

Teaching advertising creativity in Spanish universities

La enseñanza de la creatividad publicitaria en la universidad española

O ensino da criatividade publicitária nas universidades espanholas

Antonio-José Baladrón-Pazos, Universidad Rey Juan Carlos, Fuenlabrada (Madrid), España, (antonio.baladron@urjc.es)

Benjamín Manchado-Pérez, Universidad Complutense de Madrid (investigador externo), Madrid, España (benjaman@ucm.es)

Beatriz Correyero Ruiz, Universidad Católica de Murcia, Murcia, España (bcorreyero@ucam.edu)

ABSTRACT | This study seeks to analyze the training in advertising creativity at Spanish universities, focusing on the 42 Advertising and Public Relations courses offered on campus in the 2023-2024 academic year. A total of 2,175 courses were identified, of which 138 were related to the field of advertising creativity. We conducted a descriptive analysis based on the coding of information collected from the syllabi and its subsequent statistical analysis. The results address issues such as the weight that courses in this area have within the Advertising and Public Relations curricula as a whole, their predominantly practical nature –perhaps influenced by the methodological renewal driven by European convergence–, and their generic dimension, addressing more general issues of advertising creativity and creative processes. To a lesser extent, we studied more specialized aspects of the two fundamental areas of advertising creativity in the professional world: art direction and copywriting. We also found a preponderance of private training compared to the one offered in public institutions.

KEYWORDS: Creativity; advertising; curriculum; Spain; university education

HOW TO CITE

Baladrón-Pazos, A.J., Manchado-Pérez B., & Correyero-Ruiz, B. (2024) La enseñanza de la creatividad publicitaria en la universidad española. *Cuadernos.info*, (59), 205-226. <https://doi.org/10.7764/cdi.59.75099>

RESUMEN | Esta investigación buscó analizar la formación en la materia de creatividad publicitaria en la universidad española actual, centrándose en los 42 grados presenciales sobre Publicidad y Relaciones públicas impartidos en el curso 2023-2024. Entre 2175 asignaturas, se identificaron 138 de la materia de creatividad publicitaria. Se realizó un estudio descriptivo basado en la codificación de la información recogida en las guías docentes y su posterior tratamiento estadístico. Los resultados abordan cuestiones como el peso que las asignaturas de esta materia tienen en el conjunto de los planes de estudio de Publicidad y Relaciones públicas, su carácter eminentemente práctico –quizá influido por la renovación metodológica impulsada por la convergencia europea– y su dimensión genérica, al abordar en mayor grado cuestiones generales sobre la creatividad y los procesos de creación publicitarios. En menor medida se estudian aspectos más especializados sobre los dos ámbitos fundamentales de la creatividad publicitaria en el mundo profesional: dirección de arte y redacción publicitarias. Asimismo, se encontró una preponderancia de la formación privada frente a la impartida en centros públicos.

PALABRAS CLAVE: creatividad, publicidad, currículum, España, educación universitaria

RESUMO | O objetivo desta pesquisa foi analisar a formação na disciplina de criatividade publicitária na universidade espanhola atual, focando-se nos 42 cursos presenciais de Publicidade e Relações Públicas oferecidos no ano letivo de 2023-2024. Foram detectadas 2 175 disciplinas e, posteriormente, identificaram-se 138 relacionadas à criatividade publicitária. Se realizou um estudo descritivo baseado na codificação das informações coletadas nos guias de ensino e seu posterior tratamento estatístico. Os resultados obtidos abordam questões como o peso que as disciplinas desta área têm no conjunto dos currículos de Publicidade e Relações Públicas; seu caráter eminentemente prático, talvez influenciado pela renovação metodológica impulsionada pela convergência europeia; sua dimensão genérica, ao tratar mais de questões gerais sobre a criatividade publicitária e os processos criativos publicitários. Em menor escala, aspectos mais especializados das duas áreas fundamentais da criatividade publicitária são estudados no mundo profissional: direção de arte e redação publicitária. Também foi constatada uma preponderância da formação privada em comparação com a oferecida em instituições públicas.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: criatividade; publicidade; currículo; Espanha; educação universitária

INTRODUCTION

This study analyzes the educational offer for advertising creativity in the context of Advertising and Public Relations degrees at Spanish universities. Although creativity in advertising can be understood as a cross-disciplinary and cross-curricular competence required by the professional sector (Álvarez-Flores et al., 2018; Monge-Benito & Etxebarria-Gangoiti, 2017; Perlado-Lamo-de-Espinosa & Rubio-Romero, 2015), in the present study it is treated as an academic subject in the sense of Alegre-Rodríguez (2012), i.e., as a thematic cluster across a field of knowledge composed of different courses of study.

The theme of creativity in advertising has been consolidated since the beginning of advertising education in Spanish universities, where it occupies a prominent place in the training curricula (Méndiz-Noguero, 2000). As this author states in relation to the degrees prior to the adaptation of university studies to the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) – which resulted from the signing of the Bologna Declaration in 1999 – “all faculties are preparing to dedicate their main teaching load to this subject. It includes many more hours than the minimum set by the Ministry” (p. 220). Later, with European convergence and the new university degrees, the last major transformation of these courses took place. *The White Paper on Undergraduate Degrees in Communication* (Agencia Nacional de Evaluación de la Calidad y Acreditación, 2005) has already given greater weight to a course on creativity in the Advertising and Public Relations project in the form of more credits: 26 for Creativity and Innovation in Communication, specifically in Advertising and Public Relations. Likewise, the Advertising and Public Relations degree program was proposed on the basis of four professional profiles, one of which was the Creative and Designer profile, which emphasized the importance of the professional field of advertising creativity, although allowing creativity and design professionals to coexist led to some confusion.

The description of this profile (Agencia Nacional de Evaluación de la Calidad y Acreditación, 2005) served as a starting point for the definition of the concept of advertising creativity used in the present research: a subject composed of courses dedicated to teaching the processes of conceptualization, ideation and visualization of advertising ideas until their adaptation and integration into the media. Although this subject is adjacent to other subjects, such as strategic advertising planning (which focuses on the development of advertising strategies, with the *planner* as the main profile) or design (which is more related to the production of messages and less to their conceptualization or ideation, with the designer as the main profile), these are considered distinct subjects in the present study and therefore their courses have not been included.

State of the art

The prominence of the topic of advertising creativity in educational curricula has sparked research interest in its analysis and the way it is taught. This is partly due to what occurred with other advertising disciplines (Alemany-Martínez, 2020; Castelló-Martínez, 2012; Gómez-Nieto & Tapia-Frade, 2017), and also in the context of interest in the study of the teaching of advertising in universities in general (Baladrón-Pazos et al., 2022; Fernández-Gómez & Feijoo-Fernández, 2022; Fondevila-Gascón et al., 2015; López-Berna, 2014; López-Berna et al., 2016; Méndiz-Noguero, 2000). Apart from this, there is also excellent research on university teaching, but it solely focuses on Public Relations. Some recent works in this area are those of Corbacho-Valencia (2013), Perlado-Lamo-de-Espinosa et al. (2016), Matilla et al. (2018) and that on creativity by Estanyol i Casals (2012).

Previous research on creativity, which is taught in the Advertising and Public Relations degree at Spanish universities, has analyzed it mainly in an essayistic dimension (Alonso, 2004; Camusso, 2007; Ricart et al., 2001; Castelló-Martínez & Tur-Viñes, 2019; Liberal-Ormaechea & Santos, 2022; Ramos-Serrano & Muñiz-Velázquez, 2018) or with case studies related to the teaching of innovation activities (Bartolomé-Muñoz-de-Luna et al., 2018; De Miguel-Zamora, 2022; García-López & Galarza-Fernández, 2020; Marugán-Solís, 2021; Muela-Molina, 2012; Sivera-Bello, 2016; Tur-Viñes et al., 2011, 2012).

However, in this case, the interest lies in the works that are more related to our research and that treat the object of study from a holistic perspective and not exclusively theoretical. The following studies should be highlighted: the one by Fernández-Souto and Balonas (2021) on five Spanish and five Portuguese universities, albeit with a limited scope; the recent work by Llorente-Barroso and colleagues (2021), which is based on in-depth interviews with creative professionals to determine the extent to which university training in advertising creativity provides a response to the needs of the market; the study by Pérez-Ordóñez and colleagues (2021), which focused on creative competence in Advertising and Audiovisual degrees; the comparative analysis of the content of 33 courses on creativity in advertising by Selva-Ruiz and Caro-Castaño (2014), or that of Sanz-Marcos and colleagues (2021), which examined Advertising and Public Relations curricula and the perceptions of graduates and academics regarding the development of students' creative competence. Apart from the latter study, which is based on the consultation of curricula of public Advertising and Public Relations degree programs, we can refer to the work of Alonso (2008), although somewhat dated, and the works of Alegre-Rodríguez (2012) and Castelló-Martínez (2020), which are of greater interest. The scope and depth of the study by Alegre-Rodríguez (2012) is based on an analysis of the curricula of creativity courses in

advertising in terms of content, objectives, bibliography and assessment systems. However, it does not address the pedagogical activities in classrooms to better understand how this subject is de facto taught, and despite its interesting nature, an update is necessary. There are also more recent works such as that of Castelló-Martínez (2020), which analyzes creativity and strategy teaching through its nomenclature, and that of Baladrón-Pazos et al. (2022), which, although it refers to advertising teaching as a whole, has been used as a methodological reference.

This study primarily aims to provide more up-to-date data showing the actual situation of teaching advertising creativity in Spanish universities. In recent years, the curricula have been redesigned, and many new universities have started to offer these courses. Secondly, the present study attempts to broaden the teaching of this subject for future advertisers. To this end, the consultation of the descriptions of these courses in the curricula was considered insufficient, so the analysis of teaching guides was deemed necessary to extract results associated to the variables related to the pedagogical activities used in the classrooms. The results allowed for a diagnosis that could be useful to propose improvement actions to the actors in this field of education.

METHOD

The study began with some research questions related to the subject of advertising creativity in the Advertising and Public Relations degree programs in Spain, such as: What is the importance of training in this subject in the degree programs? What is the predominant profile of the courses that make up the subject? Are there differences in training between public and private centers? Does the training on this subject focus on general aspects of creativity or on the two more specific aspects of advertising creativity: art direction and copywriting? Do the training activities and assessment systems used in the classrooms to teach the subject matter have a more practical or theoretical dimension? Based on these questions, the general objective (GO) of our study was to describe the current training in advertising creativity in the face-to-face Advertising and Public Relations courses at the Spanish university (academic year 2023-2024). The specific objectives (SO) were the following:

SO1. Identification and characterization of advertising creativity courses in Advertising and Public Relations majors on campus in the 2023-2024 academic year in Spain.

SO2. Discovery of the main assessment systems used in the period studied.

SO3. Identify the main pedagogical activities used in the courses on creativity in advertising.

A quantitative descriptive study was designed. The websites of Spanish universities were consulted to find the degrees that will be offered in the academic year 2023-2024, to identify the official degrees in advertising or Public Relations that cover both areas of knowledge together and those that do so separately. The latter case was considered as long as the field of public relations was not linked to other fields not included in the present study, such as protocol or journalism. Distance learning degrees were excluded because the specificity of their teaching methods was not comparable to those of face-to-face programs; duplicate degrees to avoid redundancy in the records; and those that were partially taught at foreign universities. Ultimately, 42 official degrees from 40 higher education centers were selected (table 1).

On-campus official degree	Public education center
Advertising and Public Relations Communication in organizations	Universidad Autónoma de Barcelona
Advertising and Public Relations	Universidad Complutense de Madrid
Advertising and Public Relations	Universidad de Alicante
Advertising and Public Relations	Universidad de Cádiz
Advertising and Public Relations	Universidad de Girona
Advertising and Public Relations	Universidad del País Vasco
Advertising and Public Relations	Universidad de Murcia
Advertising and Public Relations	Universidad de Málaga
Advertising and Public Relations	Universidad de Sevilla
Advertising and Public Relations	Universidad de Valladolid
Advertising and Public Relations	Universidad de Vigo
Advertising and Public Relations	Universidad Jaume I de Castellón
Advertising and Public Relations	Universidad Pompeu Fabra
Advertising and Public Relations	Universidad Rey Juan Carlos
Advertising and Public Relations	Universidad Rovira i Virgili
Official on-campus degree	Private education center
Advertising and Public Relations	Universidad Abat Oliva CEU
Advertising and Public Relations	Universidad Antonio de Nebrija
Advertising, Public Relations, and Marketing	Universidad de Barcelona - Escuela Superior de Relaciones Públicas

Table 1 - Continues ►

Creative advertising	Universidad Camilo José Cela
Advertising and Public Relations	Universidad Cardenal Herrera CEU
Advertising and Public Relations	Universidad Católica San Antonio
Advertising and Brand creation	Universidad de Diseño y Tecnología
Advertising and Public Relations	Universidad de Sevilla - Centro Universitario EUSA
Advertising and Public Relations	Universidad de Vic / Universidad Central de Cataluña
Advertising, Marketing, and Public Relations	Universidad de Vic / Central de Cataluña - ESERP The Barcelona School of Business and Social Science -
Advertising and Public Relations Communication and Public Relations	Universidad ESIC
Advertising	Universidad Europea de Canarias
Advertising and Public Relations	Universidad Europea del Atlántico
Advertising	Universidad Europea de Madrid
Advertising and Public Relations	Universidad Europea Miguel de Cervantes
Advertising	Universidad Francisco de Vitoria
Advertising and Public Relations	Universidad Internacional de Cataluña
Advertising and Digital Marketing	Universidad Loyola
Advertising and Public Relations	Universidad Pontificia de Comillas - Centro de Enseñanza Superior Alberta Giménez
Advertising and Public Relations	Universidad Pontificia de Salamanca
Advertising, Public Relations, and Marketing	Universidad Ramon Llull
Advertising and Public Relations	Universidad San Jorge
Advertising and Public Relations	Universidad San Jorge - Centro de Estudios Superiores Universitarios de Galicia
Advertising and Public Relations	Universidad San Pablo CEU
Advertising and Public Relations	Universidad Villanueva

Table 1. On-campus degrees in Advertising and Public Relations and training centers

Source: Own elaboration based on Ministerio de

Universidades (2023) and corporate websites of Spanish universities

The curricula of all active courses in these degree programs were reviewed. These are instruments that, in the Spanish university system, contain the teaching programs for the training of students. Those related to creativity in advertising were identified according to the operational concept described in the introduction and based on the description of the creative profile in advertising in the [White Paper on Undergraduate Degrees in Communication](#) (Agencia Nacional de Evaluación

de la Calidad y Acreditación, 2005). To identify them, the titles of the courses, the curriculum/content area, or both, were examined. In some cases, the titles did not accurately reflect the content, as previous studies have shown (Alegre-Rodríguez, 2021). Of the 2,175 active courses in the curricula, 138 were selected, as well as the associated teaching guides corresponding to the units of analysis.

Subsequently, the teaching guides were analyzed and coded, both in terms of formal aspects and those related to the content and tools used in the teaching-learning process, according to the previously established objectives. To ensure scientific rigor and validity, a code sheet was applied with the help of a codebook using the *double*-checking system, thus ensuring the reliability of the results obtained, with a Cohen's Kappa index between both codifications of 0.86. The questionnaire consisted of 13 variables, all of which were categorical, except for one: 1) name of educational center, 2) type of educational center, 3) name of degree, 4) name of the subject, 5) type of subject, 6) workshop-type subject, 7) number of credits of the subject (non- categorical), 8) language of instruction of the subject, 9) academic year of instruction of the subject, 10) semester of instruction of the subject, 11) thematic scope of the subject, 12) assessment systems of the subject, and 13) educational activities of the subject. Finally, a database was created consisting of 60 final variables, starting with the coding sheets. The data were analyzed using the program IBM SPSS Statistics Version 27.0.

RESULTS

To satisfy SO1, advertising creativity subjects were characterized based on several variables ranging from the center or course of study in which they were offered to more specific aspects. Starting with the center (table 2), most subjects were taught at private centers (59.4%), mainly at private universities (48.6%), and to a lesser extent at organizations affiliated with private (6.5%) and public (4.3%) universities. This is a consequence of the importance of training in private universities in the field of Advertising and Public Relations in Spain. In fact, 25 of the 40 educational centers that offer the selected degrees are private (table 1). As for the name or denomination of the degrees, the traditional name in Spain has been Advertising and Public Relations since university degrees were introduced in 1971. However, the regulations adopted at the beginning of this century have allowed greater flexibility in education, so that universities are now able to offer degrees with the traditional name or with other names, depending on the educational content. Private universities are increasingly opting for degrees that focus exclusively on advertising or are linked to other fields such as Marketing; nevertheless, most degrees use the traditional name of Advertising and Public Relations (76.8% of subjects in advertising creativity).

On the other hand, the typical profile is that of a compulsory course in the third year of the degree with a weight of six credits. Table 2 shows that 68.8% of the courses are compulsory and 25.4% are electives, mainly those strongly oriented towards art direction or copywriting. In terms of courses, 40.6% were taught in the third year, followed by courses taught in the second (23.9%) and fourth (15.2%) years of study. In terms of the number of credits, the prevalence of short-term courses was observed, as the predominant trend was six-credit courses (73.2%) –although we also found courses with three (13.0%), four (5.1%), five (4.3%) or between eight and twelve (4.4%) credits.

Type of center	Frequency	Percentage
Public	56	40.6%
Private	67	48.6%
Attached to public	6	4.3%
Attached to private	9	6.5%
TOTAL	138	100.0%
Type of subject	Frequency	Percentage
Mandatory	95	68.8%
Elemental education	8	5.8%
Elective	35	25.4%
TOTAL	138	100.0%
Number of credits	Frequency	Percentage
3	18	13.0%
4	7	5.1%
5	6	4.3%
6	101	73.2%
8	2	1.4%
9	1	0.7%
12	3	2.3%
TOTAL	138	100.0%
Academic year	Frequency	Percentage
First	16	11.6%
Second	33	23.9%
Third	56	40.6%
Fourth	21	15.2%
Various	12	8.7%
TOTAL	138	100.0%

Table 2. Courses of the subject Creativity in Advertising by type of center, subject, credits and course

Source: Own elaboration.

		Language			
		Official language of Spain	English	Both	
Type of center	Public	Frequency	53	2	1
		Percentage	94.6%	3.6%	1.8%
	Private	Frequency	78	4	0
		Percentage	95.1%	4.9%	0.0%
	TOTAL	Frequency	131	6	1
		Percentage	94.9%	4.3%	0.8%

Table 3: Courses in creativity in advertising by type of training center and language

Source: Own elaboration.

In terms of language (table 3), 94.9% of classes were taught in one of the official languages of Spain. In this study, Spanish, Galician, Catalan and Basque were observed as official languages, but the classes were categorized without distinction between them and simply compared with English. There were no relevant differences in terms of the use of English depending on the public or private nature of the centers.

Finally, the topics of the advertising creativity courses were categorized thematically into three categories. First, we find the generic category of creativity and processes of advertising creation, which refers to the general study of creativity and creative processes as applied to advertising work. Secondly, two specific ones from each of the two areas of professional work in advertising creativity: art direction in advertising and copywriting. The results (table 4) show that the general subjects on creativity in advertising have a greater weight (62.3%), while the subjects of art direction and copywriting divide the remaining 37.6% into two equal parts. There is therefore no imbalance in the training of the individual or specific areas of the creative advertising profession. It can be observed that specific training is much more common in the elective subjects.

		Type of class			TOTAL
		Mandatory	Basic education	Elective	
Thematic scope	Creativity and creative processes	69.5%	50.0%	45.7%	62.3%
	Advertising art direction	14.7%	0.0%	34.3%	18.8%
	Advertising copywriting	15.8%	50.0%	20.0%	18.8%
	TOTAL	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table 4. Subjects of advertising creativity by thematic area and type of subject

Source: Own elaboration.

	Type of center		TOTAL	
	Public	Private		
Evaluation system	Internships or cases	35.7%	30.6%	32.7%
	Assignment or project	36.2%	27.1%	30.9%
	Written test	21.0%	34.9%	29.1%
	Participation	3.1%	3.3%	3.2%
	Oral presentations	3.0%	1.6%	2.2%
	Oral test	0.4%	2.2%	1.4%
	Other	0.5%	0.3%	0.4%
	Complementary activities	0.1%	0.0%	0.1%
	TOTAL	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table 5. Evaluation systems in the subjects on advertising creativity by type of center

Source: Own elaboration.

SO2 of our study was to identify the most important assessment systems used. To this end, the information contained in the curricula about the common assessments used during data collection was coded. Internships and assignments (table 5) were the main assessment systems (they have an average share of 32.7% and 30.9% of the final grade, respectively). The terminology used in the different assessment systems varied in each education center. Therefore, in order to standardize the coding, the category of placements or cases was used for the short-term placements and the category of tasks or projects for the long-term placements, which are usually the result of one year or almost one year of work. In contrast, the traditional exam, known as the written test, accounted on average for 29.1% of the final grade. Other assessments that occurred more or less frequently were oral exams, presentations, attendance results or class participation. It must be emphasized that in the public centers, the evaluation systems based on internships were more important: the former accounted for 35.7% of the grade, compared to 30.6% in the private centers, while assignments accounted for 36.2%, compared to 27.1% in the private centers. Exams, on the other hand, accounted for 21.0% in the public centers compared to 34.9% in the private centers. When these data are broken down by year of study and number of credits (table 6), it can be seen broadly that, on the one hand, the exam becomes less important as the year of study progresses (from 34.8% in the first year of study to 22.7% in the fourth year), while the assessment systems that are more related to practice (internships and assignments) vary according to the course of study. In addition, depending on the number of credits, it was generally observed that practical assessments played a greater role compared to examinations in courses of shorter duration than the standard six-credit courses, mainly because they were delivered in a workshop style; in fact, the weight of the examination in this type of course was only 7.8% compared to 31.0% in courses not delivered in this style.

	Number of credits							Academic year				
	3	4	5	6	8	9	12	1	2	3	4	Var.
Internships or cases	43.0%	55.7%	57.7%	27.1%	20.0%	0.0%	70.8%	33.0%	30.2%	28.1%	47.0%	36.6%
Assignment or project	31.8%	32.4%	21.7%	31.3%	45.6%	78.2%	0.0%	23.1%	31.7%	33.0%	20.6%	45.1%
Written test	21.1%	4.5%	19.4%	33.9%	0.0%	0.0%	29.2%	34.8%	31.9%	31.9%	22.7%	13.2%
Participation	2.3%	2.8%	1.2%	3.5%	0.0%	16.1%	0.0%	3.7%	2.4%	3.0%	4.7%	2.8%
Oral presentations	0.9%	0.0%	0.0%	2.0%	34.4%	5.7%	0.0%	2.9%	1.7%	1.3%	5.0%	2.3%
Oral test	0.9%	0.0%	0.0%	1.8%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	2.6%	1.7%	1.8%	0.0%	0.0%
Other	0.0%	4.6%	0.0%	0.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.2%	0.9%	0.0%	0.0%
Comp. activities	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.2%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
TOTAL	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Table 6: Assessment systems in advertising creativity subjects by credit and course

Source: Own elaboration.

The last of the specific objectives (SO3) was to identify the main educational activities utilized. The educational activities on campus were quantified according to the number of hours and then their percentage weight was calculated in relation to the total number of hours of each course on campus. The results (table 7) show that theoretical classes accounted for barely 36.8% of the teaching hours. After deducting the hours allocated for the assessment tests (4.3% of the total time), the remaining hours were mainly distributed among practical activities such as practical classes (30.0%), assignments or cases (8.7%), seminars or workshops (8.0%) and oral presentations (3.8%). In contrast to what was found in the assessment systems, in this case the public centers spent more time on theoretical teaching, although the difference was small. It can also be underlined that in the private centers more importance was given to activities such as oral presentations or debates.

In summary, it can be said that the type of teaching does not have a major influence on the role of non-practical activities. In the compulsory courses, theoretical teaching takes up 36.8% of teaching time while in the electives it is 34.5%. As the number of credits increases, a clear preponderance of theoretical teaching can be observed (table 8), with great variability in practical teaching activities depending on the duration of the courses. Nevertheless, these data need to be compared and contrasted with a more comprehensive analysis, partly due to the limited number of courses with less than six credits (37 out of 138).

	Type of center		TOTAL	
	Public	Private		
Educational activity	Theoretical classes	38.9%	35.5%	36.8%
	Practical classes	30.4%	29.8%	30.0%
	Assignments or cases	8.4%	8.8%	8.7%
	Seminars or workshops	6.1%	9.1%	8.0%
	Evaluation tests	4.1%	4.5%	4.3%
	Oral presentations	1.5%	5.1%	3.8%
	Tutoring	4.2%	1.9%	2.8%
	Debates or participation	1.1%	3.2%	2.4%
	Other	2.9%	0.5%	1.4%
	Readings or videos	0.8%	1.4%	1.1%
	Complementary activities	1.6%	0.2%	0.7%
	TOTAL	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table 7: Educational activities on topics related to creativity in advertising by type of center

Source: Own elaboration.

	Number of credits						Academic year					
	3	4	5	6	9	12	1	2	3	4	Var.	
Educational activity	Theoretical classes	14.7%	18.0%	20.2%	38.5%	31.1%	41.2%	31.6%	39.7%	38.6%	30.9%	36.0%
	Practical classes	42.4%	11.2%	39.4%	29.7%	6.7%	38.3%	26.1%	23.5%	33.4%	35.0%	18.5%
	Assignments or cases	17.2%	52.0%	0.0%	7.2%	43.3%	0.0%	12.0%	10.7%	6.4%	9.1%	13.5%
	Seminars or workshops	0.0%	0.0%	24.5%	7.8%	0.0%	14.3%	1.7%	14.3%	7.7%	5.0%	5.6%
	Evaluation tests	0.0%	0.0%	5.3%	4.8%	0.0%	3.1%	5.1%	5.2%	4.5%	2.3%	2.8%
	Oral presentations	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	4.1%	18.9%	0.0%	4.8%	1.0%	3.3%	9.8%	0.0%
	Tutoring	0.0%	7.5%	5.3%	2.9%	0.0%	1.5%	7.2%	1.8%	2.1%	3.6%	0.0%
	Debates or participation	0.0%	3.7%	0.0%	2.7%	0.0%	0.0%	9.8%	0.5%	1.3%	3.5%	0.0%
	Other	25.7%	3.9%	5.3%	0.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	1.0%	0.6%	0.0%	23.6%
	Readings or videos	0.0%	3.7%	0.0%	1.1%	0.0%	1.6%	1.7%	1.3%	1.3%	0.0%	0.0%
	Complementary activities	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.9%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	1.0%	0.8%	0.8%	0.0%
	TOTAL	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Table 8. Educational activities in subjects related to advertising creativity by credits and academic year

Source: Own elaboration.

In view of the above, an important aspect is the distribution of percentages between the two generic categories: theoretical activities (Theoretical teaching) and practical activities, i.e., the others, with the exception of the categories related to tests –evaluation tests and oral presentations- or those whose description in the curricula does not necessarily include practical learning –tutoring, complementary activities and other. As for the weight of theoretical teaching depending on the academic year in which the teaching takes place, it increases in the main classes of the degree (table 8).

DISCUSSION

The descriptive study carried out allows us to expand the knowledge of university education in the field of advertising creativity in Spain, with more up-to-date data and with a focus on issues related to the way teaching is carried out, the educational activities, and the evaluation system applied. Due to our methodological approach, the number of 138 classes identified differs from other published studies. Sanz-Marcos et al. (2021) analyzed only the names of the courses in the curricula, so their sample was composed of 53 courses; in the work of Castelló-Martínez (2020), the number increased to 202, as it dealt with creativity and strategy courses in all communication degree programs; in the work of Alegre-Rodríguez (2012), 286 were identified, as it included advertising strategy courses in addition to advertising creativity, copywriting and art direction. The latter author recognized that some of the courses were duplicated due to the adaptation process to the Bologna Declaration (2012) and indicated the need to revise the nomenclature of the courses to clearly define their contents, similarly to Castelló-Martínez (2020). This lack of definition in the nomenclatures is one of the main difficulties identified in the present study, as it made the selection of units of analysis difficult, as well as the comparison between the different published works. Selva-Ruiz and Caro-Castaño (2014) also pointed out the complexity of this type of analysis due to the inconsistency of descriptive statements in the programs and curricula. This is a weakness that the authors highlight and an interesting research direction is therefore opened in terms of a certain standardization of these nomenclatures. As for the scientific aspects, this would allow a rigorous replication of other studies or longitudinal studies, and not only snapshots of a particular situation, as found in various published studies and this study. As far as the pedagogical aspect is concerned, this would allow for a better definition of the content of each course, facilitate the administrative process of recognizing courses, or even contribute academically to a greater consolidation and maturity of the subject.

Apart from this difficulty, the results show the important role that private universities play in the training of students in Advertising and Public relations

in Spain; about six out of ten training programs and courses in this subject are taught in this type of center. This is within the framework of a Spanish university system that opened its doors to training in private universities at the end of the 1990s, which at the beginning of this century accounted for 40% of students in these courses (Agencia Nacional de Evaluación de la Calidad y Acreditación, 2005).

CONCLUSIONS

The sample and the results obtained lead to the conclusion that education in the field of advertising creativity has a fundamentally generic dimension. At least four out of ten courses specialized in one of the two professional areas selected as specific for the present study (art direction in advertising and copywriting), while most dealt with general issues of creativity and creative processes as applied to advertising work. In any case, the difficulty encountered in the selection of courses from the sample and in the coding of the contents collected in the curricula due to the lack of uniformity of the courses, justifies the need for new studies that will allow us to ratify this matter by using other methodological designs.

Likewise, it can be concluded that the training on the object of study is mainly practical. Theoretical teaching comprised one third of classroom training and, on average, and six out of ten points of the final grade depended on practical evaluation systems, as compared to three points of the exams, a practical dimension that was also noted in the study by Alegre-Rodríguez (2012). This reality could be influenced by the methodological renewal that took place with the implementation of the Bologna Plan. The data collected also suggests that practical assessment systems are more important in private universities. However, it is necessary to look more closely at the nature of this practical training, as previous studies such as that of Llorente-Barroso et al. (2021) concluded that university training was not fully effective in providing a response to the skills demanded by the labor market.

In addition, the role of advertising creativity in the context of Advertising and Public relations in Spain should be emphasized: The data obtained show that these subjects represent 6.34% of the total subjects of the training pathways. In addition, seven out of ten subjects are compulsory, a very similar value to that obtained by Sanz-Marcos et al. (2021). This indicates its importance, as these are courses that students must take compulsorily in order to graduate, although this is not enough to strongly suggest that the subject occupies an important place in the curricula, as compared to other professional fields of advertising.

Our study focused on the subject in the sense described in the introductory section. Nevertheless, we need to reflect, albeit briefly, on other aspects, such as

the importance and relevance of creativity as a transversal competence and, more generally, the need to adapt training to a great extent to the needs of the professional sector. Previous studies such as the one by Álvarez-Flores et al. (2018) or the geographically closest one by Monge-Benito and Etxebarria-Gangoiti (2017) already pointed out the importance of creativity as a skill required by the advertising industry, which is also fundamental in the digital environment (Llorente-Barroso, 2020; Perlado-Lamo-de-Espinosa & Rubio-Romero, 2015). It would therefore be important to strengthen creativity as a transversal competence in these curricula, as Pérez-Ordóñez et al. (2021) or Fernández-Souto and Balonas (2021) conclude, and not to focus exclusively on specific courses (Castelló-Martínez & Tur-Viñes, 2019).

Finally, in addition to the difficulty described at the beginning of this section, it is important to point out other research limitations that can be used for future lines of research. First, it is necessary to address creativity education in advertising in the context of distance education, which is becoming increasingly important and was not analyzed in the present study because its teaching methods were not comparable to those used in an on-campus teaching format. Secondly, the descriptive nature of our research is scientifically valid for a first diagnosis, but it needs to be complemented by other types of studies that can help answer the objectives defined in the present study, as well as others that are more related with the adaptation of training to professional needs. This would allow us to further deepen the object of investigation outlined here within the framework of future, broader research studies that could provide specific suggestions for improvement that could be implemented in the curricula to ensure a better response from the university institution in its service to society and the business world.

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ABOUT THE AUTHORS

ANTONIO JOSÉ BALADRÓN-PAZOS, Ph.D. in Advertising and Public Relations, he holds a bachelor's degree in Journalism from the Pontificia Universidad de Salamanca, and one in Advertising and Public Relations from the Universidad de Vigo. He has received an extraordinary doctorate award and a research award on Mass Communication from the Consell de l'Audiovisual de Catalunya (Catalan Audiovisual Council). He has more than 20 years of experience in teaching and research. He has participated in academic activities and has been as a visiting professor at various foreign universities, in Europe and America.

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7870-2545>

BENJAMÍN MANCHADO-PÉREZ, Ph.D. from the Universidad Complutense de Madrid. He works at the university's the department of Financial and Actuarial Economics and Statistics, where he currently collaborates as an external researcher in the research group Statistical Methods and Big Data Applied to Economics, Tourism, and Other Social Sciences. He has authored several scientific articles on econometrics and advertising research, utilizing bibliometric methods and multivariate analysis. He has more than 25 years of professional experience in various sectors: university teaching, private banking, asset management, construction, aerospace engineering, agri-food industry, and healthcare sector.

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9176-3182>

BEATRIZ CORREYERO-RUIZ, vice-dean of the Journalism Degree at the Universidad Católica de Murcia (UCAM) and member of the UCAM research group on Communication, Politics, and Image. She holds a Ph.D. in Journalism from the Universidad Complutense de Madrid. She has over 20 years of experience in teaching and research. Her research areas include the study of State propaganda through tourism, radio, and multimedia journalism.

 <http://orcid.org/0000-0003-0069-8448>