Sustainable Journalism through the concepts of engagement and relevance: a scoping review

La sostenibilidad de los medios a través de los conceptos de engagement y relevancia: scoping review

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Abstract:

The concepts of relevance and engagement provide an approach to understanding new media companies' search for a new sustainability model. This new model must complement the advertising revenue with subscriptions. The media need to ensure various sources of funding. They must regain relevance and maintain engagement with their audience; this paper presents the results of a scoping review. The objective is to identify and synthesise the academy's vision concerning the relevance and engagement applied to the sustainability of journalism. The academy analyses the innovation processes in news media outlets in-depth and attempts to leverage its business model through paying users. The results show a growing interest in the media's economic feasibility due to the demise of the advertising-based business model. The in-depth analysis of engagement shows the academy's lack of a defined consensus, although new research has made valuable contributions. Moreover, there are significant differences between professionals' and academics' visions. Although to a lesser extent, Relevance is present in the sustainability debate through the visibility and trust that media brands bring.

Keywords:

Digital journalism; engagement; sustainability; media business; systematic review.

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Resumen:

Los conceptos de relevancia y engagement aportan claves para analizar la situación actual de las empresas periodísticas, en busca de un nuevo modelo de sostenibilidad que complemente los ingresos por publicidad, principalmente, con las suscripciones. Para asegurar sus fuentes de financiación, los medios necesitan recuperar la relevancia que han ido perdiendo, y conseguir el engagement con su público. En este trabajo se presentan los resultados de una scoping review cuyo objetivo es identificar la visión de la academia sobre los conceptos de la relevancia y el engagement aplicados a la sostenibilidad del periodismo. Los resultados evidencian una preocupación creciente por la viabilidad económica de los medios. También reciben una especial atención los procesos de innovación y los intentos de afianzar el modelo de negocio en los usuarios de pago. El análisis del engagement muestra que todavía no hay una definición consensuada por parte de la academia. Además, los resultados evidencian diferencias importantes con la visión de los profesionales. La relevancia, aunque en menor medida, está presente en el debate sobre la sostenibilidad a través de la visibilidad y la confianza que aportan las marcas de los medios.

Palabras clave:

Periodismo digital; engagement; sostenibilidad; negocio de los medios; revisión sistemática.

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1. Introduction and theoretical framework

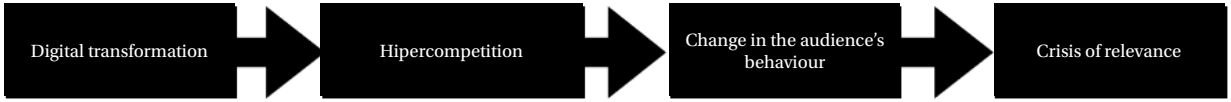
This paper focuses on the news media companies' sustainability in relevance and engagement in academic investigations. The advent of the internet radically changed how news is consumed, leading to the current crisis of media viability (Meier; Bracker; Verhovnik, 2017). The profound change in the advertising market and the proliferation of free content and sources of information has led to the media's loss of relevance, as they have lost exclusivity not only as a source of information but also as an advertising media's (Maestro Espínola; García Santamaría; Pérez Serrano, 2016), as digital platforms have absorbed advertising. This viability is considered part of this research's theoretical framework,

The concept of relevance has two connotations. On the one hand, it can be defined as the media's capacity to be an influential actor in society, an opinion shaper (Vázquez-Herrero; Negreira-Rey; López-García, 2019). In this sense, we refer to reputation. On the other hand, relevance can also be understood as the media's degree of visibility on the internet, which in turn, is related to the medium's reputation (Gundlach; Hofmann, 2020).

This paper is set in the context of the internet, which is constantly changing, making it challenging to identify structures from all economic and cultural sectors, not only from the media (Nel et al., 2020). The academic sphere has emphasised the evolution

in the industry, and in particular, the concept of journalistic innovation is often understood as a rescue platform for a sector seeking a new business model (Creech; Nadler, 2018).

Graph 1. The context of the subject of study in digital media transformation



Source: created by the authors

The media are forced to adapt to the digital environment and decide, accordingly, the modus operandi of the continuity and change of the media (Zelizer, 2019). For this reason, digitalisation is the focus of this research, not in a technological sense but rather in a strategic sense. The work is based on the definition of Digital Journalism Studies, proposed by Eldridge et al. in 2019 (cited by Steensen; Wetslund, 2021): "Digital Journalism Studies should strive to be an academic field which critically explores, documents, and explains the interplay of digitisation and journalism, continuity and change."

Since the emergence of social media, The main consequence of digitalisation is the loss of the media's monopoly on audiences (Myllylahti, 2020). Not only the media communicates on the internet; governments, corporations, and institutions of all types share information on websites and social networks. News is separated from journalism (Steensen; Westlund, 2021), and media outlets compete with each other and any other content for the internet user's attention (Krebs et al., 2020). For the media to be a viable business in this hypercompetitive environment, they must understand how audiences access news (relevance) and their consumption and engagement patterns. As Batsell (2015) points out, the more urgent engagement becomes, the more the digital transformation process progresses.

On the other hand, engagement is generally understood as the media's ability to evoke a specific reaction from the audience. The media needs a loyal audience to sell advertising and obtain paying users. Engagement ranges from reaction metrics (views, visits, clicks, likes) to news co-production (Nelson, 2018; Belair-Gagnon; Nelson; Lewis, 2019). As we will see, the concept of engagement is not easy to define. Therefore, we have chosen to maintain the term in English, due to the lack of a consensual translation that can incorporate the different aspects that the original term has acquired for researchers and professionals, although we recommend Ortega-Santos and Rodríguez-Barba's work (2018) for those who are interested in a documented discussion about this.

Accordingly, this research is based on the need to analyse two concepts linked to the sustainability of journalism: the idea of relevance, due to the fierce competition on the internet, and engagement, due to the media's need to ensure the readers' engagement. Relevance and engagement are keys to monetising the audience through subscriptions and advertising.

On the other hand, they are two closely related concepts in which the latter, as we understand, follows the former. Relevance centres on the media itself and the key factors that leverage it, such as the quality of the journalistic product and the publisher's independence. Engagement, on the other hand, focuses on the audience's behaviour. Finally, sustainability is a viable and durable business model (Harlow, 2018). However, like businesses, the media have a particularity, as stated by Natalie Jomini

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Stroud: "The public expects them to function like schools, providing a public service. But newspapers have to function like businesses because taxpayer dollars do not fund thems" (Jomini Strod, 2017).

Such a distinctive feature forces us to reconcile the business vision with the mission to inform the public and monitor political and economic power. Nelson and Tandoc's (2019) concept of the balancing act can explain this tension or search for balance between fulfilling their social function and being economically viable, as well as between what the audiences want and what they need in general (Belair-Gagnon; Nelson; Lewis, 2019).

This research aims to provide state-of-the-art on the concepts of relevance and engagement in the context of the sustainability of news media companies.

Based on the proposed objective, the following research questions are posed:

- How does academia analyse the impact of digitalisation on the advertising-based media business model?
- How does academia analyse changes in traditional media audiences and new audiences?
- How does academia analyse the impact of the brand's reputation on media durability?

Relevance, engagement, and innovation in the sector have shaped the conceptual basis for the search for scientific papers on the topics, problems, and areas of study aimed at the sustainability of news media companies or their business model.

2. Materials and methods

For this review work, various systematic review papers known as scoping reviews (Arksey; 0'Malley, 2005; Munn et al., 2018) have been carried out, given the research questions and the breadth of the area of knowledge to be covered. Specifically, "a systematic review poses the effectiveness of an intervention while a scoping review aims to learn about the characteristics of knowledge" (Codina, 2021).

In all cases, these are systematic reviews that must comply with some methodological validation protocols. In this case, the present research has applied the phases of the SALSA framework (Search, Appraisal, Synthesis, Analysis) and followed the checkpoints of the PRISMA Scr framework.

Searches were conducted for the research development in January 2021 to cover six whole years (2015-2020), with the second update in March 2021. The authors agreed on the key words and the inclusion and exclusion criteria until the evidence base from the analysed documents banks was shaped. Regarding the data extraction process, the first author was in charge of reading the papers and the first version of the data extraction, generating a structured summary from each reading and applying the same analysis scheme to each paper. The other authors reviewed and checked the results, and agreements were reached through consensus.

The following table shows the essential parameters of the revision work carried out.

Table 1. Essential parameters of the review work

Databases used	Web of Science and Scopus.
Documentary typology	Academic and review papers.
Date range	From January 2015 until March 2021.
Concepts from which key words are derived	1. Journalism 2. Media Business 3. Subscriptions 4. Engagement 5. Relevance
Main reasons for exclusion	False positives, e.g.) articles that mention the word engagement are unrelated to the research's topic. Academic papers whose subject of study is set in a country without press freedom, as the conditions of economic survival are specific and not comparable.

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3. Results

Based on the analyses, the evidence base allows for an initial classification according to the main object of the study analysed. They are two closely related topics, but with different approaches, which make up more than 50% of the academic papers: the sector's impact of digital transformation on the business model and innovation as an agent of digitalisation, i.e., innovation as a vector of adaptation to the digital context.

On the other hand, audiences occupy 25% of the selected articles. The remaining references have the following themes as their subject of study: the media's brand, their values, and their relationship to the visibility of the media and topics that are included in this analysis under the heading of "the brand as a generator of relevance". In any case, it can be seen that the main themes identified are relatively evenly distributed.

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Table 2. The main themes detected in the article

The main object of the study	Articles	
The impact on the business model	16	26.2%
Innovation as an agent of digitalisation	18	29.5%
Audience behaviour/engagement	14	22.9%
The brand as a generator of relevance	13	21.3%

Source: created by the authors

3.1. The impact on the business model

With the advent of the internet, audiences have become digitalised by technological platforms and social networks. The main issue identified in the academic output is the crisis brought about because digital revenues do not compensate for the losses of print editions (Maestro Espínola; García Santamaría; Pérez Serrano, 2016; Lehtisaari et al., 2018). Print editions still generate a higher turnover than digital editions in some traditional media (Olsen; Solvoll, 2018).

Some works insist that the crisis in the business model is a crisis of relevance in the digital environment where the media do not have exclusivity over the news (Zayani, 2021), and this crisis is shared with the advertisers (Maestro Espínola; García Santamaría; Pérez Serrano, 2016). Both are searching for a new way to reach readers and users in an increasingly fierce competitive environment for the audience's attention (Lehtisaari; Grönlund, 2015; Lehtisaari et al., 2018). In this sense, some authors highlight the idea that "the media and advertising must adapt to a model where the reader is the epicentre" (Maestro Espínola; García Santamaría; Pérez Serrano, 2016).

The recurring idea is that the advertising crisis forces the media to continuously experiment (Nelson, 2019; Márquez; Peñamarín, 2020). The media aspires to increase revenues from users such is the case with crowdfunding (Antonopoulos et al., 2020; Márquez; Peñamarín, 2020).

Subscription research is interested in two main topics: firstly, the effectiveness of paywalls (Chyi; Ng, 2020) on subscriptions and the variant of "data walls (Evens; Van Damme, 2016), which on the one hand, contribute to improving the user's experience through personalisation and on the other hand, they are mainly oriented at the sale of qualified advertising spaces. Consequently, there is still no consensus about the impact of the walls on the decline in traffic and, therefore, the advertising revenues (Kim; Song; Kim, 2020).

The second line of investigation focuses on understanding users' inclination to pay for a subscription (Chyi; Ng, 2020), the reasons for subscribing (da Silva; Sanseverino, 2020; Saavedra; González, 2015) and the main reasons for choosing one source or another (Harlow, 2018). This research highlights the importance of media reputation (Kim; Song; Kim, 2020) in the trust it generates and, consequently, the intention to pay (Vara-Miguel, 2020).

The audience is also analysed as the basis for the primary sources of revenue: its monetisation through advertising and subscriptions. On the one hand, this is described as a break strategy or prioritising the readers' loyalty and their transformation into subscribers. On the other hand, it is an acceleration strategy focused on not losing traffic and selling qualified audiences to advertisers (Olsen; Solvoll, 2018).

Concerns about the loss of quality focus the critical discourse on the impact of digitalisation on the business model. Firstly, the main criticisms focus on the decline in journalistic quality due to the focus on audience metrics (Victoria-Mas; Lacasa-Mas, 2015; Fürst, 2020), which negatively impacts their reputation and can lead to a loss of relevance, jeopardising its long-term sustainability. Secondly, there is a risk of an echo chamber that results from exposure to fewer sources due to subscriptions (Arendt; Northup; Camaj, 2019) compared to the free and open exposure to diverse sources offered by the advertising-based funding model. Similarly, Pope (2017) highlights the quality gap that paywalls can generate between subscribers and free users.

The notion of hyper-competition is, therefore, at the root of the crisis. The internet lowers the entry barrier to compete for the audience's attention (Lehtisaari et al., 2018). Competition comes from within the sector (intra-media competition) and other sectors (intermedia competition) or non-journalistic content. In this hypercompetitive environment, the media rely on their brands to win (Krebs et al., 2020). The concept of coopetition arises due to the lack of resources to stand out from competitors. No one has the resources to produce all types of content (Pope, 2017; Villi et al., 2020) and to have bargaining power over internet giants (Lehtisaari et al., 2018).

Reducing journalist staff is not the only adjustment measure to declining advertising revenues. News organisations adapt by focusing on data (Evens; Van Damme, 2016) driven by paywalls and social media consumption (Mañas-Viniegra; Sierra-Sánchez; López-Cepeda, 2019), promoting understanding and collaboration between newsroom and management, and orienting the journalistic product as a service to its audience (Lehtisaari; Grönlund, 2015).

3.2. Innovation as an agent of digitalisation

Innovation is essential for the media's survival and is a widely shared starting point (García-Avilés; Carvajal Prieto; Arias Robles, 2018; Heckman; Wihbey, 2019; Karimi; Walter, 2015; Manfredi-Sánchez; Rojas-Torrijos; Herraz De-la-Casa, 2015). There is concern about defining and analysing the process (García-Avilés; Carvajal Prieto; Arias Robles, 2018, Vázquez-Herrero; Negreira-Rey; López-García, 2019; Karimi; Walter, 2015; García-Perdomo; Magaña, 2020 among others), creating taxonomies (Carvajal et al., 2015) that enable learning from the experience and replicating it with the aim of finding a suitable business model.

The discourse critical of innovation is either ad hoc (Antonopoulos et al., 2020; Creech and Nadler, 2018, Hess; Waller, 2020) or secondary (Fürst, 2020). There is a dominant discourse, partly dominated by US think tanks. They are based on the market logic defined by technological internet giants, which according to some authors, sidesteps normative debates surrounding the media's role in democratic life (Creech; Nadler, 2018). Some works are limited to innovation and do not question the whole discussion, which should not go as far as personalising or sacrificing news quality (Cestino; Berndt, 2017). Experts believe that media professionals must decide what benefits the business and the profession (Nelson, 2019); it is a historical balancing act.

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Depending on the research, the areas of analysis are product, formats, distribution, organisation and business model (García-Avilés; Carvajal Prieto; Arias Robles, 2018); content, product, process, and business model (Vázquez-Herrero; Negreira-Rey; López-García, 2019); technology, organisation, content and audience (Carvajal et al., 2015); or finally, resources, processes and values (Karimi; Walter, 2015). We propose to articulate the areas of analysis to clarify the following: product (contents and formats of such content, as well as the audiences that have inspired them), process (considering the organisation), business model (which includes the distribution of contents) and culture and technology as cross-cutting areas of analysis.

A specific culture imposes innovation processes, the startup culture. Beyond startups, the triad of entrepreneurship, innovation, and business model (Heckman; Wihbey, 2019) is the formula for finding a way out of the crisis. Startups are generally identified as leaders in innovation, not only in the media sector. (Carvajal et al., 2015).

The personal leader (Harlow; Chadha, 2019) or group leader shapes the organisation's personality in digital ventures, which is the product and its business model; they act as journalists and managers. The barrier between the newsroom and the company's managers ceases to exist in these digital ventures (Harlow, 2018).

Both individual and corporate entrepreneurial orientation is linked to an innovative vision, aggressive competition, and the search for opportunities (Nel et al., 2020). There is a broad consensus that entrepreneurship, and freedom of the press, are fundamental to a well-functioning democracy and economy. In their study, Nel et al. (2020) collaborated with Wan-Ifra in 2016 in 69 countries, showing a positive correlation between a country's press freedom and the revenue generated by the media from its readership base. However, entrepreneurial orientation is critical in creating a positive revenue impact.

The sense of urgency that sometimes accompanies academia's view of innovation contrasts with the more leisurely view of practitioners and managers. In some cases, media outlets still have healthy accounts, allowing them to wait and watch for innovations from competitors and act accordingly (Lehtisaari; Grönlund, 2015). In other cases, the media should make minor incremental improvements that allow them to slow the rate at which their revenues are falling (Villi et al., 2020).

Professionals suffer from a lack of resources due to a decrease in revenue and a lack of vision (Heckman; Wihbey, 2019). Journalists accept innovations but are suspicious of them as they may alter the essence of the profession (Meier; Bracker; Verhovnik, 2017). In this sense, they tend to adapt innovations to traditional work (Nelson; Tandoc, 2019).

Several investigations that highlight the innovations incorporated into writing are reflected in greater integration between departments (Cestino; Berndt, 2017; Nelson; Tandoc, 2019) or multidisciplinary teams and multi-faceted profiles (Zayani, 2021, García-Avilés; Carvajal Prieto; Arias Robles, 2018) or hybridisation of roles (Schmitz Weiss et al., 2020).

Academia observes the conditions that favour innovation and the relationship between innovation and higher revenue (Karimi; Walter, 2016). The size of the environment favours innovation processes due to the possibility of dedicating more resources; entrepreneurial culture favours innovation processes and is related to higher revenues. More innovation processes lead to more profits. Although there is evidence to the contrary, there are times when innovation is beneficial and could improve reputation, but not profitability (Vázquez-Herrero; Negreira-Rey; López-García, 2019).

3.3. Audience's behaviour/engagement

The main idea is that the media needs the audience to survive if they intend to monetise through advertising or subscriptions (Belair-Gagnon; Nelson; Lewis, 2019; Nelson, 2019). Engagement is the key to transforming visitors into repeat visitors and subscribers (Nelson; Tandoc, 2019). In any case, engagement existed before the internet and its metrics, such as civic engagement (Ferrer-Conill; Tandoc, 2018). Therefore, it is not a new aspiration for journalism.

Engagement has two interpretations that span the entire media spectrum. On the one hand, it is the salvation from financial bankruptcy for for-profit media (Belair-Gagnon; Nelson; Lewis, 2019). Publications can sell as many subscriptions and advertisements as possible to a loyal audience (Lehtisaari et al., 2018). On the other hand, engagement is expected to save journalism from losing its ability to set the political-social agenda and, above all, to secure its mission of informing the public and monitoring power (Nelson, 2019).

Some media have tried to get closer to the audience to increase engagement, only to discover that it is not necessarily their target audience. Therefore the public and the audience's view of the media's positioning is decisive for the media's future and its business model (Belair-Gagnon; Nelson; Lewis, 2019).

Engagement case studies and literature reviews establish definitions of engagement in terms of levels, phases, and gradations around the audience and their behaviour. The user moves between these levels depending on their political and civic engagement. Nelson's (2019) systematised review stands out with the two views on engagement: news-production oriented –in which the audience creates content or proposes newsworthy material– and reception –oriented– which measures the sharing of news on social networks or the time of consumption.

In this way, the engagement-audience binomial has continuity with the audience-metrics binomial. Audience metrics, especially audience size metrics, are the metrics that determine the success or failure of a media outlet (Nelson, 2018). However, no measure of engagement meets journalists' and editors' aspirational definition, who complain about not having the time or the skills to understand audiences' behaviour beyond the number of page views (Whitelaw, 2018). Therefore, audience and engagement-oriented media make decisions that are not entirely based on quantitative metrics (Ferrer-Conill; Tandoc, 2018). There is a consensus that managing solely based on the metrics available to professionals puts the social mission of journalism at risk.

Measuring engagement is elusive, as Nelson states (2018). The author also states that the loss of engagement is not the origin of the crisis; perhaps it is not the key to recovering from it. Given the impossibility of communicating engagement, its measurement, and necessity clearly and quantitatively, the author concludes, "Perhaps in a few years, the term "audience engagement" will vanish altogether and be replaced by a new journalistic pursuit." (Nelson, 2018).

The second main objective of engagement research is to understand news consumption as a necessary but inadequate condition for audience engagement. News is mainly consumed through social networks, where the user is more exposed to unreliable news sources (Chen; Pain, 2019). The analysis of user behaviour on Facebook is the most frequent in studies. The engagement capacity of digital native media is also compared with traditional audiovisual media (Dodds, 2017). The latter naturally have

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more suitable formats (video and audio); however, digital natives adapt better than legacy media to broadcasting in the new media (Mañas-Viniegra; Sierra-Sánchez; López-Cepeda, 2019).

Facebook seems to have reached a certain degree of saturation along with Twitter in favour of Instagram and YouTube, which are becoming more attractive as platforms for consuming news, and, consequently, have a greater capacity for engagement. This capacity is analysed on YouTube according to the type of video (informative, home videos, journalistic). Despite not obtaining as many views, journalistic videos receive a higher percentage of comments with a higher intention of civic engagement (Djerf-Pierre; Lindgren; Budinski, 2019).

Despite the media's efforts to be present where the audience is, audiences become loyal to the media's Facebook page, not to the media (Chen; Pain, 2019). As a result, media outlets are increasingly aware that online presence is not the solution to their crisis of relevance. Page abandonment rates are high, and the increased content dissemination does not help generate more interaction either (Mañas-Viniegra; Sierra-Sánchez; López-Cepeda, 2019). Still, the media can benefit from social media to attract a younger audience through soft news (Chen; Pain, 2019). The public's participation and the dissemination and assessment of news is social media's essential contribution. Men and people with a lower socioeconomic status participate most on social networks as they see it as a tool for self-empowerment (Ha et al., 2018).

On the other hand, researchers want to understand why news consumption motivates. Riskos et al. (2021) analyse the motives and their impact on bringing about engagement. The results of the study show the engagement capacity of utility and hedonism. Zeng, Dennstedt and Koller (2016) analyse the perception of User Generated Content on young people versus professional journalistic content. Both contents are perceived as similarly necessary, but professional content is preferred if the source is a media outlet.

Finally, the research addresses the organisational impact of engagement practices. Ferrer-Conill and Tandoc (2018) try to understand how metrics affect decision-making and new profiles. Social media publishers and analysts seem to focus more on the short term. However, engagement editors take on a more strategic role and act as mediators between the previous professionals- which emerged in marketing departments- and editors and journalists.

3.4. Brands as a generator of relevance

Some research focuses on a brand's ability to gain visibility and engagement through its reputation (Victoria-Mas; Lacasa-Mas, 2015). Brand awareness, reputation, and the trust it generates (Evens; Van Damme, 2016) are related to the audience's time of exposure to it. Traditional media have privileged visibility, favouring them as an advertising media and allowing them to attract audiences from print to digital. Thus, having a solid brand guarantees differentiating themselves in a hypercompetitive environment (Krebs et al., 2020) and winning over/retaining audiences and/or advertisers. Media brands are essential to the decision to pay for content, as content has become a commodity in digital media (Vara-Miguel, 2020).

Visibility occurs in a hypercompetitive context for users' attention, including journalistic and non-journalistic content (Krebs et al., 2020). Visibility is measured through page views, the primary media's main reference; Song; Kim, 2020). If the visits that increase the page view count are what matters, it is understandable that professional practice maximises the media's presence without considering profitability a priori (Pope, 2017). The media's presence is sometimes maximised with low-

quality content, which aims to win over audiences (Victoria-Mas; Lacasa-Mas, 2015), as they are unconscious of the risk of losing relevance and discrediting the brand.

Traditional media must leverage their competitive advantage in visibility against the new digital players (Victoria-Mas; Lacasa-Mas, 2015). Half of the searches are carried out with the brand name (Gundlach; Hofmann, 2020). Media do not have this privileged position in countries with less democratic traditions and trust in institutions, where digital journalistic ventures are perceived as independent from political and economic powers that control traditional media (Harlow, 2018).

Some research highlights that the brand is a predictor of the consumer's behaviour to conceptualise its influence (Arendt; Northup; Camaj, 2019). The brand also acts as a predictor of the quality of the media. The perception of the brand's quality conditions the perceived quality of its contents (Krebs, 2017). Therefore, the brand's positioning is crucial to determining the media strategy, for instance, it's content policies. Defined based on the relative weight of each type of content, political inclination and originality, Kim; Song; Kim (2020) analyse its impact on paywalls.

The analysis from the user's point of view focuses on the evaluation of brands in terms of the benefits they provide or Consumer Based Brand Equity (CBBE). Bakshi and Mishra (2016) propose a model to analyse the dimensions that positively impact CBBE, which can be summarised as credibility, entertainment, political unity, and location. In this list, entertainment and place are the most important deciding factors for choosing a brand, followed by policy congruence and credibility (Bakshi; Mishra, 2016).

However, in Victoria-Mas, Lacasa-Mas and Marimon's (2018) analysis, reliability is the most relevant symbolic benefit. In Victoria-Mas and Lacasa-Mas' (2015) case study of La Vanguardia, journalistic values are also not perceived as the most important aspect, although the media base the value of their brands on these values: "In media outlets, the identity, the brand's mission and the necessary professional values for implementing this mission are contained in the editorial principles" (Nieto Tamargo and Iglesias, 2000, cited in Victoria-Mas; Lacasa-Mas, 2015).

4. Discussion

The most significant aspects of this study are highlighted below. The main themes are reasserted to link them to the discussion of the results.

Impact on the business model

It is possible that advertisers and the media cannot find a way to make advertising media relevant and effective; subscriptions and memberships may be the only solution. The latter is the path indicated by academia and the most researched. However, could the media replace advertising revenues with subscriptions? What volume of subscribers can the media aspire to? Would the volume of subscribers as the only funding source allow the media to maintain their current organisation, or would they have to adapt and/or resize? The impact of the disappearance of advertising as a source of revenue is a significant research gap.

Innovation as an agent of digitalisation

Despite its holistic vocation, innovation focuses on formats, content and the journalistic product. Moreover, on how news organisations adapt to these innovations. However, some media outlets seem to accept the digital distribution of that product

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to technological platforms and social networks, as Zayani's study shows (2021). The distribution of the innovative product (content and format), which generates its visibility and findability (content and format), is barely analysed in the body of the studied scientific production, giving rise to a new research gap.

Some recent studies, which undoubtedly contribute to the interpretation of innovation in journalism, focus mainly on or exclusively on new formats (Salaverría, 2019); while this paper has focused on the key sustainability aspects, new formats can contribute little, although there may undoubtedly be a relationship of mutual influence that could again form part of future lines of research.

Audience behaviour/engagement

There is a divergence between academic views and professional practice. Academics tend to favour active participation in news production, and practitioners tend to defend their role as gatekeepers, which they see as an essential part of the profession. It is engagement to a certain extent.

Regarding audiences, a salient point in the results is the widespread sentiment that the media are losing some of their mass audiences on the internet. Digitalisation opens the door to new audiences in countries that share a common language and are not within reach of legacy logistical distribution. However, the analysed results show that expanding the audience with different profiles –young people, for example– is not so obvious, nor is it so obvious to compete with other products competing with the media for the audience's attention. In this sense, while there is research on the media's competition with non-journalistic content (Krebs et al., 2020), no analysis of competition within the sector itself has been found, despite the need to understand the decision-making process that leads a user to pay or not –or several– of the media outlets they consult. We highlight the new gap in research to cover.

The brand is a generator of relevance

The starting point for relevance considers two aspects: the brand's reputation and visibility in the digital environment. The articles analysed do not focus on these aspects, but they do show the importance of the brand in accessing the media through brand searches (Gundlach; Hofmann, 2020), as a predictor of behaviour (Arendt; Northup; Camaj, 2019), in the perception of quality (Krebs, 2017) or as a critical factor in the WTP (Evens; Van Damme, 2016). The perception of the journalistic product's quality connected with editorial independence as guarantors of the media's reputation and relevance constitutes a research gap.

Progress in defining relevance and engagement

Despite the problematic need in the case of engagement and the scarce research on relevance, we proposed a definition of each concept on which the scoping review has been constructed. Since it is an abstract proposal, further research is required to operationalise these concepts and determine future metrics.

- Engagement as a multifaceted phenomenon: engagement is understood as both a process and an outcome. It consists of the set of actions carried out by the media to generate audience loyalty (process), to convert as many as they can into members (outcome)

- Relevance as a dual concept: Relevance could be understood as the importance of the media outlet based on its reputation, on the one hand, and its ability to inform consumers and the general public, which can be conceptualised as visibility. This technical capacity is acquired by having the necessary resources at one's disposal. Reputation, achieved over time and perception of "good work", is also a vital source of visibility for the media.

In addition to the aspects relevant to the significant themes analysed in this systematic review, one concept cuts across all of them: size and the constraints of an audience-based model, which we consider below.

Other work

On the other hand, we must refer to previous studies with common interests, as they allow us to collate the interpretation of the results and corroborate the interest of future research.

Myllylahti (2020) proposes a conceptual framework of attention as the backbone of a media outlet's business model in the digital platform environment. This approach to engagement is similar to the concept of visibility that this article proposes as a critical element.

García-Avilés '(2021) recent literature review depicts a pandemic context where they predict the end of the advertising-based model and demonstrates the need to apply a holistic and longitudinal perspective to journalistic innovation research. It also points to the importance of comparative studies for accessing learning from other contexts. Such analysis could be extended to other comparable industries, such as content, without ruling out research on innovation in advertising formats that could extend the life of such an essential source of revenue.

Finally, the study on visibility from Lopezosa et al. (2020) is a starting point for the search for methods to analyse media visibility as a key to media sustainability.

Among the limitations, we have limited the analysis to scientific papers. It is a highly accredited procedure, but possibly a study focusing on reports or the so-called grey literature could extend the results, which could be a subject of future research.

5. Conclusions

The conclusions of the study, which aim to answer the research questions proposed at the beginning of the scoping review, are set out below:

- How does academia analyse the impact of digitalisation on the advertising-based media business model?
- How does academia analyse media's experience with implementing innovation processes?
- How does academia analyse changes in traditional media audiences and new audiences?
- How does academia analyse the impact of brand reputation on media durability?

Regarding the first research question, the researcher's position is based on the need to find an alternative to the business model based solely on advertising. The new model must be digital and focused on an active and/or participative audience like social networks. The media is forced to do everything possible to engage its audience.

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The main conclusion is that there is still no business model. The revenues from the digital version –advertising and digital subscriptions– do not compensate for the losses from the print version, to the extent that closing the print edition would be catastrophic for the traditional media. The sector is constantly experimenting with cost control, the organisation of professionals, and the sources of revenue.

The search for digital audiences and the ability to immediately measure the impact of a news story has affected the quality of the journalistic product. There is a risk in editorial decisions driven by click-and-share metrics. Publishers try to balance publications in the public interest and what works in terms of audience metrics.

Regarding the research question on journalistic innovation, researchers agree on a holistic perspective that, beyond technology, considers the product, production process, formats and business models. Scholarly attention has mainly focused on analysing innovative formats and content, unsuccessful in finding a winning formula.

The cultural factor is significant when dealing with innovation. In this sense, innovation processes must impact the organisational culture to achieve the progress they are looking for. It is also clear that traditional media are reluctant to innovate. There are diverse causes for this: some do not present results that force them to innovate urgently, and others do not know how and/or do not have the means to do so. Academia equates this pro-innovation culture with the dominant startup culture in the business world. It uses it as a reference to analyse innovation processes in journalistic ventures and traditional media through corporate entrepreneurship.

Regarding the research question about audience changes, academia analyses their behaviour to understand and measure their engagement. The scoping review concludes that there is a broad consensus on the difficulty of defining engagement unequivocally and measuring it.

In short, engagement is a multifaceted concept that applies from engagement as a click to civic participation or subscription. Conceptually, academics and professionals agree on their aspirational view of engagement, which differs from a simple click or like on social networks; however, academic research does not yet provide a metric that can replace the one that is currently used by the sector, which revolves around the size of the audience and the media's ability to attract traffic from social media or technological platforms. This metric is at the opposite end of the spectrum, from the aspirational future of the profession to the engagement click-end.

Academia's analysis of the brand impact on media durability is less concrete and more dispersed than in the three previous research questions. The importance of loyalty above and trust concentrates the research around brand reputation. The academy analyses the components of brand reputation and, on the other hand, their impact on the audience's behaviour**.** In this sense, they conclude that the media's self-image does not coincide with the audience's.

Moreover, the audience's behaviour has utilitarian motivations that do not form part of the image that the media would like to project. Users have tended to replicate their media consumption patterns in the digital environment, which has given a notable advantage to traditional media due to their higher level of brand recognition than digital native media. The few studies that focus strictly on the impact of brand reputation on media longevity indicate that traditional media are failing to capitalise on the recognition advantage and, in some cases, may be damaging their reputation due to their digital strategy.

Regarding the initial hypothesis that relevance and engagement are critical elements for media sustainability, relevance is considered to be validated. However, it is (relatively) little analysed, even though the Internet environment is so defining of the sustainability crisis (digital transformation) that it is essential, especially in its facet of visibility or findability.

On the other hand, although it maintains its quality as a key element, engagement can be understood as a dependent variable, as it is more of a consequence of relevance rather than a causal element. More engagement means more subscriptions/memberships and higher advertising investment, but it is relevance- understood as reputation and findability or visibility, which brings about audience awareness and engagement.

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Methodology	Llúcia Castells-Fos and Lluís Codina
Data collection and analysis	Llúcia Castells-Fos
Discussion and Conclusions	Llúcia Castells-Fos and Lluís Codina
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