

Discussions on Public Relations and Marketing: Trends in Spanish University Degrees. Comparative Study on Portugal, the US and the UK

Las relaciones públicas y el marketing: tendencias en los grados de las universidades españolas. Estudio comparativo con Portugal, Estados Unidos y Gran Bretaña

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Abstract

The following is a reflection on Spanish undergraduate studies that combine the concepts of marketing and public relations.

Sharing origins and often functions and specialists, both concepts have run parallel paths that have merged on multiple occasions. This evolution has been studied from different points of view. Initially, marketing experts included PR techniques as an additional tool to grant it a greater specific instrumental relevance over time. On the other hand, PR scholars have tried to dissociate themselves from marketing in order to acquire an independent position within the field of communication.

In Spain, these conceptual differences are currently blurred due to the creation of new university degrees and double degrees combining both disciplines. This trend is evidenced within the Spanish university market which, throughout this article, will be compared to other markets, namely the American and the British ones, as a scientific reference for both concepts, and to the Portuguese one, given its geographical proximity.

We will reflect on the reasons that have led the Spanish university market to combine both concepts and to offer official studies that include them in their nomenclature, far from the historical tradition in this country, where studies in public relations have been related to the

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field of communication, while those in marketing have been related to the field of economics.

The identification of this trend in the job market of organisational communication professionals poses new challenges to training institutions, especially to universities.

Keywords: Marketing, Public Relations, Spain, Portugal, UK, USA

Resumen

Presentamos una reflexión sobre los estudios universitarios españoles que combinan los conceptos de marketing y relaciones públicas. Compartiendo orígenes y a menudo funciones y especialistas, ambos conceptos han recorrido caminos paralelos que se han fusionado en múltiples ocasiones. Esta evolución ha sido estudiada desde diferentes puntos de vista. Inicialmente, los expertos en marketing incluyeron las técnicas de relaciones públicas como una herramienta propia, pero éstas fueron alcanzando una mayor relevancia a lo largo del tiempo. Por otro lado, los estudiosos de las relaciones públicas han tratado de disociarse del marketing para adquirir una posición independiente dentro del campo de la comunicación.

En España, estas diferencias conceptuales están actualmente desdibujadas debido a la creación de nuevos títulos universitarios y dobles títulos que combinan ambas disciplinas. Esta tendencia se evidencia en el mercado universitario español que, a lo largo de este artículo, se comparará con otros mercados: el americano y el británico, como referencia científica para ambos conceptos, y con el portugués, dada su proximidad geográfica.

Reflexionaremos sobre las razones que han llevado al mercado universitario español a conjugar ambos conceptos y a ofrecer estudios oficiales que los incluyan en su nomenclatura, lejos de la tradición histórica de este país, donde los estudios de relaciones públicas han estado relacionados con el campo de la comunicación, mientras que los de marketing han estado relacionados con el campo de la economía. La identificación de esta tendencia en el mercado laboral de los profesionales de la comunicación organizativa plantea nuevos retos a las instituciones de formación, especialmente a las universidades.

Palabras clave: Marketing, Relaciones Públicas, España, Portugal, UK, USA

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1. INTRODUCTION

Public relations and marketing share significant features: origin and period of emergence, a parallel development, and the fact that they make sense when they are practiced within the framework of an organisation. However, the former is responsible for creating relations and generating goodwill for an organisation, while the latter deals with consumers and selling products and services. Their managerial functions overlap and use analogous communication tools to reach different audiences.

Public relations seek to create a favourable environment before carrying out transactional negotiations involved in marketing, hence their interaction, as pointed out by Philip Kotler, when deciding to use the support of public relations in marketing, to the extent of stating that public relations are one of the “Ps” in marketing strategy. With this “P”, public relations efforts are integrated within marketing actions and, within the corporate organisational chart, they would be placed in the marketing department.

Nonetheless, many scientists do not agree with Kotler’s idea, as is the case of professor Sousa Gonçalves, for whom

“a comunicação (organizacional= RP) foi, e ainda é, muitas vezes, considerada a parente pobre do marketing e gestão, isolada numa missão de segunda ordem, quando a sua função é transversal e respeita tudo e todos na organização (...) mais desenganemo-nos, se acreditamos que a magia publicitaria ou técnicas avulsas de marketing podem saldar o desinvestimento organizacional na invenção e realização das práticas mais quotidianas. A acção comunicacional é um processo complexo e permanente e nem o mais apurado trabalho de marketing, nem a publicidade mais inventiva podem substituir a verdade e o comportamento organizacional” (2005: 507).

It can also be interpreted (Caro and Elosúa, 2004) that this wording implies restricting public relations to the purely commercial sphere, which contradicts PR’s managerial nature. Thus, marketing could be understood as a tool at the service of public relations, an idea that could be illustrated through situations such as the difficulty to access the advertised products due to a bad distribution policy, generating frustration among consumers and prompting rejection towards the manufacturer. Similarly, an excessive price increase without an equal increase in quality would lead to firms no longer hiring that service, discrediting the

company that offers it. Reducing a product's quality or quantity would not only generate mistrust towards that product, but would also cause the manufacturer to lose credibility, etc. Authors such as Arceo (1988) point out that marketing is almost exclusively sales-oriented, while public relations, or communication, have a wider scope. Sanz-de-la-Tajada (1986) states that public relations have a managerial role and rely directly on general management, while admitting their contributions to marketing, but always in an indirect way and through communication. Ehling, White and Grunig explain that difference more explicitly:

“Public relations and marketing both are essential functions for a modern organization. Marketing managers identify markets for the products and services of the organization. Then, they supervise marketing communication programs to create and sustain demand for the products and services. Public relations managers, in contrast, supervise programs for communication with publics - groups of people who organize themselves when an organization affects them, or they affect it. Markets can arise within many stakeholder categories -such as employees, communities, stockholders, governments, members, students, suppliers and donors, as well as consumer” (1992: 384).

According to Rey, Zambrano and Zambrano (2015), we are dealing with an integration process between both disciplines, as companies have shifted from a model of coexistence between marketing communication and organisational communication to a model of integration that combines them in a higher unit: integrated communication, understood as a company's communicative actions carried out to interact with its different audiences. Thurlow, Sévigny and Dottori (2018: 139) agree on this when stating that “as the marketing public relations disciplines become intertwined, there is a need for public relations and marketing to share appropriate roles by mutual consent and understanding, rather than by only trying to differentiate the domains between the two”.

Perhaps this market trend justifies the current implementation of degrees and double degrees in Spanish universities with both designations in their nomenclature.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1. Ties between both concepts: Marketing and PR

In 1989, scholars of marketing and public relations held a meeting to try to clarify concepts and functions within management. While they agreed on the use of the same techniques to build and maintain relations with audiences, the relation was quite different, although they concluded that PR and marketing should work together in order to achieve organisational targets (Broom, Lauzen and Tucker, 1991: 124), “Marketing builds and maintains a market for an organization’s goods and services, whereas public relations builds and maintains hospitable social and political environments. Both marketing and public relations are essential to organizational survival and success”.

Ehling, White and Gruning (1992: 358) think that “marketing and public relations they should complement each other, but the assignment of organisational responsibilities are murky, often overlapping and frequently conflicting”. Other authors delved further (Kotler, Mindak, 1978; Lauzen, 1992; Moriarty, 1994; Gruning, 1998; Hutton, 2001, 2010; Hallahan, 2007), until the concept of integrated marketing communications (IMC) was developed in the 80s as a combination of all communicative marketing efforts (Estanyol, 2012; Anantachart, 2006).

Twenty years later (Estanyol, 2012: 56), “IMC is still critically discussed and in the Spanish context, relations between marketing and PR departments have not settled into a stable marriage and fundamental disagreements remain”. Within this framework, the increasing collaboration between both disciplines is pointed out (Daymon and Holloway, 2004; Kent and Taylor, 2002), although this collaboration is limited to the corporate world (Estanyol, 2012). This is an existing trend according to the Global Communications Report (2017), where internal departments and external agencies agree in the increasing closeness between both: “almost half of PR professionals and more than 60% of marketing executives believe that their two disciplines will become more closely aligned in the next five years. Some think PR will dominate. Others think it will be dominated.” Estanyol reflects this stating that “the relationship between marketing and public relations is considered essential and this may be because PR actions help achieve marketing objectives, or vice versa, because PR

strategy needs the support of marketing actions to achieve a specific communication objective” (2012: 86).

This piece of information is also interpreted from another point of view, as nowadays there are many PR companies affected by the intrusion of companies closer to marketing and business management, specifically consultancy firms. According to the article published in *PRComunicación* on the 4th of July 2018, large multinational companies are starting to change their business model and occupy new sectors, entering the world of consultancy and even in companies specialised in human resources.

“This is due to the fact that large multinational companies are struggling greatly to compete in the world of corporate, financial or mass consumption communication, due to a change in the market trend, which has tipped the scales in favour of local agencies”⁴.

2.2. State of affairs in Spain

Historically, both disciplines have gone hand in hand and have developed extensively since the 20th century, and scholars often defend that their origins are even more remote. The term “marketing” can be traced back to the first decade of the 20th century in the United States, where it appeared within the academic field. It was coined by Jones, who in 1902 taught a course on “the distribution and regulatory industry in the United States” at the University of Michigan. The concept arrived in Europe belatedly and was introduced in Spain during the last stage of Franco’s regime. AEDEMO (the Spanish Association of Market Studies, Marketing and Opinion) was created in 1968. Ten years later, in 1978, ADEIMO (the National Association of Market and Public Opinion Research Companies) was founded, bringing together industry leaders in order to promote their development. By the late 1990s, the Asociación de Marketing de España (Spanish Marketing Association) was born, created from the Club de Marketing de Madrid (Madrid Marketing Club). Its mission was to boost marketing culture to improve its professionals’ individual development, company performance and society in general.

⁴ <https://prnoticias.com/comunicacion/prcomunicacion/20168737-multinacionales-comunicacion-alejan-del-sector-poder-crecer>.

However, scientific journals written and edited in Spain would not appear until the 90s, when the ESIC (Business and Marketing School) launched the journal *Revista Española de Investigación en Marketing* (1997). Other journals would appear, such as *IPMARK*, a fortnightly journal on marketing and communication; *Anuncios*, a weekly journal on advertising and marketing; *Estrategias*, the first Spanish magazine specialising in direct and promotional marketing; *Marketing+ventas*, a journal focused on the world of economics, marketing and sales; or key websites with up-to-date news on the field of marketing, such as *Marketingnews* or *Puromarketing*. With their integration into academia, their research activity has increased significantly.

Public relations have a similar history. This discipline was born in the 20th century in the United States and arrived in Europe after World War II, always subject to North American influence, which has imposed its theory, techniques and research on the field to this day. Such is their influence that Spanish scholars still follow the North American and British examples —due to closeness—, largely deviating from Central European theories that developed greatly during the past century, even though the dictatorship clearly conditioned the access of public relations in Spain, given the economic and freedom limitations of the regime.

The first book written and published in Spain would appear later in the 70s (Noguero, 2004; Arceo Vacas, 2006), *Las relaciones públicas en el ámbito local*, by Marqués Cargó and Marqués Canós. In this decade ATRP (Technical Association of Public Relations), CENERP (Spanish Centre of Public Relations) and ARP (Public Relations Group) would appear.

In the 70s, public relations were also introduced into universities through advertising with the creation of degrees in advertising and PR, mainstream degrees in both public and private Spanish universities. In recent years, universities have introduced them in their double-degree offer with other communication disciplines (journalism, audiovisual communication), and in other fields such as fashion, tourism, sports or law.

This development would be completed with professional and research groups, important among which was AIRP (Association of Researchers in Public Relations), founded in 2004 by professors specialised in this area. Within the professional field, we highlight ADECEC

(Association of Public Relations Consultancy Firms) and DIRCOM (Association of Communications Directors). The state of the matter regarding conceptual differences between both disciplines follows the trail of what has been argued thus far.

Estanyol's study (2012), *Spanish PR practitioners consider that the relationship with marketing departments is necessary (2012)*, states that:

“the interviewees discussed the evolution of marketing professionals' knowledge of public relation as evidenced by this comment from years ago in marketing departments, investment in communication was assigned almost completely to advertising, whereas nowadays marketing professionals are aware of the benefits of investing in public relations. They also have a similar opinion of positive change from previous marketing departments 'were quite clear about advertising and left little space for public relations. But this tendency has changed in recent years. Today, marketing professionals are aware that investment in public relations offers returns, as well as affordable costs" (2012: 205).

This trend within the Spanish professional field seems to confirm the tendency towards uniting both disciplines, leaving behind the theoretical approach in which public relations and marketing were rivals. Is this due to the university market perceiving the professional trend and is therefore trying to translate it into the curriculum?

2.3. The higher education system as a foundation

The Spanish, Portuguese, American and British university systems are different. The American one has a more flexible structure: the student chooses subjects from different degrees in order to make their own curriculum. In Spain and Portugal, the system is heavily structured, while in the British one, students are focused on one field of study.

In the US, the first years of university involve general subjects, and later on they focus on a specific field of study with subjects related to the chosen area of expertise in order to obtain a diploma, which is called a “major”. Some also choose a “minor”, a smaller set of subjects in a secondary area of expertise and subordinate to the “major”. After that, they can access a master's degree for further specialisation.

In the UK there are bachelor's degrees in different areas of expertise: BEng, BSci, BA, etc. It is also possible to add a one-year master's degree to a bachelor's degree (MEng, MSci, MA).

The bachelor’s degree would be equivalent to an undergraduate degree, while the combination of a bachelor’s and a master’s degree is not always compatible with a Spanish master’s degree. The main degree studies are *undergraduate studies*, with which one would obtain a bachelor’s degree diploma. As in the American case, postgraduate diplomas are master’s (Ma) and doctorate (PhD).

University studies in the United Kingdom, Spain and Portugal are standardised within the Bologna Process⁵, with three-year degrees in the UK and four-year degrees in Spain and Portugal.

The Portuguese and Spanish cases also have peculiarities. In Portugal, higher education is divided into two subsystems: university and polytechnic education. The former is research-oriented, while the latter is focused on the professional field. In this regard, the current study is limited to universities.

Table 1. University systems compared in the analysed countries

IN SPAIN	IN PORTUGAL	IN THE UK	IN THE US
Diplomatura/ingeniería técnica		Bachelor’s Degree	MINOR: Associate of Science (AS) or Associate of Arts (AA)
Licenciatura /Grado	Licenciatura	University Degree	Bachelor, Major
Postgrado	Mestrado	Graduate Certificate	
Máster	Mestrado	Master’s Degree	Master
Doctorado	Doutoramento	Doctorate (PdD)	Doctor or PdD

Source: Prepared by authors.

It is important to know the foundations of the higher education system in the analysed countries in order to understand the comparison and equivalence of diplomas.

3. METHODOLOGY

A qualitative methodology based on content analysis has been used to address this study, which is intended to help achieve the main objective of the research: conducting a historical review of existing ties between the disciplines of marketing and PR.

⁵ <http://www.eees.es/es/eees-paises-participantes-reino-unido>.

Analysing the official degrees offered by universities including the denominations of “Public Relations” and “Marketing” for the 2018-19 academic year. We will include four countries: the EEUU, the UK, Portugal and Spain, with our main focus on the Spanish case. It must be noted that this objective will be achieved through the conceptual analysis of the discussed university degrees, without delving into the number of subjects related to those degrees or their content.

The initial hypothesis states that, after years of separation, the academic scenario combines public relations and marketing in degrees and double degrees where both have an equally leading role regarding the nomenclature of the degrees. In the next stage of the study, we will analyse the content developed for the different subjects taught on the discussed degrees since, agreeing with Fitch & L'Étang (2017), it “is not surprising that PR is situated either in communications, media, journalism or business marketing contexts. However, it is not good academic practice, and it raises some interesting questions over curriculum and pedagogy”.

We will analyse official undergraduate degrees in the academic year 2018-19 in several countries, excluding master's degrees and degrees in which the curriculum analyses both concepts (public relations and marketing), but that do not mention them in their official nomenclature. This work excludes degrees such as Marketing and Business Communication, Marketing and Advertising, Public Relations and Management, Public Relations and Advertising, etc.

Four different countries have been analysed to carry out the study and have been selected on the basis of various criteria:

1. United States and United Kingdom were chosen from the Academic World Ranking Universities data (Shanghai),⁶ according to the following parameters:

A) On one hand, they are the first two countries with the highest number of universities in the top 300:

⁶ <http://www.shanghairanking.com/es/>.

- i. The United States with 104 universities.
- ii. The United Kingdom with 29.

B) On the other hand, both countries are selected based on 2015 data from the same ranking in the specific subject of Economics, in which we will frame the object of the study, these are the first two countries.

2. The other selected countries are Spain and Portugal, because of the proximity for the authors.

A comparative study between these four countries is thus proposed. To do that, we have examined the official degrees offered by public and private universities in these four countries. Due to their different education systems, research has been limited to higher university studies in both public and private institutions.

In Spain and Portugal, we have used the database from Universia⁷, which gathers data from universities that offer degrees, double degrees and triple degrees including the denominations Public Relations and Marketing:

Table 2. Official degrees and double degrees offered in Spain for the academic year 2018-19

DEGREE	UNIVERSITY	LINK
Publicidad y RRPP + Marketing	Universidad Rey Juan Carlos	https://www.urjc.es/estudios/grado/704-publicidad-y-relaciones-publicas-y-marketing#itinerario-formativo
Doble grado en Pub y RRPP y marketing y comunicación digital	Universidad Nebrija	http://www.nebrija.com/carreras-universitarias/dobles-titulaciones/publicidad-rrpp-marketing/
Doble grado en Publicidad y RRPP y Marketing e investigación de mercados	Universidad de Cádiz	http://www.uca.es/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/DG-Publicidad-y-Rel-Publicas.pdf
Grado en Publicidad, Marketing y RRPP	ESERP + Univ. de Vic + Univ Central de Catalunya	https://es.eserp.com/grados/grados-barcelona/grado-en-publicidad-marketing-y-relaciones-publicas-en-barcelona/
Doble grado en	Universidad Abad Oliba	https://www.uaoceu.es/doble-grado-en-

⁷ www.universia.es/estudios.

Marketing y dirección comercial + Publicidad y RRPP		marketing-y-dir-comercial-publicidad-y-rr-pp
Doble grado en Marketing + Publicidad y RRPP	Universidad Cardenal Herrera	https://www.uchceu.es/estudios/doble-grado/marketing-publicidad-rrpp
Publicidad y RRPP + Marketing y gestión comercial	Universidad San pablo CEU	http://www.uspceu.com/es/oferta-academica/grado/03-publicidad-relaciones-publicas-marketing-gestion-comercial/index.aspx
Grado en Publicidad, RRPP y Marketing	Universitat Ramon Llull	https://www.blanquerna.edu/es/grado-publicidad-relaciones-publicas-marketing

Source: Prepared by the authors.

Table 3. Degrees and double degrees offered in Portugal for the academic year 2018-19

DEGREE	UNIVERSITY	LINK
Licenciatura en comunicación aplicada: Marketing, Publicidade e Relações Públicas	Universidade Lusófona de Humanidades e Tecnologías	https://www.ulusofona.pt/licenciaturas/comunicacao-aplicada-marketing-publicidade-e-relacoes-publicas

Source: Prepared by the authors.

For the US selection, we have conducted a double search (Public Relations and Marketing)⁸. It is important to highlight the differences between American and European higher education models, which hindered the search in the American case. However, we did find departments or schools integrating both concepts in the USA. In this process, we have analysed the following studies:

Table 4. Degrees and double degrees offered in the US for the academic year 2018-19

DEGREE	UNIVERSITY	LINK
Public relations and marketing communication	Ohio Dominican University	http://www.ohiodominican.edu/academics/undergraduate/bachelor-degrees/public-relations-marketing-communications

Source: Prepared by the authors.

⁸ <https://www.bachelorsportal.com>, combined with the databases <https://www.educations.com>, <https://www.collegefactual.com/majors>, and www.collegemagazine.com.

Regarding the UK, we have used the professional association CIRP (a national PR benchmark)⁹, and the search engine¹⁰ (searching for both Public Relations and Marketing), as well as the ranking made by *The Guardian* (including Journalism and Media Studies)¹¹.

Table 5. Degrees and double degrees offered in the UK for the academic year 2018-19

DEGREE	UNIVERSITY	LINK
BA (Hons) Marketing with Public Relations	London South Bank University	http://www.lsbu.ac.uk/courses/course-finder/marketing-public-relations-ba-hons
BA (Hons) Marketing with Public Relations	Huddersfield University	https://courses.hud.ac.uk/full-time/undergraduate/marketing-with-public-relations-ba-hons
Marketing and Public Relations. BA (Hons) Degree	Coventry University	https://www.coventry.ac.uk/cuc/course-structure/hnc-hnd-degree/2017-18/marketing/
Marketing (advertising and PR). BA (Hons)	Birmingham University	http://www.bcu.ac.uk/courses/marketing-advertising-and-public-relations-ba-hons-2018-19
Public Relations, media and marketing	Canterbury Christ Church University	https://www.canterbury.ac.uk/study-here/courses/undergraduate/public-relations-media-and-marketing-18-19.aspx
BA (Hons) Public Relations and Marketing	Manchester Metropolitan University	http://www2.mmu.ac.uk/study/undergraduate/course/ba-public-relations-and-marketing/
BA/BA (Hons) Public Relations, Marketing and Events	Queen Margaret University	https://www.qmu.ac.uk/study-here/undergraduate-study/2019-undergraduate-courses-folder/baba-hons-public-relations-marketing-and-events/
Marketing, Advertising and Public Relations BA (Hons)	Worcester University	https://www.worcester.ac.uk/courses/marketing-advertising-and-public-relations-ba-hons-wbs.html

Source: Prepared by the authors.

It should be noted that accessing information posed challenges, as there are no lists and/or search engines compiling degrees and double degrees through the same parameters in each analysed country. This limitation to the study is its main strength, as it makes this research a

⁹ <https://www.cipr.co.uk/content/training-qualifications/cipr-recognised-degrees/university-course-list>, <https://www.bachelorsportal.com/study-options/268927285/public-relations-united-kingdom.html>

¹⁰ ¹⁰ <https://www.timeshighereducation.com/world-university-rankings/by-subject>

¹¹ <https://www.theguardian.com/education/ng-interactive/2017/may/16/university-guide-2018-league-table-for-journalism-publishing-and-pr>.

novelty. Once again, we highlight that this research allows us to understand the trends in university education in Spain, taking as a reference the cases of neighbouring countries (such as Portugal) and international academic powers in communication (EEUU and the UK).

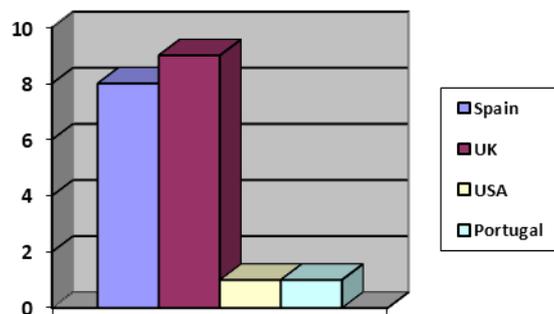
Therefore, to approach the study, qualitative research based on content analysis has been chosen as a research technique. The object of study has been delimited in a specific time and geographical space with the aim of collecting data on the universities that offer undergraduate degrees in whose nomenclature the variables "public relations" and "marketing" are linked.

4. RESULTS

In Spain, there are eight universities offering degrees including both disciplines in their title (Rey Juan Carlos, Nebrija, Universidad de Cádiz, Central de Catalunya con Universidad de Vic and ESERP, Abad Oliba, Cardenal Herrera, San Pablo CEU and Ramón Llull). In Portugal, there is only one case at the Universidade Lusófona, with greater presence in Institutos Superiores.

The concepts of marketing and public relations only appear in one American university (Ohio Dominican University), although it is true that there are departments and schools that include both terms. In the British case, we have analysed nine degrees (BA Hons) from London South Bank University, Huddersfield University, Coventry University, Birmingham University, Canterbury Christ Church University, Manchester Metropolitan University, Queen Margaret University, Worcester University and Chester University:

Figure 1. Official degrees and double degrees offered in universities (academic year 2018-19)

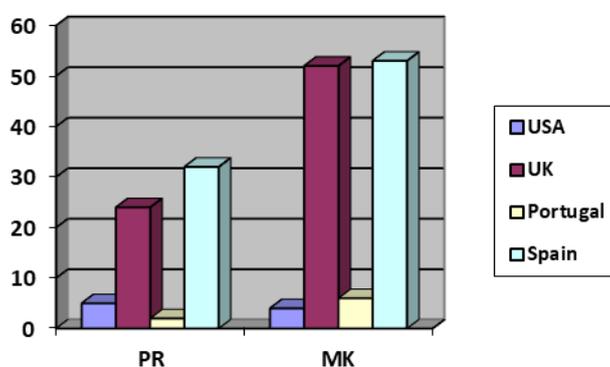


Source: Prepared by the authors.

Even though we have found degrees that meet the criteria in every country, there is a wide gap between the cases in Spain and the United Kingdom, countries where the offer is broader, and the Portuguese and North American ones, where only one case was found.

The duration of the studies is usually three compulsory years plus an elective one in the British case compared to four years in Portugal, the United States and Spain. Only Spain offers double degrees with an additional year. Regarding subject distribution, there is a general prevalence of marketing over PR in all the analysed countries.

Figure 2. Subject distribution in the analysed degrees.



Source: Prepared by the authors.

Finally, the results are broken down by country to know their reality independently:

a) UK: Nine degrees: four are called Marketing and/or with PR (London South Bank University, Huddersfield University, Coventry University and Chester University); one starting with PR, not Marketing (Manchester Metropolitan University); two with “Advertising” in their name (Worcester University and Birmingham University); and the rest mix both concepts with other areas: PR and Marketing communications (Queen Margaret University); PR, media and marketing (Canterbury Christ Church University).

Regarding the subjects, there is a prevalence of marketing over PR during the three or four years of the degrees. Some of them offer only one PR subject throughout the curriculum (London South Bank University, Worcester University or Birmingham University). There are fewer PR subjects in every case, being Queen Margaret University the most balanced one with five PR subjects (one in first year, two in third year, and two electives in fourth year)

compared to six marketing subjects (one in first year, two in second year, two in third year, and one in fourth year).

b) Spain: two double degrees in Advertising, PR and Marketing (Universidad Rey Juan Carlos and Universidad Ramón Llull), two of them in a different order, Marketing, Advertising and PR (Universidad Cardenal Herrera), and one degree in Advertising, Marketing and PR (offered by the ESERP with the Universidad de Vic and the Universidad Central de Catalunya). The rest are complemented by other disciplines—Advertising, PR, Marketing and Trade Management (Universidad Abat Oliba), Marketing, Trade Management and Advertising and PR (Universidad San Pablo CEU), Advertising, PR, Marketing and Digital Communication (Universidad Nebrija), or Advertising, PR, Marketing and Market Research at the Universidad de Cádiz.

The general trend is double degrees offering, on the one hand, subjects coming from marketing and, on the other hand, subjects from the degree in advertising and PR. This information is unique in the Spanish university market, where university studies traditionally combine advertising and PR.

c) Portugal: only one degree in Public Relations and Marketing at the Universidade Lusófona: Licenciatura em Comunicação Aplicada: Marketing, Publicidade e Relações Públicas. In Portugal, it is traditional to combine public relations and advertising, as is the case in Spain. These are not double degrees, as the workload is significantly smaller. They also prioritise subjects on marketing (6) over those on PR (2).

d) USA: the education system is less structured, and students have more freedom to make their own curriculum. We only observe a degree with “Marketing and PR” in its official name: “Public Relations and Marketing Communication” at Ohio Dominican University. It is a four-year degree, offering four subjects on PR and four on marketing, although there are two subjects combining both concepts: “Power-packet writing for PR and MK” and “Workshop in advanced PR & MK communication”.

Remarkably, these studies refer to marketing communications, not to marketing. Both terms appear in schools, departments, and on a great number of master’s degrees, as well as diplomas specialising in marketing communications.

5. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The conceptual borders between marketing and public relations evolved towards an integration that is also seen in the professional and academic fields.

The portal Top Universities¹² points out that “students who graduate with communications degrees typically veer toward public relations (PR) or marketing careers. PR focuses more on maintaining relationships, while marketing works to actively promote the company or the brand.” According to these data, the first trend we have identified is that students consider that it is natural to include communication (PR) and marketing as complementary disciplines.

The question arises as to whether or not educational institutions identify that students tend to complement their initial training in communication with marketing, and vice versa, or whether or not the creation of new degrees based on existing ones to provide an outlet to new graduates is just a fad.

Perhaps the labour market trends make the academic field identify its needs and create degrees and double degrees in which students are simultaneously trained in PR and marketing. Bear in mind that, according to the 2017 Global Communications Report, “the PR professionals and the Marketing professionals believe that Public Relations will become more closely aligned with marketing (47%) and less than a 7% of them believe that PR will become a distinct and separate function from marketing”.

If these trends about the fields of public relations and marketing stemming from the labour and academic spheres are so evident, why are they not equally evident in every country?

According to this study, the trends only translate into an academic offer with degrees combining both names in the United Kingdom and Spain. Are these countries more sensitive to these trends? This would suggest that American and Portuguese academic markets are oblivious to those trends, as we only found one degree/licentiate fulfilling that characteristic.

In this regard, it could also be expected that the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) would offer a common framework to all the countries where it operates, but this statement

¹² <https://www.topuniversities.com/student-info/careers-advice/communications-careers-pr-vs-marketing>.

is not feasible either, as our study points out that only the Spanish and British cases support the identified trends, excluding the Portuguese one regarding the offer of degrees/licentiatees. It would also be interesting to compare these data to those referring to master's degrees and other postgraduate and specialised programmes. We must emphasise that this concern also exists at a more professional level, as the Global Alliance of Public Relations and Communications Management is working to establish a global body of knowledge which may be proposed as a foundation for professional credential schemes and academic curricula across the world (Manely and Valin, 2017).

Despite the great number of university studies offering subjects on marketing and public relations in the analysed countries, those combining these disciplines in their official nomenclature are quite scarce, at least regarding degrees/licentiatees.

The analysed countries do not show a common pattern regarding the trend towards the creation of new degrees combining both concepts. While there are more of these studies in the United Kingdom and Spain, they are rather anecdotal in Portugal and the United States. This is not to say that there are no degrees with subjects in both disciplines, but rather that there are few institutional efforts by the universities to officially combine both concepts in their official denomination.

We could assume that the European and North American cases are different due to their respective university systems, given that the North American one is less rigid and allows students to create their own academic curriculum based on their interests. The creation of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) was supposed to provide a framework to standardise this trend, but this is not the case, as evidenced by the comparison of the Spanish and British cases to the Portuguese one.

We could also assume that educational institutions plan their offer according to the needs of the professional field. In this regard, everything seems to suggest that public relations and marketing professionals are looking for a greater collaboration between both disciplines. After a historical evolution in which they tried to separate from each other, we have moved towards integration through marketing communication.

This trend in the labour market, confirmed both at the national (in Spain) and the international levels, can serve as a catalyst for educational institutions to embrace the creation of new degrees, a fact that is more evident in the cases of the UK and Spain compared to Portugal and the US.

The trend towards the combination of both terms in their official names is more evident in the British and Spanish cases, where there is a broader offer. In the British case, these are degrees or licentiates, while in the Spanish one there is a significant offer of double degrees combining subjects from consolidated degrees such as the Degree in Advertising and PR and the Degree in Marketing, among others.

Nonetheless, in future studies it would be interesting to analyse the postgraduate degrees in the researched countries in order to know whether or not specialisation is a decisive factor, i.e., if specialisation in master's degrees and the denomination of these degrees could explain the trend towards the combination of both concepts.

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