

Institutional communication in higher music education institutions: a comparative study between Spain and the international context

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La comunicación institucional en conservatorios superiores de música: estudio comparativo entre España y el ámbito internacional

ABSTRACT RESUMEN

This article analyses the management of institutional communication in Spanish higher music education institutions, comparing it with leading international institutions. Its objective is to identify differences and similarities in the structure, resources, strategies, and functions of communication departments to detect areas for improvement and propose recommendations to optimise their impact and institutional projection. The research adopts a quantitative approach based on an online questionnaire completed by 40 national and international institutions. The questionnaire comprises 38 closed and open-ended questions, addressing the composition of communication departments, their objectives, the channels employed, strategic planning, and performance evaluation. These data are compared to identify trends and divergences in communication management. The findings reveal significant differences: international institutions have more structured departments, specialised teams, and greater investment in communication, whereas Spanish institutions exhibit a lower degree of strategic planning and resource limitations. International institutions prioritise reputation management, international projection, and impact assessment, while Spanish centres focus primarily on student recruitment and the dissemination of activities. Furthermore, international institutions diversify their communication channels and employ advanced analytical tools, whereas a more traditional approach prevails in Spain. This study provides a novel comparative perspective on institutional communication in higher music academic institutions, a field that remains largely unexplored in academic literature.

Este artículo analiza la gestión de la comunicación institucional en los conservatorios y escuelas superiores de música españoles, comparándola con centros de referencia internacionales. Su objetivo es identificar diferencias y similitudes en estructura, recursos, estrategias y funciones de los departamentos de comunicación, con el fin de detectar áreas de mejora y proponer recomendaciones para optimizar su impacto y proyección institucional. La investigación emplea un enfoque cuantitativo basado en un cuestionario online respondido por 40 instituciones nacionales e internacionales. El cuestionario incluye 38 preguntas cerradas y abiertas, abordando la composición de los departamentos de comunicación, sus objetivos, los canales utilizados, la planificación estratégica y la evaluación de resultados. Se comparan estos datos con el fin de detectar tendencias y divergencias en la gestión comunicativa. Los resultados evidencian diferencias significativas: los centros internacionales cuentan con departamentos más estructurados, equipos especializados y mayor inversión en comunicación, mientras que en España se observa una menor planificación estratégica y escasez de recursos. Los centros extranjeros priorizan la gestión de la reputación, la proyección internacional y la evaluación del impacto, mientras que los españoles se centran en la captación de alumnado y la difusión de actividades. Además, los centros internacionales diversifican sus canales y emplean herramientas avanzadas de análisis mientras que en España predomina un enfoque más tradicional. Este estudio ofrece una perspectiva comparativa inédita sobre la comunicación institucional de los conservatorios y escuelas superiores de música, un ámbito poco estudiado en la literatura académica.

KEYWORDS PALABRAS CLAVE

Institutional communication; Communication strategies; Communication management; Communication resources; Higher music education institutions; Higher music education.

Comunicación institucional; Estrategias de comunicación; Gestión de la comunicación; Recursos de comunicación; Conservatorios superiores de música; Educación musical superior.

La comunicació institucional a conservatoris superiors de música: estudi comparatiu entre Espanya i l'àmbit internacional

RESUM

Aquest article analitza la gestió de la comunicació institucional als conservatoris i escoles superiors de música espanyols, comparant-la amb centres de referència internacionals. El seu objectiu és identificar diferències i similituds en l'estructura, els recursos, les estratègies i les funcions dels departaments de comunicació, per tal de detectar àrees de millora i proposar recomanacions que permetin optimitzar-ne l'impacte i la projecció institucional. La investigació emprà un enfocament quantitatiu basat en un qüestionari en línia respost per 40 institucions nacionals i internacionals. El qüestionari inclou 38 preguntes, tant tancades com obertes, i aborda la composició dels departaments de comunicació, els seus objectius, els canals utilitzats, la planificació estratègica i l'avaluació de resultats. Es comparen aquestes dades per detectar tendències i divergències en la gestió comunicativa. Els resultats evidencien diferències significatives: els centres internacionals compten amb departaments més estructurats, equips especialitzats i més inversió en comunicació, mentre que a Espanya s'observa una menor planificació estratègica i escassetat de recursos. Els centres estrangers prioritzen la gestió de la reputació, la projecció internacional i l'avaluació de l'impacte, mentre que els espanyols es centren en la captació d'alumnat i la difusió d'activitats. A més, els centres internacionals diversifiquen els canals i fan servir eines avançades d'anàlisi mentre que a Espanya hi predomina un enfocament més tradicional. Aquest estudi ofereix una perspectiva comparativa inèdita sobre la comunicació institucional dels conservatoris i escoles superiors de música, un àmbit poc estudiat a la literatura acadèmica.

PARAULES CLAU

Comunicació institucional; Estratègies de comunicació; Gestió de la comunicació; Recursos de comunicació; Conservatoris superiors de música; Educació musical superior.

OPEN ACCESS. SHARE RESEARCH DATA

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1. Introducció

This study examines institutional communication in Spanish and international higher music education institutions (hereafter, higher music conservatories), based on the perspectives of their communication officers.

Following the enactment of Law 1/2024, of 7 June, these institutions have been integrated into the Spanish Qualifications Framework for Higher Education (MECES), which equates their qualifications with those of university degrees. This equivalence ensures that their students enjoy the same rights as university students, including access to the national system of scholarships and state-funded financial aid.¹ Such recognition underscores the need to analyse the communication practices of these institutions in alignment with the analytical frameworks typically applied to universities and other higher education institutions.

The primary aim of this study is to provide a detailed overview of communication management in 40 Spanish and international higher music conservatories, addressing issues such as institutional roles, implemented strategies, evaluation tools, thematic content, and target audiences. The analysis seeks to identify strengths and weaknesses in order to promote more strategic and integrated communication practices, suited to the demands of the contemporary educational and cultural environment.

Given the limited body of research on communication in music conservatories, this study adopts university communication research as its main theoretical framework. This comparative approach enables an assessment of the communication practices of conservatories in relation to universities, while also evaluating their alignment with international standards. The comparison with foreign institutions helps to identify best practices that may be adapted to the Spanish context, thereby fostering a strategic communication approach that enhances institutional reputation and visibility.

The significance of this research lies in its contribution to the understanding of a largely unexplored area of communication, with direct implications for improving communication policies in higher music conservatories. This effort is part of a broader need to consolidate institutional communication as a cross-cutting axis that enables the projection of these institutions' values, educational offerings, and cultural mission within an increasingly competitive global environment.

2. Literature Review

Higher music education institutions in Spain, whose qualifications are equivalent to university degrees under Law 1/2024, face similar communication challenges, particularly in the management of their image and engagement with target

audiences. However, whereas institutional communication in universities has been extensively studied, research focusing specifically on higher music conservatories remains limited.

University communication research encompasses various dimensions, including the management, composition, objectives, and functions of communication offices (Almansa-Martínez, 2005, 2011; Castillo-Esparcia & Almansa-Martínez, 2004; Rivero-Hernández, 2017; Simancas-González & García-López, 2017, 2019); the image of universities in the media and among stakeholders (León-López, et al., 2019; Losada-Díaz, 2002; Meyer, 2008; Zamora-Medina & Hernández-Gómez, 2014); communication trends and tools (De Aguilera-Moyano et al., 2012; Durán-Mañes, 2005); the evolution of institutional communication (Losada-Vázquez, 1998); and digital communication strategies (Amaral & Santos, 2020; Blanco-Sánchez, 2014; Capriotti et al., 2023; Castillo-Díaz, 2007; Gómez-Calderón & Paniagua-Rojano, 2014; Paniagua-Rojano & Gómez-Calderón, 2012; Paniagua-Rojano et al., 2012). Other important areas include internal communication and university branding (Amaral & Santos, 2020; Herranz-de-la-Casa et al., 2009; Losada-Díaz, 2004; Palencia-Lefler, 2008; Rutter et al., 2017), as well as students' perceptions of institutional communication and its impact on engagement (Segura-Mariño et al., 2021; Clark et al., 2016).

In the context of higher music conservatories, the limited existing research on communication has primarily focused on their use of social media (Peralta, 2018; Urpí-Cámara et al., 2022, 2024), with the latter two studies addressing, respectively, strategic communication and content curation. Other contributions have examined communication from a public relations perspective (Haro-Almansa & Zummeren-Moreno, 2020), as well as the influence of communication on pedagogical quality (Haro-Almansa & Zummeren-Moreno, 2023).

Accordingly, this research adopts university communication studies as its main analytical framework, as the organisational dynamics and communication needs of higher music conservatories bear significant similarities with those of universities. At the same time, the study incorporates insights from the limited body of research specifically addressing these institutions.

2.1. Institutional Communication in Universities

Institutional communication in universities has evolved from models based on unidirectional relationships towards more strategic and integrated approaches. University communication offices, defined as organised structures reporting to senior management and responsible for coordinating all internal and external communication activities (Almansa-Martínez, 2005), have expanded their roles beyond media relations to include

corporate image management, public relations, and crisis communication (Almansa-Martínez, 2005).

In the current socio-economic context, marked by the knowledge society and Industry 4.0, the strategic management of institutional communication is essential for building distinctive institutional brands and strengthening reputational capital (Álvarez-Álvarez, 2022). Simancas-González & García-López (2022) highlight strategic planning and communication management as key areas for research and development in the university sector, with particular emphasis on promoting the institutional brand, tailoring messages to different audiences, and selecting the most effective channels.

The integration of digital tools and social media into university communication strategies (Amaral & Santos, 2020; Paniagua-Rojano et al., 2012) has been fundamental in strengthening relationships with students, who represent a key target audience for these institutions (García-García, 2018). Despite the fact that social media are among the most frequently consulted and highly valued communication channels by students, institutional shortcomings in their management—particularly in public universities—remain evident (Segura-Mariño et al., 2021). Furthermore, research has highlighted an imbalance in the attention given to different audiences through digital channels (Paniagua-Rojano et al., 2012).

Despite the increasing institutionalisation of university communication offices, these departments continue to face significant challenges. Chief among them is the lack of integration between internal and external communication, which undermines their ability to effectively fulfil organisational objectives (Simancas-González, 2015). Moreover, while digital strategies are essential, they are not always supported by specific action plans or sufficient professional resources (García-García, 2018).

Nonetheless, progress has been made in the implementation of communication plans and in the adoption of performance indicators to evaluate audience engagement and interaction (Busto-Salinas, 2013). These practices reflect a shift towards more participatory and strategic communication models, better aligned with broader institutional goals (De Aguilera-Moyano et al., 2012). Strategic communication management has become a key success factor for universities, not only by reinforcing academic excellence, but also by enabling institutions to differentiate themselves and build a solid reputation (Álvarez-Álvarez, 2022), thereby fostering a sustained competitive advantage (Miotto et al., 2020). In recent years, research on university institutional communication has increasingly emphasised the importance of managing intangible assets and developing distinctive brands as essential strategies to address the communication challenges faced

by higher education institutions (Simancas-González, García-López, 2017).

2.3. Application to the Field of Higher Music Conservatories

Although higher music conservatories differ from universities in terms of size and available resources, they share the need to develop effective communication strategies in order to position themselves within an increasingly competitive and globalised environment. Research in university communication provides a valuable framework for understanding how these institutions can manage their communication offices and design strategies tailored to their specific characteristics. For instance, the studies by Almansa-Martínez (2005, 2011) and Castillo-Esparcia & Almansa-Martínez (2004) on the structure and functions of university communication offices offer relevant guidance for higher music conservatories. Similarly, the importance of integrating digital tools such as social media, and of approaching communication as a transversal and strategic process (Álvarez-Álvarez, 2022; De Aguilera-Moyano et al., 2012; García-García, 2018) is equally applicable to these institutions.

This study contributes to addressing the gap in the academic literature on communication in higher music conservatories by applying a comparative and context-sensitive approach grounded in university-based experience. In doing so, the research aims to identify the strengths and weaknesses in the communication management of these institutions and to propose strategic improvements that enhance their reputation and increase the effectiveness of their engagement with both internal and external audiences.

As noted by De Aguilera-Moyano et al. (2012) and García-González et al. (2022), institutional communication must be understood as a transversal process that permeates all structures and their surrounding environment. This integrated approach is particularly essential for higher music conservatories, whose institutional visibility largely depends on their ability to communicate their mission, values, and educational offer effectively.

3. Objectives

The main purpose of this study is to analyse the management of institutional communication carried out by public and private Spanish higher music education institutions, as well as by relevant international centres, with the aim of identifying prevailing models.

To achieve this aim, the following specific objectives are proposed:

- **OE1:** To analyse the status of communication departments in Spanish higher music conservatories, examining their

organisation, structure, human and financial resources, and functions.

- **OE2:** To characterise the communication objectives, channels, audiences, and themes addressed by these institutions.
- **OE3:** To evaluate the extent to which communication is managed in an integrated and strategic manner, by analysing the existence of communication plans and systems for assessing communication actions.
- **OE4:** To carry out a comparative analysis of institutional communication management between Spanish centres and international benchmark institutions.

4. Methodology

This study adopts a quantitative approach and, following the methodology proposed Ñaupas-Paitán et al. (2018), aims to describe the predominant communication practices within these institutions. The study sample comprises two distinct groups, allowing for a comparative analysis: first, the 37 public and private Spanish centres listed in the National Registry of Non-University Educational Institutions (Registro Estatal de Centros Docentes no Universitarios, RCD)¹; and second, as an international benchmark, the 8 institutions that are part of the INTUNE University Alliance², the 11 institutions belonging to the IBG³ group, and the top 50 institutions ranked in the QS World University Rankings by Subject 2024: Performing Arts⁴ (hereafter, QSWUR).

Data collection was carried out through an online questionnaire (Microsoft Forms) consisting of 38 questions, combining closed-ended items (dichotomous, polytomous, or multiple choice) with open-ended questions. This methodological combination, supported by the recommendations of Ñaupas-Paitán et al. (2018) and Vinuesa (2005), enabled the collection of both quantitative and qualitative data, offering a more comprehensive view of communication practices. Prior to distributing the questionnaire, a content analysis of the institutions' official websites was conducted, following the methodology proposed by Segura-Mariño et al. (2020), in order to identify contact details for each institution's communication officer. In cases where no specific communication officer was identified, contact details for directors or other relevant institutional representatives were collected.

Fieldwork was carried out over a six-month period, from May to December 2024, taking into account the academic and holiday calendars of the participating institutions. A two-phase data collection strategy was implemented. In May, the questionnaire was emailed to the institutions belonging to the INTUNE alliance and those included in the QSWUR ranking. Subsequently, in October, the same procedure was applied to the Spanish institutions and those in the IBG group. In both phases, the questionnaire was accompanied by an information

Section	Content
About the person in charge of the Communication department/service	Contact details, position, and placement within the institution's organisational chart
Resources and characteristics of the Communication service/department	• Human resources • Visibility on the institutional website • Budget • Functions and designated responsibilities • External contracting • Spokespersons and position within the organisational structure
Objectives and tools used	• Communication objectives • Internal and external communication channels and tools • Performance measurement
Social media and website	• Social media profiles • Persons responsible for social media and institutional website
Tools and audiences	• Strategic plans and guidelines, and those responsible for them • Visibility of these documents on the institutional website • Internal and external audiences
Topics and evaluation of communication actions	• Priority topics in communication campaigns • Evaluation of outcomes
About the centre	• Mission, vision, values, and intended institutional image • Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) actions
Your opinion	• Additional relevant aspects not covered • Permission to be contacted

Table 1. Structure of the questionnaire. Source: Author's own elaboration.

sheet outlining the objectives of the study, and participants were asked to provide informed consent, with full assurance of confidentiality regarding their responses.

In order to maximise the response rate and minimise non-response errors, a differentiated follow-up strategy was implemented. For international institutions, up to three email reminders were sent, complemented by direct messaging via the institutions' Instagram accounts and the LinkedIn profiles of their communication directors. In the case of Spanish institutions, in addition to email reminders, follow-up phone calls were made using the contact information available on their

official websites, with the aim of establishing more direct and personalised communication.

The questionnaire, whose structure is presented in Table 1, was organised into eight thematic sections, drawing on the frameworks established by Simancas-González & García-López (2017) and Túniz-López et al. (2018).

The data collection phase concluded in December 2024. Two institutions were excluded from the analysis due to the absence of informed consent. To ensure anonymity and proper data handling, participants were identified using a unique code generated by the online platform. The analysis of the collected data was carried out using Microsoft Excel and the analytical tools provided by Microsoft Forms.

The final sample consisted of 23 responses from Spanish institutions, representing a response rate of 62.2%. Of these, 16 corresponded to public institutions (69.6% of all public centres), and 7 to private institutions (30.4% of all private centres). It is worth noting that three Spanish centres expressed interest in participating but did not complete the questionnaire within the established deadline. As for international institutions, a total of 17 unique responses were collected.⁵ These included all 8 members of the IN.TUNE Alliance (100%)⁶, 6 institutions from the IBG group (55%), and 11 institutions from the QSWUR list (22%).⁷

5. Results

The following section presents the results addressing the research objectives. These have been organised into eight subsections, corresponding to the sections of the survey.

5.1. Communication Department Heads

More than half of the Spanish institutions surveyed (52.2%) have a designated communication officer. In the remaining institutions, responsibility for communication activities falls to the director (13%), teaching staff (8.7%), the head of studies (8.7%), or other roles such as the secretary, deputy director, or IT coordinator (4.3% each). Regarding their position within the organisational structure, 56.5% of communication officers belong to or report directly to the senior management team, 4.3% report to the head of studies, and 39.1% did not specify a clear reporting line.

In international institutions, the situation differs significantly. Of the 17 institutions surveyed, 88.2% have a communication director, while in only two cases is this role carried out by teaching staff (see Figure 1). Regarding their hierarchical position, three report directly to the institution's leadership, dean's office, or vice-rectorate; two are part of the senior management team; and one occupies a third-tier position in the organisational structure, below the rectorate and institutional

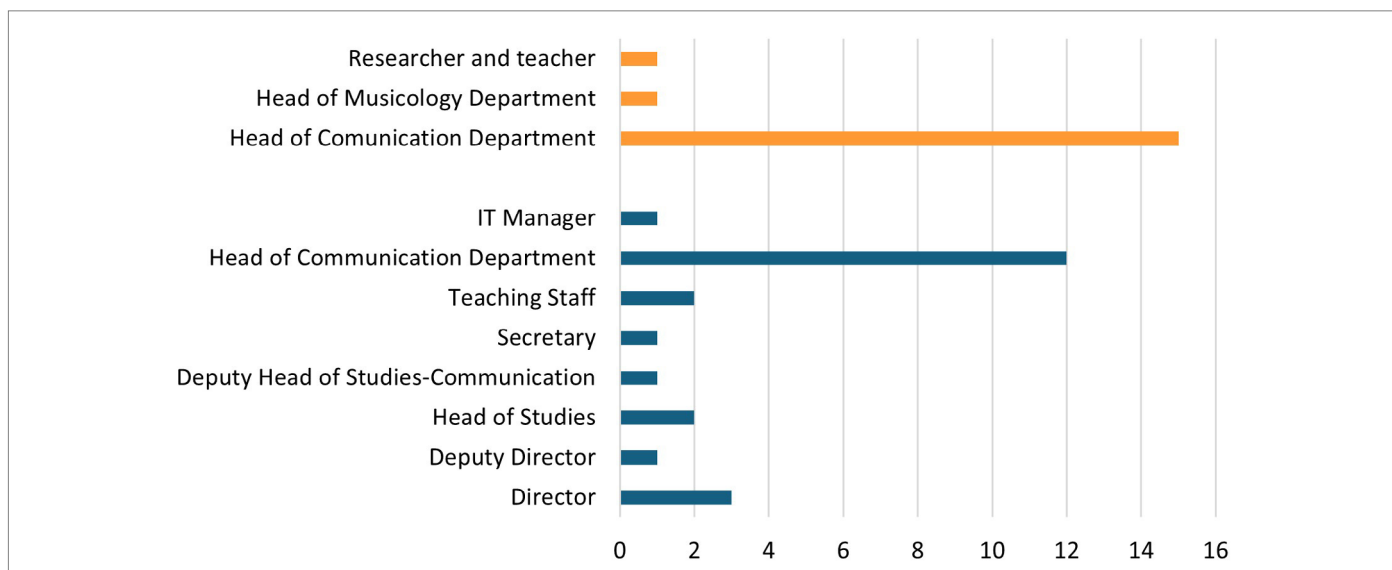


Figure 1. Positions of communication officers in international and Spanish higher music education institutions. Source: Author's own elaboration.

leadership. In addition, in two institutions, the communication officer belongs to the Corporate Affairs department, and in one, to the Public Relations unit. The names and reporting lines of the communication departments vary, with examples including: "Brand and Communications team within the Corporate Affairs directorate", "Communications and Production", "Communications & Engagement", "Communications, Marketing and Recruitment" or "Event Communication and Marketing".

5.2. Resources and Characteristics

The composition of communication teams in Spanish institutions is heterogeneous. Some institutions delegate these functions to senior management or teaching staff, who combine communication duties with their primary responsibilities, while others employ up to six full-time staff or outsource the role to external professionals. Seven institutions report having full-time personnel dedicated to communication tasks, with team sizes ranging from one to six individuals (the latter in only one case). One institution states that it does not have a dedicated communication department, with these responsibilities assumed by senior management and administrative staff. Additionally, 56.5% of institutions host university students undertaking curricular or extracurricular internships, and 47.8% provide visibility for their communication department on the institutional website.

In international institutions, there is clear evidence of larger teams with diverse roles and working arrangements, and most benefit from the support of the communication departments of the universities to which they belong. Team sizes range from a minimum of two or three people working full- or part-time, to teams of four to eight staff members, some full-time and others part-time, with specific roles such as design,

editing, marketing, online marketing, fundraising, webmaster, and community manager. One institution has outsourced media relations and employs a total of ten people across marketing and communication, while others report teams of up to 15 or 20 full-time staff when including university-level and external communication resources. One institution has fully outsourced its communication functions, and another recently created a communication department consisting of a single staff member.

In this context, 35.3% of the institutions host university students on internship placements, and 70.6% report that their communication department is visible on the institutional website.

With regard to financial resources, only 34.8% (8 institutions) of the Spanish centres report having a dedicated communication budget. Of these, only three provided approximate figures, ranging from €1,000 to €42,000 and €175,000 annually. The remaining four institutions that do have a communication

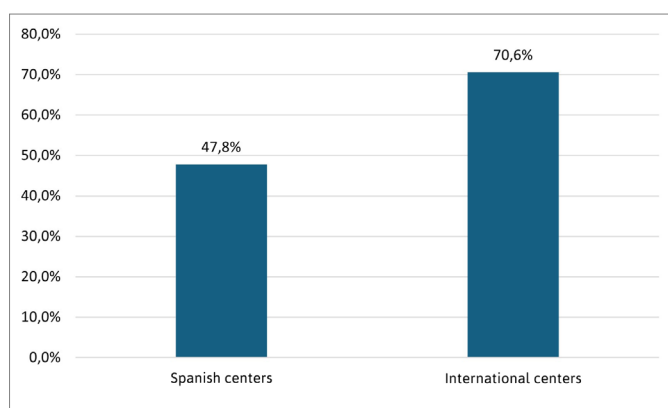


Figure 2. Visibility of communication departments on the institutional websites of Spanish and international centres. Source: Author's own elaboration.

budget but did not disclose specific figures explained that the information is confidential, that it cannot be specified due to the outsourcing of services on a needs basis, that they allocate a small monthly amount, or they provided no comment.

In contrast, 82.4% of the international institutions surveyed reported having their own dedicated communication budget. Of these, 9 institutions (64.3%) responded to the question regarding the total amount and breakdown of their budget. Among them, 7 institutions (50%) provided overall figures, while 2 offered details on how the funds are distributed across specific areas. One institution indicated that the budget varies annually, and another chose not to disclose this information. The reported budgets range from €62,000 to €680,000, the latter including staff salaries within the department's total figure. Additionally, 4 institutions (28.6%) reported budget ranges between €212,000 and €270,600, with one specifying that this amount also includes the marketing budget. Finally, one institution reported an approximate budget of €176,000€.

The most common functions performed by communication officers in Spanish institutions include the drafting of press releases (78.3%), media relations (73.9%), management of advertising and marketing activities alongside corporate visual identity (69.6%), internal communication management, protocol and institutional events coordination, and advising the institution's leadership on communication and image matters (60.9%). Additional responsibilities include the design of communication materials (56.5%) and the management of sponsorship and patronage initiatives (39.1%). Tasks delegated to other members of the department include website management and the production of photographs and videos of institutional activities (56.5%), the design of communication

materials (43.5%), and the management of internal communication and newsletter creation (39.1%). The least developed areas are the design and implementation of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives—43.5% reported that no one assumes this role—and the dissemination of research conducted within the institution (39.1%). Furthermore, 34.8% of the surveyed institutions mentioned additional responsibilities, such as inter-institutional communication, international communication, the management of internal auditions and external concerts, as well as IT-related tasks, internship supervision, database management, the coordination of streamed concert broadcasts, and institutional relations (Figure 3).

In international institutions, the main functions of communication officers are similar, with media relations, press release drafting, internal communication, and advising senior management reported by 82.4% of respondents. Additionally, in 70.6% of cases, responsibilities include webmaster duties, advertising and marketing activities, and visual identity management. In 58.8% of institutions, tasks also involve the production of newsletters, the design of communication materials, and the creation of photographs and videos. Unlike in Spanish institutions, research dissemination receives greater attention, being a responsibility in over half of the cases (58.8%). Another key difference is that in international institutions, only one communication officer is directly responsible for designing and implementing Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives; in 52.9% of cases, these tasks fall to other members of the communication team (Figure 4).

The management of sponsorship and patronage activities is similar across Spanish and international institutions (see

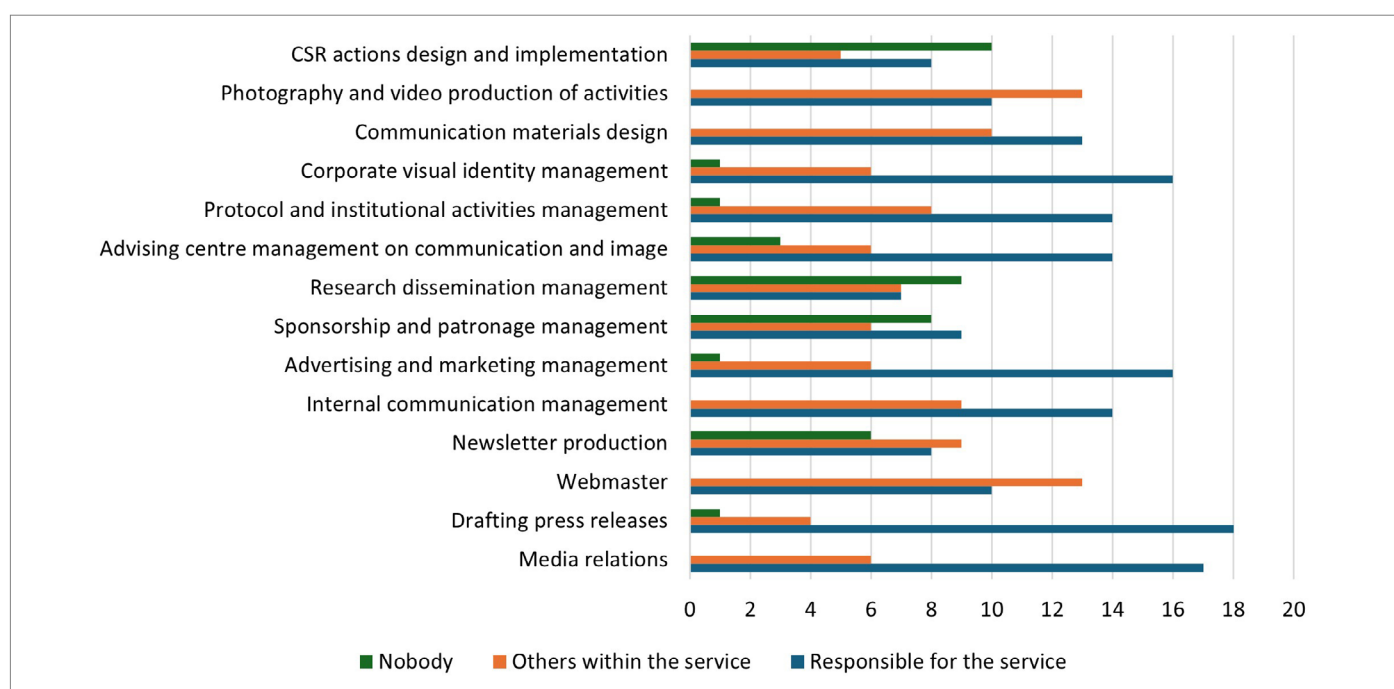


Figure 3. Functions of the communication departments in Spanish institutions and those responsables. Source: Author's own elaboration.

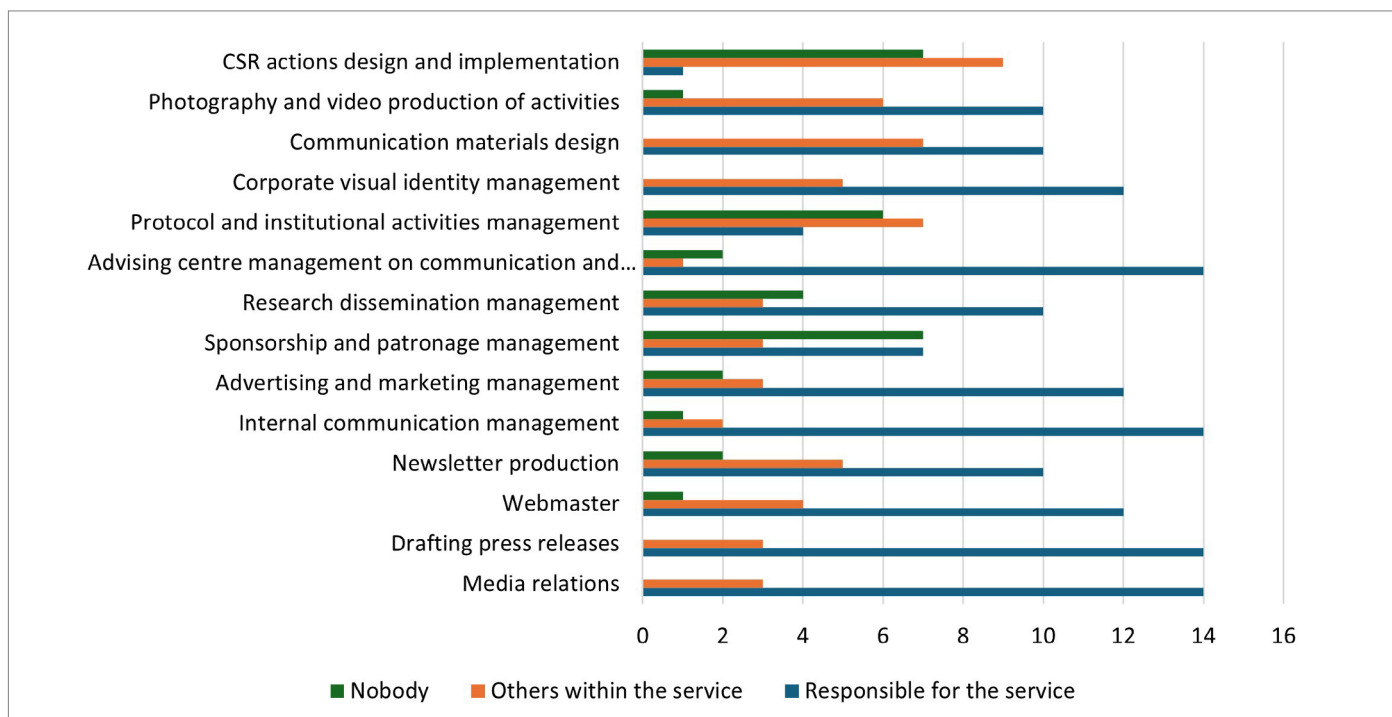


Figure 4. Functions of the communication departments in international institutions and those responsible. Source: Author's own elaboration.

Figure 5). However, notable differences arise in the management of protocol: in 41.2% of international institutions, this function is carried out by other members of the department, while in 35.3% it is not assigned to anyone within the communication team. In contrast, in Spanish institutions, this responsibility mainly falls to the head of communication (60.9%). Additionally, six international institutions reported the following specific functions: "highlighting academic staff and managing their communication and/or publicity requests"; "Promoting performance seasons (opera, ballet, concerts, and other series)"; "Planning and managing the school's presence at events"; "Event programming and marketing"; "Crisis communication"; "Video production of concert recordings"; "Video strategy"; and "Managing bookings for concerts, performances, and guided tours".

The most frequently outsourced services among Spanish institutions are photography and video production (34.8%), followed by design (30.4%), advertising (17.4%), press clipping (13%), and press release writing (4.3%). This order mirrors the outsourcing priorities of international institutions, where photography (64.7%), video (52.9%), and design (29.4%) are also the most commonly outsourced services. Additionally, international institutions report outsourcing press clipping (29.4%), press releases (23.5%), and, to a lesser extent, advertising and event organisation (11.8%). Six institutions mention outsourcing additional services such as "advanced technical support for the website and part of the video production", "concert programmes", "translation", "media buying", and "website management". In contrast to seven Spanish institu-

tions that do not outsource any services, only one international institution reports not relying on external providers.

Finally, fewer than half of the Spanish institutions (47.8%) have an official spokesperson. This role is held by various positions, including: director (6), dean (1), general director (1), general and academic director (1), head of external relations (1), and head of the department of cultural activities (1). The situation is similar in international institutions, where 41.2% report having an official spokesperson. The positions responsible for this role include: head of communication (2), head of public relations (1), dean (2), either the dean or vice-dean depending on the topic (1), rector and director (1), and two press officers based in the rector's office (1).

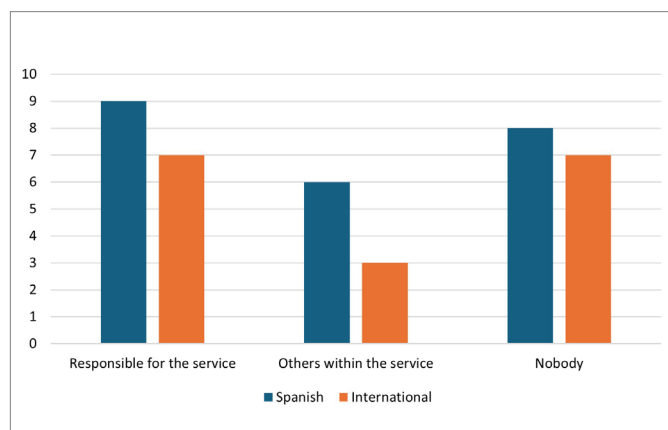


Figure 5. Management of sponsorship and patronage activities in Spanish and international institutions. Source: Author's own elaboration.

5.3. Objectives and Tools Used

For 95.7% of Spanish institutions, the main objective of the communication department is to disseminate the institution's activities, followed by student recruitment and the design and management of the centre's social media plan (82.6%). In addition, for 16 institutions (69.9%), supporting the centre's strategic objectives and the design and production of publications are key priorities. Designing and implementing a communication plan, as well as managing the institutional brand, rank fourth in priority for 15 institutions (65.2%), followed by international projection and internal communication management (14 institutions, 60.9%). The design and production of promotional materials is considered important by 13 institutions (56.5%), while reputation management is a top priority for 52.2%. Other less frequently mentioned objectives include managing media databases and designing merchandising. One institution reported having no defined objectives, while two others added the following: live interviews on radio and television, content management, logistics and a dedicated "communication person", and social media management (Figure 6).

The dissemination of activities and student recruitment are also the main objectives of the communication departments in international institutions (82.4%), along with reputation management. Brand management and the design and production of promotional materials rank second (76.5%), followed by the design and implementation of communication and social media plans, support for strategic objectives, and internal communication (70.6%). The design and publication

of institutional materials, as well as international projection, are important for 52.9% of the institutions surveyed, while managing media databases and designing merchandising are priorities for 41.2%. Additionally, six institutions mentioned specific objectives such as celebrating students' academic achievements, community engagement, national and regional visibility, ticket sales, activity promotion, website management, and increasing community participation. One institution noted that the appointment of a communication officer was recent and that objectives have not yet been formally defined.

With regard to external communication channels, 95.7% of Spanish institutions make use of the institutional website and social media platforms, followed by press contacts (60.9%) and newsletters (39%). Less frequently used channels include press sections on the institutional website, radio, academic journals, podcasts, and television. Additionally, three institutions mentioned alternative channels such as advertising, digital screens on campus, regional television, and institutional platforms such as the regional government's official agenda.

Similarly, international institutions also prioritise the institutional website and social media as their main external communication channels (100%), followed by press contacts and newsletters (82.4%), the press section on the website (47.1%), and, to a lesser extent, radio (29.4%), podcasts (23.5%), and academic journals (17.6%). Only two institutions reported using television as a communication channel. Additional channels highlighted by seven institutions include advertising (posters, brochures, and digital formats), concerts

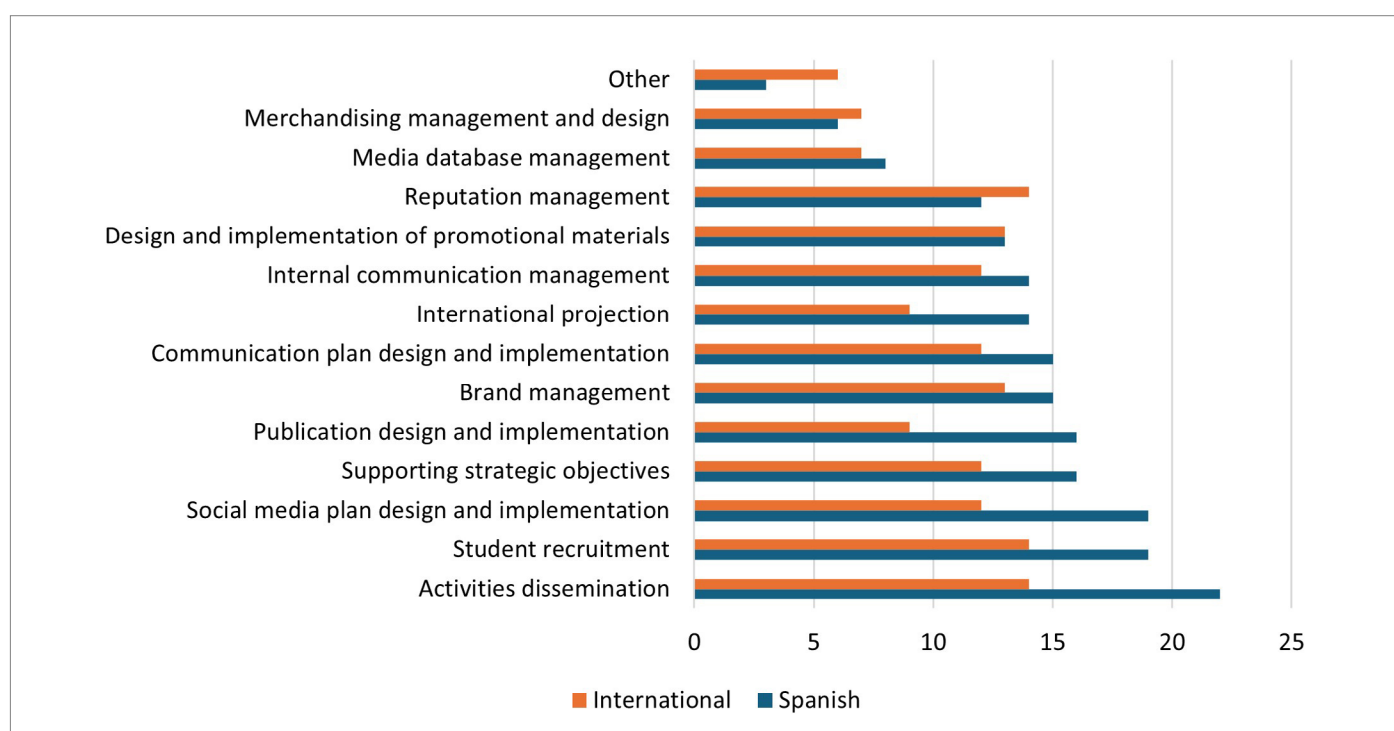


Figure 6. Main objectives of the communication departments in Spanish and international institutions. Source: Author's own elaboration.



Figure 7. External communication channels and tools used by Spanish and international institutions. Source: Author's own elaboration.

and events, magazines, live streaming, and archiving in institutional repositories (Figure 7).

Just over half of the Spanish institutions (56.5%) analyse the impact of their external communication channels, using mainly Google Analytics (47%), integrated platform statistics (42%), and, to a lesser extent, press clipping services (1 institution). In contrast, 76.5% of international institutions carry out impact assessments, with platform statistics being the most commonly used tool (52%), followed by Google Analytics (39%), Matomo (1 institution), and other unspecified methods (1 institution).

Email is the main internal communication channel in 95.7% of Spanish institutions, followed by formal events or meetings (52.2%) and platforms such as Teams, Zoom, or Meet (43.5%). Other channels include noticeboards (physical or digital) and newsletters, used by 39.1% of institutions. Less commonly used channels include the intranet (30.4%) and suggestion boxes, WhatsApp groups, Telegram, and the Cisco Webex platform (4.3%).

In international institutions, email is likewise the predominant internal communication channel (100%), followed by formal events or meetings (82.4%), which—unlike in Spanish institutions—are used at the same frequency as platforms such as Teams, Zoom, or Meet. These are followed by newsletters (70.6%), the intranet (58.8%), and digital or physical noticeboards (41.2%). Other channels mentioned include WhatsApp (1 institution). No institution reported having a suggestion box.

5.4. Social Media and Website

All 23 Spanish institutions have official profiles on Instagram and YouTube, followed by Facebook (95.7%) and X (formerly

Twitter) (82.6%). Presence on other platforms is limited: LinkedIn (21.7%), WhatsApp (13%), TikTok and Telegram (8.7%), and one institution has an open profile on Threads. However, one centre reported that its use of Telegram is non-existent. Only eight institutions (34.8%) have a dedicated community manager for social media management, and nine (39.1%) have a webmaster. In two of these cases, the management of the institutional website is outsourced (Figure 8).

In the case of international institutions, nearly all have official profiles on Facebook and YouTube (94.1%). Unlike Spanish institutions, international centres show slightly lower presence on Instagram (88.2%) but place greater emphasis on having an institutional profile on LinkedIn (76%). Another notable difference is their presence on X, with only half of the surveyed institutions maintaining a profile on the platform (52.9%). WhatsApp is used by only one institution, and none use Telegram. However, the use of TikTok (4 institutions, 23.5%) and Threads (5 institutions, 29.4%) is more prominent than among Spanish centres. Other platforms mentioned include Spotify (1) and Bluesky (1). One institution noted that it does not have its own dedicated profiles, instead using the university's central communication channels; another explained that platforms such as X, Threads, and TikTok are used by individual departments, but not through official institutional accounts.

With regard to the presence of staff dedicated exclusively to managing social media and the institutional website, 52.9% of the international institutions surveyed reported having a community manager within their team. Likewise, 64.7% stated that they have a webmaster, although in one of the participating institutions this service is provided externally.

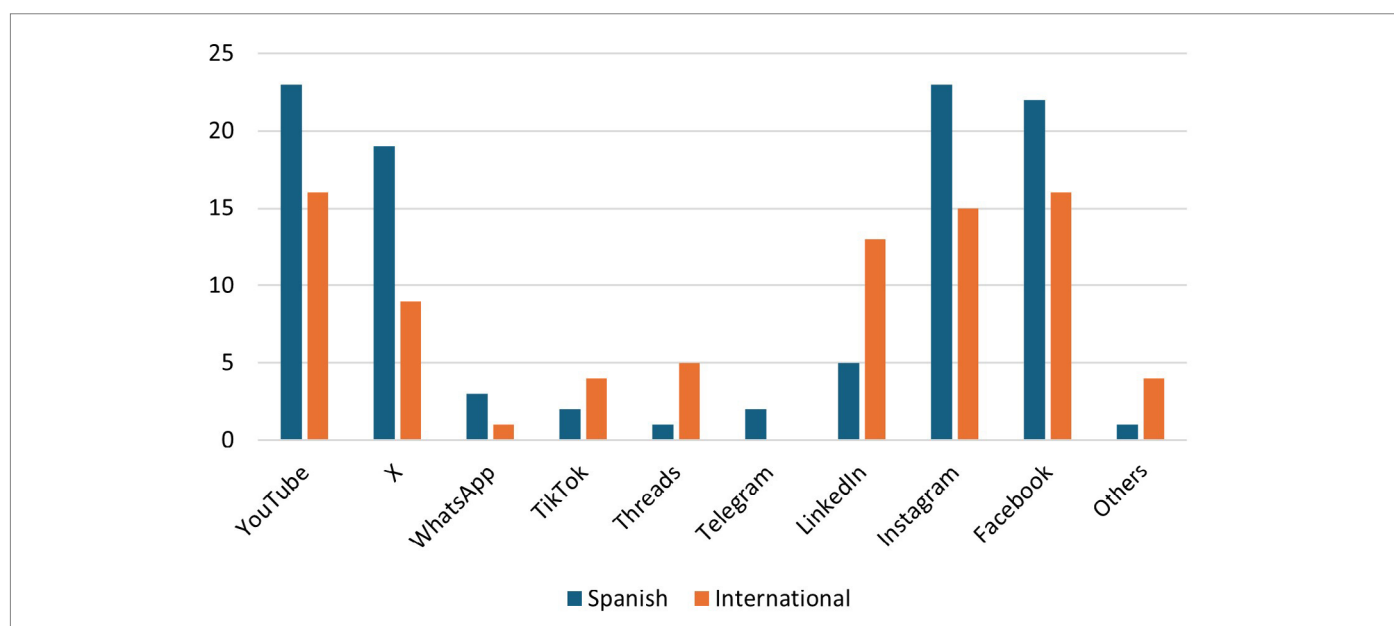


Figure 8. Institutional social media profiles of Spanish and international centers. Source: Author's own elaboration.

5.5 Tools and Audiences

Only 30.4% of Spanish institutions have a communication plan, and responsibility for its development and implementation lies with the communication officer or the individual fulfilling that role. One respondent added that this responsibility is shared by "the Communication team, the senior management team, and the heads of various departments. Communication serves all of them. The communication plan must be participatory and cross-cutting," while another stated that the plan is developed by the Director of Communication and Marketing, with input from the team and general management. Regarding the advantages of having a communication plan, 11 institutions provided responses:

- "Consistency, improved corporate image, and resource optimisation";
- "Having a guide outlining objectives, strategies, and channels to be used, taking into account actions and audiences";
- "Improved organisational visibility and planning";
- "Anticipation, preparation, and organisation";
- "Better planning, project prioritisation, and alignment across the organisation";
- "It's not an advantage, it's essential. It's your daily roadmap";
- "It enables the systematisation of actions and clarifies the organisation of tasks and the responsibilities of each area";
- "It allows goal-oriented work and planning";
- "Structured working approach";

- "Having a roadmap with priorities helps prevent day-to-day urgencies from taking over";
- "Visibility of the work carried out".

The most commonly available document in communication departments is the social media plan, present in 12 institutions (52.2%). Additionally, 47.8% have a corporate identity manual, but only 7 institutions (30.4%) reported having a style and language guide. Just 13% have a Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) plan, and only one institution has a crisis communication plan. However, these documents are publicly available on institutional websites in the following cases: the corporate identity manual (2 institutions), the CSR plan (1 institution), and the style and language guide (1 institution). Overall, 87% of institutions do not publicly share their communication strategies.

The situation in international institutions reveals a different dynamic, with the most widely implemented document being the crisis management plan (88.2%), followed by the communication plan and the social media plan (82.4%), the style and language guide (70.6%), and the corporate identity manual (64.7%). In contrast, the least common document is the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) manual (17.6%). Among all of these, the most accessible documents on the institutions' websites are the corporate identity manual and the style and language guide (29.4%). Furthermore, only two of the surveyed institutions publish both their crisis manual and communication plan on their website, each corresponding to a different institution.

Responsibility for the development and implementation of the communication plan lies with the head of communication and their team in 64.7% of cases. One institution specified that this responsibility is shared in collaboration with senior

Audience	Spanish	International
Music enthusiasts	1	
Friends of the conservatory	1	
General public and wider community	3	2
Members of the public interested in cultural activities and concerts	4	6
Community groups and social organisations	1	
Educational community of the institution (students, teaching staff, and administrative and support staff)	14	8
Of the university		3
Local community organisations	1	
Students' family members	1	3
Prospective or potential students	8	9
Graduates	3	6
Music industry	1	5
Institutions	3	
Educational and cultural institutions	7	4
Media outlets and specialised critics	4	3
Sponsors and partners	2	3
Prospective teaching staff		2
Teaching staff, administrative staff, retired teaching staff, and the general public		1
Cultural promoters and event programmers	2	1
General public	4	4
Political and economic decision-makers		2
Everyone	1	
Anglophone concert goers, Francophone concert goers, Downtown office workers		1
Tourists		1

Table 2. Internal and external audiences targeted by the communication actions of Spanish and international institutions. Source: Author's own elaboration.

management, while another noted joint responsibility with the communication teams of other artistic faculties within the university. One institution stated that the responsibility rests with the senior management team, another indicated that the plan is currently under development, and four institutions did not respond to this question.

Regarding the advantages of having a communication plan, responses from international institutions reflect broad consensus on its value as a cornerstone of institutional strategy. A communication plan is seen as a tool that enables the clear definition of objectives, reinforces message coherence, and ensures efficient allocation of resources. As highlighted in the responses, such a plan serves as "an ongoing rudder for the ship; clarity of purpose outside the details of the day-to-day," while also helping to "clarify the vision, improve teamwork, give direction, [and] allow success measurement." Its role in "setting course and objectives, facilitating decision-making and budgetary arbitration with management" is especially valued, ultimately leading to "effective communication, both externally and internally." In this regard, the responses underscore the importance of adopting a proactive approach—one that anticipates needs and establishes priorities—thus avoiding purely reactive measures and fostering robust, strategic communication.

Eighteen Spanish institutions responded to the question regarding the internal and external audiences targeted by their communication activities. The most frequently mentioned groups were the academic community (students, teaching staff, and administrative and support staff) at 77.8%, followed by prospective students (44.4%) and educational and cultural institutions (38.9%). A detailed breakdown of the responses is presented in Table 2. Among the 23 institutions surveyed, 56.5% stated that they plan their communication actions based on audience segmentation.

The 13 international institutions that responded to the question regarding communication target audiences showed a high degree of alignment with Spanish institutions by identifying prospective students (69.2%) and the educational community (61.5%) as their main internal audiences. In this context, 23.1% of institutions (3 institutions) also include the academic community of their affiliated university as a relevant audience. Among the most prominent external audiences are graduates and members of the public interested in cultural activities (46.2%), followed by the music industry (38.5%), the general public, and educational and cultural institutions (30.8%). Other identified groups include media outlets and specialised critics, sponsors and partners, and students' family members (23.1%), as well as the general public (15.4%) and cultural promoters and programme curators (1 institution). Additionally, some institutions specified particular audiences such as prospective teaching staff and political and economic decision-makers (15.4%, 2 institutions), alongside city centre office workers,

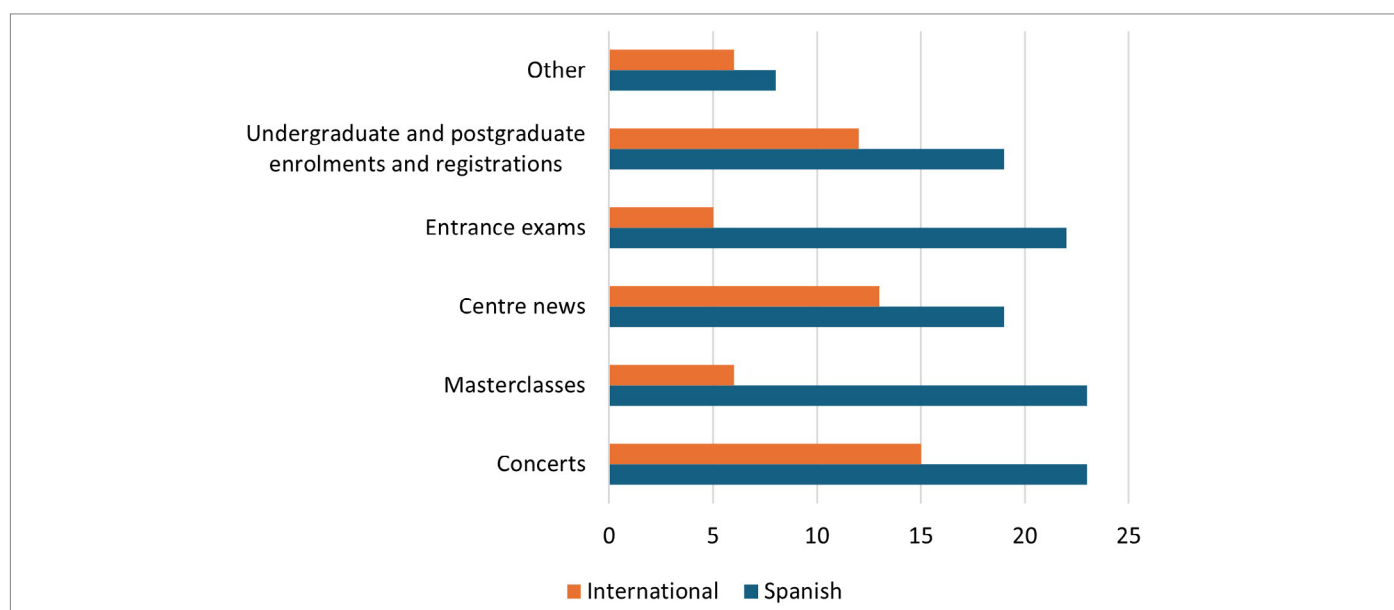


Figure 9. Main communication themes of Spanish and international institutions. Source: Author's own elaboration.

tourists, and "teachers, administrative staff, retired teachers, general audience, but fewer students" (1 institution each). Finally, 76.5% of institutions affirmed that they plan their communication activities based on audience segmentation, thereby emphasising the strategic importance of audience management.

5.6. Topics and Evaluation of Communication Actions

All Spanish institutions agree that the priority communication topics are concerts and masterclasses. The second priority is providing information on entrance examinations (95.7%), followed by the dissemination of institutional news and information about undergraduate and postgraduate enrolments (82.6%). To a lesser extent (4.3%), other topics include "courses," "information about other cultural and musical activities in the city and region such as competitions, workshops, or masterclasses," "success stories of alumni," "student competition awards," "workshops," "welcome week," "festivals," and "projects with patrons" (see Figure 9).

For international institutions, the dissemination of performed concerts constitutes the primary theme of their communication activities, cited by 88.2% of respondents. This is followed in importance by institutional news (76.5%), undergraduate and postgraduate enrolments (70.6%), masterclasses (35.3%), and entrance examinations (29.4%). Similarly to Spanish institutions, relevant topics include the promotion of student and faculty achievements, open days, and a wide range of events. More specifically, they highlight additional content such as "artistic research results (beyond concerts), final exams, published papers, books and articles, and news where the Academy expresses a cultural or musical stance in the public sphere." These priorities reflect a diverse approach encompass-

ing both the promotion of artistic activities and the visibility of the academic and cultural production of the institutions.

Regarding the evaluation of communication campaigns and actions, 65.2% of Spanish institutions report conducting outcome analyses. However, only 15 specify the instruments used, highlighting social media followers (100%) and website visits (80%) as the main indicators, with press clipping and surveys conducted at enrolment mentioned to a lesser extent (33.3%). No additional evaluation systems were reported.

International institutions, on the other hand, demonstrate a higher proportion of entities analysing the outcomes of their communication activities, reaching 76.5% (13 institutions). These institutions unanimously use institutional website visits and social media followers as key metrics, complemented by press clipping (69.2%) and enrolment surveys (61.5%). Additionally, two of these institutions report using specific analytical tools such as Meta Business Suite, the Hootsuite platform for social media, and Google Analytics for web monitoring. These data reflect a more structured approach to outcome evaluation among international institutions.

5.7. About the Centre

In response to the question regarding the mission, vision, values, and image they wish to project, 28.6% of the 21 Spanish institutions' responses highlighted the concept of "excellence," followed by "quality" (23.8%), "reference" (23.8%), and ideas such as "internationalisation," "transversality," and "training future professionals" (19%). Other less frequently mentioned concepts include "diversity of projects" (9.5%) and more specific notions such as "inclusivity," "brand strength," "social impact," "creative laboratory," "research activity," and "unique

music faculty." However, one institution acknowledged that these dimensions are not defined.

Regarding Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) actions, only seven responses were received. Three institutions acknowledged not having specific or defined CSR initiatives; one institution referred to its service charter, while three others detailed specific integration and social action projects, both independently and in collaboration with external organisations.

In international institutions, two reported being in the process of redefining their mission, vision, and values; five referred directly to information published on their websites; and three provided more detailed descriptions that reveal a notable alignment with the values of excellence, innovation, and inclusivity: "Vision: excellence beyond tradition. Values: Student centric, Inclusive, Pioneering"; "Communication goal is connected to the overall strategy for the academy, and states that [institution name] should appear as a visible, attractive, and profiled educational institution to our most important stakeholders. To achieve this, we must appear genuine, participate in social life with clear opinions, musical expressions and not least share our knowledge"⁸; "[Institution name] embodies an ambitious vision to become a global centre of excellence in artistic education, where the most promising talents are trained to become the artists of tomorrow. To achieve this goal, the [institution name] is committed to providing a stimulating and innovative learning environment based on artistic excellence, creativity, cultural diversity, and societal engagement."⁹

Regarding Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) actions, 10 responses were obtained from international institutions. Notable initiatives include occasional humanitarian actions, concerts in care homes for the elderly, and support for students in vulnerable situations. One institution referred to its strategic plan available on its website, while another mentioned its sustainability and responsibility policies online. Additionally, three institutions detailed more structured actions, including integration programmes for minority and disadvantaged students, measures to combat violence, harassment, and discrimination, and initiatives aimed at promoting equality, environmental protection, and the physical and mental well-being of students. Finally, two institutions acknowledged not having specific CSR actions but indicated that they are currently under consideration, reflecting the diversity of approaches and levels of development in this area.

5.8. Opinions

At the end of the questionnaire, respondents were given the opportunity to add any unaddressed or relevant aspects. Eight Spanish institutions provided observations, including the absence of a dedicated communication department, with

the responsible person often combining this role with other duties, sometimes outside working hours; that in some cases this person is specialised in communication, while in others they are teaching staff; the lack of financial resources to invest in advertising and marketing; the need to consider whether the service is appropriately scaled relative to the size of the institution and the volume of activities to be communicated; the unfortunate reality that institutions often lack the necessary departments commensurate with the level of higher education offered; and the ongoing debate regarding the appropriateness of classroom profiles on social media.

In response to this question, one international institution commented on the inclusion of an item regarding the participation of the communication officer in the senior management team, referring to James E. Grunig's principle. The institution noted that such participation does not occur within their organisation, presenting a significant strategic challenge.

6. Discussion

This study has enabled the identification of notable patterns, similarities, and differences in the communication management of the institutions analysed. The results reflect diversity in structure, resources, and objectives, which collectively provide a comprehensive overview of communication practices within these institutions.

Regarding OE1, more than half of the Spanish institutions surveyed (52.2%) have a designated communication officer, compared to 88.2% in international institutions. This difference suggests a higher level of professionalisation in international centres, where more diverse and specific departmental titles are also observed, such as "Communication & Engagement," "Communications, Marketing and Recruitment," or "Event Communication and Marketing." Furthermore, the hierarchical position of the communication officer differs, with a higher proportion of international officers reporting directly to senior management or being part of the executive team, thereby reinforcing their strategic role within the institution.

The composition of communication teams also reveals marked contrasts. While most Spanish institutions have small teams or assign communication duties to staff who combine these with other responsibilities, international institutions demonstrate greater specialisation and functional diversity. International communication teams include designers, community managers, marketing managers, and other specialised roles, with team sizes ranging from two to twenty people, depending on the institution and its affiliation with universities. The visibility of these teams on institutional websites stands at 70.6%, compared to 47.8% for communication departments in Spanish institutions. Additionally, 82.4% of international institutions have dedicated budgets, compared to just 34.8%

of Spanish institutions, where the lack of financial resources significantly limits the scope of communication activities.

Outsourcing of services is more frequent and diversified in international institutions, which prioritise photography, video, and design, alongside press clipping and press releases. In contrast, while Spanish institutions also outsource these areas, seven of them do not outsource any services, reflecting a less specialised approach and fewer resources. Regarding institutional representation, fewer than half of the institutions in both contexts have an official spokesperson (47.8% in Spanish institutions and 41.2% in international ones). The diversity of roles assumed by spokespersons indicates the absence of a clearly defined figure within institutional communication policies and highlights the need for greater professionalisation in this area.

The additional final comments provided by the institutions highlight significant challenges, such as the lack of specialisation among communication officers, insufficient financial resources, and the need to scale communication services according to the size and activities of the institution. Furthermore, a notable point raised by one international institution is the absence of the communication officer's participation in the senior management team.

Regarding the functions performed by communication departments, there is consensus on prioritising the drafting of press releases, media relations, and the management of visual identity and advertising. However, international institutions place greater emphasis on research dissemination and the implementation of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives, areas that are less common in Spanish institutions. Additionally, differences are observed in protocol management, with international institutions demonstrating greater delegation of responsibilities within their teams in this area.

Regarding OE2, in terms of communication department objectives, activity dissemination and student recruitment are priorities in both contexts. However, in international institutions, reputation management, international projection, and the celebration of academic achievements carry significant weight, indicating a more strategic approach. Additionally, international centres suggest further objectives such as community engagement, increasing event participation, and enhancing ticket sales, reflecting a broader orientation towards the involvement of diverse audiences.

Both groups concur in prioritising the academic community and prospective students as their main target audiences, although international institutions more frequently include graduates and external sectors such as the music industry. Audience segmentation is key in both cases, applied by 56.5% of Spanish institutions and 76.5% of international ones, reflec-

ting a more strategic approach to audience management in the latter.

Spanish and international institutions share the dissemination of concerts as the central theme of their communication strategies, followed by activities related to enrolment and registration, institutional news, and masterclasses. In Spanish institutions, entrance examinations (95.7%) stand out as an additional priority, whereas they hold less relevance in international institutions (29.4%), which instead emphasise the dissemination of artistic research results, academic publications, and cultural activities. These differences reflect complementary approaches: while Spanish institutions prioritise student recruitment, international institutions broaden their communication towards academic and cultural projection, highlighting a more diversified model oriented towards global institutional visibility.

Regarding OE3, the evaluation of results reveals a more structured approach among international institutions, where 76.5% analyse the impact of their external communication actions, compared to 56.5% of Spanish institutions. While international centres prioritise platform analytics (52%) and Google Analytics (39%), Spanish institutions primarily use Google Analytics (47%) and, to a lesser extent, integrated platform statistics (42%). Other methods, such as Matomo and press clipping services, are marginally employed by only one institution in each case. These differences underscore a more strategic and professionalised approach to outcome evaluation internationally.

The availability of strategic documents also shows a notable difference. While only 30.4% of Spanish institutions have a communication plan, this figure rises to 82.4% among international institutions. Moreover, international centres highlight documents such as crisis management plans (88.2%) and style and language guides (70.6%), underscoring the importance of having clear and specific guidelines for communication actions. The social media plan is the most prevalent document among Spanish institutions (12 institutions, 52.2%).

In this context, the evaluation of communication campaigns and actions is more common in international institutions (76.5%) than in Spanish ones (65.2%), with website visits and social media followers standing out as the primary metrics in both cases. However, international institutions more frequently employ advanced tools such as Meta Business Suite, Hootsuite, and Google Analytics, alongside complementary metrics like press clipping (69.2%) and enrolment surveys (61.5%), compared to their less frequent use in Spanish institutions (33.3%). These differences further indicate a stronger strategic and professionalised approach in the international context.

Finally, in relation to OE4, the comparative analysis between Spanish and international higher music education institutions

reveals systematic differences that allow for the identification of clearly distinct communication models. In terms of channels, both prioritise the institutional website and social media as their main external communication avenues (95.7% and 100%, respectively), but international institutions diversify their strategy more, with a wider use of newsletters and press contacts (82.4%) compared to Spanish institutions (39% and 60.9%, respectively). They also stand out in the use of radio (29.4%), podcasts (23.5%), and academic journals (17.6%), tools with lower presence in Spanish institutions. This difference indicates a more developed media strategy in international centres. Likewise, for internal communication, while email is the primary channel in both contexts, international institutions are distinguished by a more extensive and balanced use of formal meetings and collaborative platforms such as Teams, Zoom, or Meet (82.4%), as well as newsletters (70.6%), whereas these figures are lower in Spanish institutions (43.5% and 39.1%, respectively). The intranet is also more common in international institutions (58.8% vs. 30.4%), while tools such as WhatsApp and suggestion boxes are marginally used in both contexts.

The professionalisation of communication teams is also significantly higher in international institutions: 52.9% employ a community manager and 64.7% have webmasters, compared to 34.8% and 39.1% respectively in Spanish institutions. This reflects greater investment in the strategic management of digital communication in these centres. Moreover, international institutions stand out for their adoption of emerging social networks such as TikTok (23.5%) and Threads (29.4%), contrasting with their limited presence in the Spanish context. While Spanish institutions exhibit full presence on Instagram and YouTube, international centres prioritise platforms such as LinkedIn (76%) and have lower presence on X (52.9% compared to 82.6% in Spain). Regarding Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), the study reveals a more structured development in international institutions, with initiatives integrating diversity, inclusion, sustainability, and student well-being, whereas the Spanish context mainly involves isolated or sporadic experiences.

Taken together, these elements suggest that international institutions embody a more consolidated, diversified, and globally aligned model of institutional communication, in contrast to a more functional, somewhat limited model with room for development in Spanish institutions.

7. Conclusions

The results obtained allow us to affirm that the stated objectives have been achieved, providing a detailed and comparative overview of the organisation, functions, resources, objec-

tives, audiences, and strategies employed by communication departments in both contexts.

In relation to OE1, significant structural differences have been identified: Spanish institutions exhibit limited professionalisation, with small teams and shared functions, whereas international institutions have larger, more specialised, and more visible structures, alongside greater human and financial resources.

Regarding OE2, it is evident that while both contexts share the importance of activity dissemination and student recruitment, international institutions demonstrate a higher degree of professionalisation, greater diversification of channels and tools, and a more clearly defined strategic approach.

Regarding OE3, international institutions exhibit more consolidated planning, with greater presence of strategic plans and protocols, as well as a more systematic and diversified evaluation of their communication activities.

Finally, in relation to OE4, the comparative analysis reveals distinct models: a more strategic, professionalised, and diversified model in international institutions, and a more functional and limited model in Spanish institutions, particularly regarding the use of tools, digital presence, CSR activities, and audience engagement. These differences highlight the need for Spanish institutions to strengthen the structure and professionalisation of their communication departments, as well as the importance of adopting tools and strategies that enable more planned, transversal, and institutionally aligned communication management.

Some limitations of this research can also be identified. Methodologically, the combination of closed and open questions allowed for broad and systematisable data collection, but also complicated the homogeneous analysis of qualitative responses due to their varying length and content. Moreover, structural and cultural differences between the national and international contexts must be taken into account when assessing data comparability, as well as the differing response rates, which influence the analysis in absolute terms.

In future research, it would be pertinent to incorporate multivariate analyses —such as contingency tables and hypothesis testing— that allow for a deeper comparison of variables like organisational structure, budget allocation, the existence and professionalisation of communication teams, and outcome evaluation. Additionally, it would be advisable to include the perspectives of key target audiences, such as the academic community, administrative and support staff, alumni, prospective students and their families, as well as the general public attending cultural activities. This approach would

enable a 360-degree view of the impact and effectiveness of institutional communication in these centres.

Finally, it would be valuable to further advance comparative studies between public and private institutions, with the aim of analysing potential differences in structure, planning, and outcomes of communication activities, as well as levels of audience satisfaction. Delving into these dimensions will enrich the existing knowledge on institutional communication within higher artistic education and guide future improvement processes tailored to the specific characteristics of each institution.

Despite its limitations, the study provides a solid foundation for advancing reflection and improvement in institutional communication within higher artistic education, emphasising its strategic role in the visibility, legitimacy, and sustainability of these institutions.

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Endnotes

1. Law 1/2024, of 7 June, which regulates higher artistic education and establishes the organisation and equivalences of professional artistic studies, states in Article 4 that: "Higher artistic education is integrated into the Spanish Qualifications Framework for Higher Education (hereafter, MECES) at the same level as the equivalent university degrees."
2. Of the 37 institutions comprising the study universe, 23 are publicly funded (62.2%) and 14 are privately managed (37.8%). Although the RCD classifies ESMUC and MUSIKENE as private institutions, this study considers them public due to their status as public sector foundations.
3. The IN.TUNE alliance, launched on 1 January 2024, is one of the seven coalitions selected under the 2023 Erasmus+ European Universities call, and the only one focused on music and the arts. It brings together eight higher education institutions in music and the arts from across different European regions, with the aim of enhancing their quality, performance, and international competitiveness, while promoting excellence in higher artistic education. The member institutions are: the Escola Superior de Música de Catalunya (Barcelona), the Conservatoire National Supérieur de Musique et de Danse de Paris, the Universität für Musik und darstellende Kunst Wien, the Koninklijk Conservatorium Den Haag, the Sibelius Academy – University of the Arts Helsinki, the Fakultet muzičke umetnosti u Beogradu, the Norges musikkhøgskole (Oslo), and the Universitatea Națională de Muzică din București. More information available at: <https://intune-alliance.eu/>
4. The International Benchmarking Group (IBG), established in 2010, brings together eleven of the world's leading conservatories: Royal Northern College of Music (group leader); Escola Superior de Música de Catalunya (ESMUC, Barcelona); Haute école de musique de Genève (HEM, Switzerland); Jacobs School of Music, Indiana University Bloomington (USA); Koninklijk Conservatorium Den Haag (The Netherlands); Mahidol University (Thailand); McGill University (Montreal); Norges musikkhøgskole (Norway); Sydney Conservatorium (Australia); Universität für Musik und darstellende Kunst Graz (Austria); and the Yong Siew Toh Conservatory of Music, National University of Singapore. Its mission is to foster the development of young musicians through the exchange of best practices, ensuring educational excellence. More information available at: <https://www.rncm.ac.uk/about/worldwide-partnerships/worldwide-professional-networks/>
5. The QS World University Rankings by Subject: Performing Arts is a global ranking of higher education institutions specialising in the performing arts. It forms part of the broader QS World University Rankings by Subject, which cover 60 academic disciplines grouped into five thematic areas. Based on academic reputation, employer reputation, and research impact, this ranking serves as a key reference for excellence in international arts education. More information available at: <https://www.topuniversities.com/university-subject-rankings/performing-arts>
6. The total number of responses from institutions belonging to IN.TUNE, QSWUR, and IBG amounts to 17 unique responses, as some institutions are members of more than one group. Specifically, 3 institutions listed in the QSWUR ranking are also part of the IN.TUNE alliance; 2 are included in the IBG group; and one institution belongs to all three: QSWUR, IN.TUNE, and IBG.
7. The Spanish institution that is part of both the IN.TUNE alliance and the IBG group is included in the analysis solely as part of the responses from Spanish institutions.
8. One institution stated by email that it was unable to complete the survey.
9. "We must also understand our stakeholder groups and keep up with trends and social developments where our subjects can and should play a role. [Institution name] Communication Values (as of the last strategy for 2017-2022), was Honesty, Respect, Orderliness, Productivity, and to work knowledge-based".
10. "Its role in society is to train future artists and professionals in music and dance, to help enrich national and international artistic culture, and to promote the values of art, creativity, and diversity within society. To fulfil its mission, the [institution name] reaches out to a variety of audiences, including future students, parents, institutional partners, arts professionals, former students, and the general public. It is committed to providing excellent training, total immersion in the world of music and dance, and personalised support for its students. Its core values include excellence, innovation, tradition, collaboration, diversity, commitment, and responsibility. As a prestigious institution, the [institution name] embodies an inspiring and ambitious personality, guided by artistic excellence, innovation, and inclusion. Its commitment to excellence, innovation and inclusion guides all its actions, as it firmly believes in the transformative power of art to inspire, enrich and unite individuals and communities."

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