampling strategy and in the self-referential nature of interviews with communication managers. Recruiting informants through convenience and snowball sampling may lead to an over-representation of universities with greater digital awareness, relegating less active institutions that are nonetheless equally relevant for understanding the full spectrum of communication practices. Moreover, the perceptions gathered in the interviews may be conditioned by social desirability biases or by the need to legitimise certain strategic decisions, so their interpretation should always be carried out in conjunction with the objective data from the content analysis.

5. References

- Aguado Guadalupe, G. (2015). Usos comunicativos de *LinkedIn*: Incidencia en empresas y profesionales de la información. *Estudios sobre el Mensaje Periodístico*, 21, 13–21. <https://doi.org/10.5209/revESMP.2015.v21.51124>
- Alcolea Parra, M., Rodríguez Barba, D., & Núñez Fernández, V. (2020). El uso corporativo de Instagram en las universidades privadas españolas: Estudio comparativo de treinta y cinco universidades. *Ámbitos. Revista Internacional de Comunicación*, 47, 109–134. <https://doi.org/10.12795/Ambitos.2020.i47.06>
- Amaral, I., & Correia Santos, S. (2020). Social networks and institutional communication: The case of Portuguese universities. *Revista Prisma Social*, 28, 20–43.
- Bonsón, E., & Bednárová, M. (2015). CSR reporting on *Twitter*: Some evidence from Europe. *International Journal of Accounting Information Systems*, 19, 47–58.
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77–101.
- Buenaño Barreno, P. N., & Valle Tapuy, L. M. (2022). Estrategias para el posicionamiento de una marca en redes sociales. *Esprint Investigación*, 1(2), 52–65.
- Capriotti, P. (2009). *Branding corporativo: Fundamentos para la gestión estratégica de la identidad corporativa*. Andros Impresos.
- Capriotti, P., Losada-Díaz, J., & Martínez-Gras, R. (2023). Evaluating the content strategy developed by universities on social media. *El Profesional de la Información*, 32(2), e320210. <https://doi.org/10.3145/epi.2023.mar.10>
- Cestino González, E. (2020). Aproximación al estudio de la estrategia de comunicación de las universidades andaluzas en *LinkedIn*. *Ámbitos. Revista Internacional de Comunicación*, 48, 171–187. <https://doi.org/10.12795/Ambitos.2020.i48.09>
- Cornelissen, J. (2020). *Corporate communication: A guide to theory and practice* (6th ed.). SAGE.
- Cooper, B., & Naatus, M. K. (2014). *LinkedIn* as a learning tool in business education. *American Journal of Business Education*, 7(4), 299–306. <https://doi.org/10.19030/ajbe.v7i4.8815>
- Creswell, J. W., & Plano Clark, V. L. (2018). *Designing and conducting mixed methods research* (3rd ed.). SAGE.
- Denzin, N. K. (1978). *The research act: A theoretical introduction to sociological methods* (2nd ed.). McGraw-Hill.
- EBSCO Research Starters. (2016). *Public relations and social media*. EBSCO Information Services.
- Eisenegger, M., & Imhof, K. (2013, June). Social media reputation: Social media as a data source for corporate reputation measurement [Paper presentation]. Reputation Institute Global Annual Conference 2013, Barcelona, Spain.
- Grunig, J. E. (Ed.). (1992). *Excellence in public relations and communication management*. Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Hallahan, K. (2007). Integrated communication: Implications for and beyond public relations excellence. En E. L. Toth (Ed.), *The future of excellence in public relations and communication management: Challenges for the next generation* (pp. 299–337). Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

- Highfield, T., & Leaver, T. (2016). Instagrammatics and digital methods: Studying visual social media, from selfies and GIFs to memes and emoji. *Communication Research and Practice*, 2(1), 47–62.
- Hassan, N., Ahmad, F., & Mohd Sani, M. A. (2020). Optimizing strategic communication through social media: The roles of leadership and public engagement. *Advances in Social Science, Education and Humanities Research*, 486, 1–7.
- Kietzmann, J. H., Hermkens, K., McCarthy, I. P., & Silvestre, B. S. (2011). Social media? Get serious! Understanding the functional building blocks of social media. *Business Horizons*, 54(3), 241–251.
- Krippendorff, K. (2018). *Content analysis: An introduction to its methodology* (4th ed.). SAGE.
- Neuendorf, K. A. (2017). *The content analysis guidebook* (2nd ed.). SAGE.
- McCorkle, D. E., & McCorkle, Y. L. (2012). Using *LinkedIn* in the marketing classroom: Exploring new relationships. *Marketing Education Review*, 22(1), 15–22.
- Pérez-Bonaventura, M., Tárrega, S., & Vilajosana, J. (2021). Las universidades de Madrid y Cataluña en redes sociales. *Questiones Publicitarias*, 42(7), 11–26.
- Simancas-González, E., & García-López, M. (2022). La comunicación de las universidades públicas españolas: Situación actual y nuevos desafíos. *Revista de Comunicación de la SEECI*, 55, 131–152. <https://doi.org/10.15198/seeci.2022.55.e769>
- Van Riel, C. B. M. (1997). *Comunicación corporativa*. Prentice Hall.
- Woolf, N. H., & Silver, C. (2018). *Qualitative analysis using NVivo: The five-level QDA method*. Routledge.
- Zide, J., Elman, B., & Shahani-Dennings, R. (2014). *LinkedIn* and recruitment: How profiles differ across occupations. *Employee Relations*, 36(5), 583–604.

Funding: This article received no funding.

Conflict of interest: The author declares that there are none.

English translation: Provided by the author.

HOW TO CITE (APA 7^a)

Valiela Vidal, M. E. (2026). English Concurrent Mixed-methods Model for Studying Institutional Communication on LinkedIn. *Comunicación & Métodos*, 8(1), 99-113. <https://doi.org/10.35951/v8i1.275>