Is digital slow journalism valued? An analysis of its audience in Spain

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Abstract

Due to the emergence of rapid information consumption habits, journalism has been submerged into a deep crisis of credibility. There is a need to rethink the direction of the sector and find ways in which the relevance of journalism can be renewed. Slow journalism advocates a slow, thoughtful and sustainable approach to the production and consumption of news. This research analyses consumer habits of Spanish readers of journalism in general, and digital slow journalism in particular, through a structured questionnaire. Results show that the digital press is the habitual media of the analysed population to stay informed about current affairs. Despite the value that slow journalism has obtained, there is a lack of knowledge about the type of journalism that is being consumed: only 40% claim to have read or heard about it. Those who do read slow press spend a limited amount of time on it (between 15-30 minutes), so the patterns of 'fast' reading typical of the traditional media are repeated in slow journalism and the audience attraction and retaining capacity of slow journalism is still limited. Additionally, the vast majority of the analysed population are not willing to pay for slow journalism (73%), which is an obstacle to establishing a business model for this new media trend. However, there is a strong willingness to pay among the readers of slow press, where 45% would readily pay for it. Finally, there are significant differences in terms of the age and educational level of the readers analysed, and our findings evidence the need for further audience research in order to improve the interaction between digital slow journalism and its own audience as well as to develop innovative promotional strategies.

Keywords:Digital journalism, Slow journalism, Audience research, Consumer attitudes, Spain, Structured questionnaire method.

Introduction

In the current digital communicative context, readers have taken on a significant role. The traditional system of sender-message-channel-receiver has become obsolete and a new participative model, with hybridised channels and genres, has opened up within digital journalism (Bachmann, 2013). These changes have given rise to new ways of studying and understanding journalism. Within academic research, one of the currents of the last decade is that of slow journalism. This kind of journalism is opposed to the immediate consumption of information, fake news and the increasing crisis of credibility that the media is currently experiencing, and is turning to basic principles of quality (Barranquero-Carretero, 2013; Le Masurier, 2015; Neveu, 2016). However, it is a relatively underdeveloped practice and the study of it has largely been limited to an analysis of print formats. Consequently, little is known about the social function or impact of slow

journalism (Van Krieken and Sanders, 2019). In terms of readership, there are studies that specifically analyse the role of consumers in the production of journalistic content or the introduction of participative elements in digital journalism (Gillmor, 2004; Goode, 2009). But consumer habits and the motives behind the consumption of slow journalism are largely unknown.

We believe that this information is valuable not only to better understand the nature, characteristics, influence and future challenges of this new journalistic practice, but also to generate new hypotheses which further a deeper exploration of this field of study. Therefore, given the challenges posed by the current digital context, this research seeks to discover the consumer habits of digital slow journalism within the Spanish context (Masip, 2016).

What do we know about slow journalism and its readership?

The concept of slow journalism in itself is not exactly new, since it is a trend related to previous slow movements that seek to recuperate traditional values and place attention on the quality of the product and the time devoted to its consumption (Honore, 2004). The slow tourism or slow food movements are some examples. In opposition to the consumption as an essential condition to guaranteeing the quality of the experience. In the case of slow journalism, this trend seeks to tackle headline journalism, immediacy, fake news, and superficial or unverified information. specific journalistic characteristics, is essentially critical of journalism based on now.

It was Megan Le Masurier who promoted a new line of research into slow journalism in 2015. Masurier defends slow journalism as a practice that, beyond possessing a series of immediacy, is essentially critical of the journalism based on immediacy (Le Masurier, 2015; 2016). Le Masurier, 2015; 2016). Furthermore, this author adds that slow journalism has been practiced since the dawn of the profession, but that its current characteristic element is its contrast to the rapid, immediate and poor journalistic system that we have now.

In the last five years, different authors have focused their attention on slow journalism. Geoffrey Craig (2016) underlines the social value of this type of journalism, whilst other authors relate this practice with niche journalism; that is, one which remains outside of the major news companies (Benaissa, 2017). Similarly, there are case studies about digital media which explore how, why and against what is slow journalism practiced (Sabate et al., 2018; Goikoetxea-Bilbao and Ramírez de la Piscina, 2019).

Another axis of the research into slow journalism is the relationship between the deterioration in the quality of journalism, the print media crisis and the economic crisis of 2008 (Justel Vázquez, 2012). To be exact, some authors have analysed the slow journalism or slow media phenomenon from the perspective of the economic viability of the media company (Dowlin, 2016). Most of these studies coincide in that, despite the context of the current crisis, the number of slow media outlets has increased in the digital age (Barranquero-Carretero and Jaurrieta Bariain, 2016). Likewise, other research studies especially highlight one characteristic of this new journalistic trend that is making inroads into the digital world: the recuperation of traditional journalistic genres that had been abandoned due to informative immediacy, of which feature articles, reports and in-depth analysis are just some examples. That said, on some occasions a hybridisation of these genres does occur (García and Cuarteto, 2016).

Readership has traditionally been the axis of the media company due to its direct relationship with advertising income. However, as mentioned above, this model is in crisis. For this reason, an increasing number of media outlets are choosing to cultivate reader fidelity instead of merely paying attention to economic aspects. The so-called 'reader revenue' strategy in particular, attempts to promote a sustainable business model within the media1. Results show that most of these initiatives continue to be aimed at merely retaining readership rather than recuperating its trust. For example, research has shown that some media entities resort to entertainment elements and techniques over news (Peña Fernández, et al., 2016). What is more, this tendency towards "infoentertainment" has been explained by some authors as one of the consequences of the double crisis affecting journalism: economic decline and reduced credibility (García Avilés, 2007).

But what does the readership think? Nico Drok and Liesbeth Hermans (2016) analysed young people's attitudes towards slow journalism in the Netherlands. According to this study, what this readership sector values most is that the information is to hand at all times and is free of charge. Furthermore, a considerable number of young people positively highlight that this journalism is investigative, co-operative and encourages integration.

Along similar lines, Mike Ananny (2016) has explored the consumption time for slow information. This author concluded that it is not advisable to homogenize the readership and suggests a further analysis of the different audience sectors in order to better understand their consumer habits.

Certainly, the time needed to produce and consume journalistic content is one of the foundations of research within the field of slow journalism. However, the time invested in the preparation of content does not always correlate with the quality or the degree of reader interest (Groot and Costera, 2019). That is, there is no direct relationship between the time spent on consuming slow journalism and the quality of the information; the relationship between this kind of journalism, its readership and reading time involves more complex factors and processes. In addition, several studies have confirmed that readers are increasingly skeptical about the information they receive from the press, especially in the digital media (Romero-Rodriguez et al., 2021). Our study would like to contribute to researching this area.

With the aim of identifying the challenges and opportunities that the digital environment offers for the development of slow journalism, this research analyses Spanish readership, using the following research questions as its starting point: R1) What knowledge do readers have of slow journalism? R2) What are their motives for deciding to consume or reject this kind of journalism? R3) What is the reader's profile? Similarly, our study is based on two main hypotheses: 1) readers value quality information and 2) there will be a place for slow journalism in the future market. The analysed results from this work are based on the complex relationship between active readerships, new digital media and slow content, within a sender message-channel-receiver paradigm that doesn't correspond to the traditional framework, and in which the collaboration among different parties predominates (Masip and Suau, 2014; Crilley and Gillespie, 2019). This work also seeks to obtain answers which may help find solutions to the problems of financing and credibility facing journalism in general, and slow journalism in particular. In this regard, recent research has shown that the main element of the current journalistic business model is diversification of income sources (Palacio, 2018), and we would like to explore this idea further.

Material and method

The technique used for data collection was the structured questionnaire. Firstly, a list was drawn up of pre-established questions to be posed to the research subjects via the Internet. Secondly, during the validation phase, said draft was shaped and completed with the advice of experienced professionals from CIES S.L., a Spanish company renowned for its trajectory within the field of market research and opinion polls, commissioned to implement the questionnaires and compile the results. The structured questionnaire is considered to be the most appropriate tool for measuring user opinions, attitudes, judgements and expectations for a specific element. Furthermore, it allows results to be compared and different variables obtained for the proposed ends; through adequate sampling techniques, the results could be extrapolated to the rest of the population (Casas-Anguita et *al.*, 2003). The survey was carried out in Spanish and fieldwork done throughout the month of July 2019 in Spain.

Population, sample and structure of the questionnaire

The questionnaire was completed anonymously by 500 people between the ages of 18 and 65, resident in Spain (from all autonomous communities) and with Internet access. According to the data provided by the Spanish National Statistics Institute (INE), the population of the selected territory numbered 25,838,051 in 2019. Thus, there is a 95% confidence interval, and a 4.4% error margin for the calculation of the answers. The 500 completed questionnaires provide and an acceptable and representative number for an analysis of the differences between both the subjects and studies in the same field survey. Given that it is not possible to study the whole population, the obtained data are supported by a sample in accordance with the variables (age, gender, habitat, etc.) of the population they come from. Therefore, the generalisation of the results of this study should be understood as a descriptive process that allows us to compare different variables and formulate new hypotheses (Rothman et al., 2013; Blanco et al., 2018). Thus, inferences can be drawn that may be generalized to academic research. The goal of this study is to understand a phenomenon, as such, this goal is not enhanced by representativeness, but rather depends more on comparisons drawn from a variety of contexts.

The established criteria for the selection of participants in the study was based mainly on two elements: (1) access to the Internet and (2) an age range of 18 to 65. Via these two variables, we sought to streamline and define the target group for slow digital journalism in Spain. The final sample was made up of 46% men and 49% women, and 4% who consider themselves non-binary, within the following age groups: 18-34 (31%), 35-49 (38%) and 50-65 (31%). On the one hand, of the 500 people surveyed, 6% had completed compulsory education or less; 33% had a Further Education qualification and/or vocational training; 44% held a university degree, and 17% had completed postgraduate university studies. On the other hand, 88% of those surveyed were in active employment, whilst 12% were unemployed. Finally, 49% of the participants lived in an area with a population below 50,000 inhabitants; 33% between 50,000-500,000 inhabitants; and the remaining 18% within a population of over 500,000.

The questionnaire was made up of 40 semi-structured questions, of which 3 were open, 9 were multiple choice (of which 2 were filter questions), and 28 closed. The aim of the filter questions was to select a

number of the participants in order to ask them more specific questions later. The questionnaire was thus structured into four blocks:

1) To discover general reading habits and routines in relation to the print and digital press (priority media outlet, reading frequency, aims and subscriptions).

2) In order to measure the knowledge of slow journalism in Spain and reading habits, a definition was provided and named examples of slow media given. Participants were asked which digital support they use for reading; frequency; time spent; places of access and devices used; content type and subjects read; preferred genres; subscriptions; general satisfaction; and the characteristics of slow journalism. To assess this block, closed questions were combined with multiple choice questions and a Likert scale from 0 (minimum score) to 5 (maximum score).

3) "Questions for everyone" to gain information about the attitudes of those participants who gave positive answers or had heard of slow journalism, and of those who answered negatively. To this end, general questions were included about interaction with the media, the quality of the information, willingness to pay more for slow journalism, appreciation and adequate use of multimedia resources, among others.

4) To discover the socio-demographic data of the participants. It was decided to leave this for the last part of the questionnaire -instead of the first- in order to avoid possible gender bias or stereotypes, given that asking for demographic data at the beginning of the questionnaire might influence the participants' answers. Generally speaking, there is a tendency to answer in line with the gender stereotype.

Finally, all the answers were anonymised and transferred to the SPSS programme, in accordance with the variables established in the questionnaire.

Results

Following an analysis of the results, it is worth pointing out the significant differences reflected in the three main blocks: 1) reading habits of print and digital press, 2) knowledge and consumption of slow journalism and 3) attitudes and/or opinions about journalism in general and slow journalism in particular.

Print and digital press reading habits

This block contains the main results appertaining to the habitual and priority media consumed by readers of print and digital press.

Some 85% of the analysed population uses the digital press as their habitual method to stay informed about current affairs; what is more, it is the main choice for 42%. For its part, the print press is the usual news medium of almost a third of the analysed population: 29%. Likewise, only 2% use it as their main source. With a slightly lower proportion than the digital press, television is watched habitually by 76% of those surveyed with some 25% using it as their principal source. Social media and radio are used habitually by 58% and 47% respectively. However, these last two are not priority news sources, with only 20% and 10% of the population using them habitually to stay informed.

There are significant differences in terms of gender, age and educational level. The digital press is the habitual news media for 88% of men and 82% of women. However, 49% of women and 34% of men use it as their main source. Furthermore, while 53% of the male population habitually listens to the radio to stay

informed, the percentage of women who do this is 40%. There is a similar difference in the use of social media, it being the habitual source of news for 67% of women, but only 50% of men. Finally, the use of television as the main source of information stands out: for some 32% of male users it is their main medium, but only for 19% of female users.

In terms of age, the group between 18 and 34 stays informed habitually via the digital press (85%) and social media (76%). Television also stands out as a habitual source of information within this same age range (69%), but not as the main source (21%). Among the population aged between 51 and 65, social media is significantly less prominent: some 42% of participants use it as their habitual media. Within the same age group, the radio is more popular as a habitual news medium: 55% use it as such. Finally, whilst television is consumed habitually by 69% of the younger population (18-34), it is the habitual medium for 85% of the oldest age group analysed (50-65). On the other hand, the print press is consumed habitually by 39% of this last group, but only by 21% of the youngest age group.

As far as the relationship between educational level and habitual news medium is concerned, the importance of the digital press decreases among participants with lower education. This means that while 92% of people with postgraduate studies use it on a regular basis, of those only with compulsory education this figure is reduced to 69%. Something similar is true of the priority media variable: for 59% of the population with a higher educational level the digital press is their main media source, whilst this is true of only 38% of those with just a compulsory education. For its part, television stands out as the priority medium for 31% of people with compulsory education, whilst the participants with postgraduate studies consume it less: 11%. Finally, a significant difference can be observed in relation to the use of social media: Within the population with the lowest educational level (compulsory), a mere 17% use it on a regular basis; whilst that percentage rises to 60% and 70% among those with a university degree and a postgraduate qualification respectively.

Why do some media formats take priority over others when it comes to staying informed? Among the people whose main news source is the digital press, the majority choose it for its quick, easy and comfortable access (65%). Those who prefer the print press as their main source of information, do so largely out of habit (11%). Similarly, habit lies behind the consumption of radio as the main news source (38%), in addition to it allowing people to do other things at the same time (24%), together with the reliability of a media outlet with truthful information (16%). In terms of television as a priority medium, the majority said that they use it out of habit (42%). Furthermore, 28% choose it as their main source for its quick, easy and comfortable access. Curiously, only 5% prioritise television for its reliability or truthfulness. Finally, the participants who give priority to social media to stay informed about current affairs also do so largely due to its quick, easy and comfortable access (45%). In second place, although to a lesser extent, is habit (21%). Furthermore, one of the important reasons why people prioritise the use of social media is the immediacy of the news (17%).

How often does the analysed population read the digital and/or print press? And what do they really look for in each media outlet? The frequency of reading in paper format is quite diverse. Some 27% of those surveyed claimed to do so on a daily or almost daily basis, while 18% read using this source once or twice a week. Thus, the percentage of participants that never or almost never reads the print press is quite high at 17%. Finally, 15% consume it 1 to 3 days a month; 12% reads it less than once a month, and 11% spend 3 to 5 days a week on it. We can see differences in the Reading of the print press in terms of the gender of the participants. While this format is consumed daily or almost daily by 31% of men, the proportion

decreases among the female population: 23%. What is more, there are more women (16%) who read the print press less than once a month, in comparison to men (8%). In terms of age, the highest frequency of print press reading can be found in the oldest age range (50-65): while some 19% reads it 3 to 5 days a week, this is true of only 8% and 6% of those in the age ranges 18-34 and 35-49 respectively. As far as the digital press is concerned, consumption frequency in general is much higher. Some 64% of those surveyed read the press in this format daily or almost daily, and a mere 15% do so 3 to 5 times a week. Similarly, daily or almost daily reading of the digital press is higher amongst men, with 72%, against 55% of women. The main reason behind the consumption of the media is the reliability or quality of certain media outlets (59%), but a significant percentage of the analysed population also chooses them for things that do not appear in other outlets (34%). Likewise, 19% seek out a specific media outlet, whilst 17% look for an editorial line. On the other hand, feeling part of a community (6%) and admiration of particular journalists (8%) are the least valued reasons. Differences can be seen in terms of the gender and age of those surveyed. For example, whilst 22% of men seek out a specific editorial line, this is true of only 11% of women. Furthermore, the importance of specific subjects that do not appear in other media is valued by 42% of the 18-24 age group, but only by 29% of those aged between 35-49.

Does the analysed population have, or has it ever had, a subscription to a print or digital media outlet? Some 80% neither has nor has ever had a subscription to a print media. This percentage rises to 88% in the case of a digital media outlet. Among the participants who either have or have ever had a subscription, the proportion is higher among those with a subscription to a print media outlet (20%) than to a digital one (12%). Furthermore, there are more men than women with some kind of subscription to these media. To be exact, whilst 15% of men have or have had a subscription to a digital media, the same is true of only 8% of women. In terms of age, indeed there is a significantly lower proportion of subscriptions to print media in the 18-34 age group: 13%.

Figure 1: Knowledge of slow journalism.
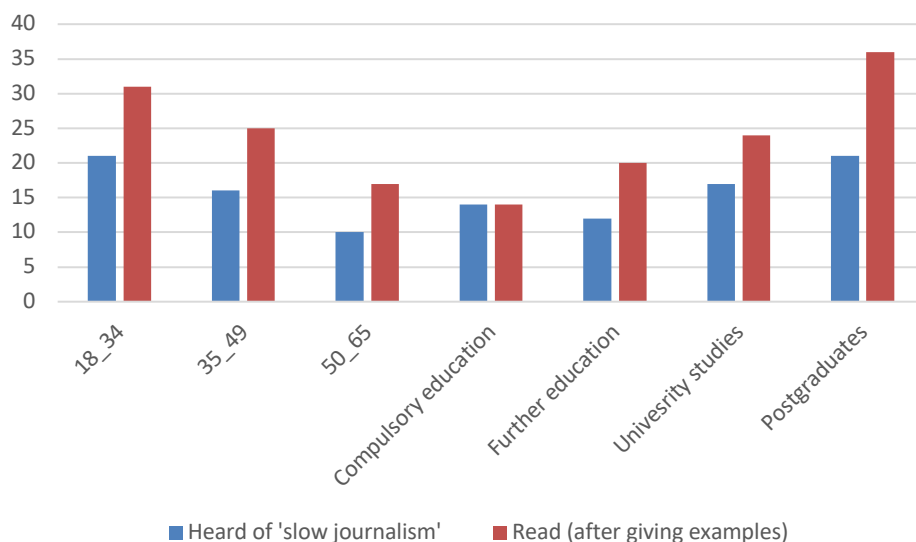
Source: Own elaboration

Finally, it is worth mentioning the small number of participants who have heard of the terms "narrative journalism", "restful journalism" or slow journalism. A mere 16% know of slow journalism, and 24% confess to having read it after hearing the definition and being given some examples. There are no significant differences in terms of gender, but knowledge of slow journalism is more widespread among postgraduates (36%) within the 18-34 age group (31%) -see Figure 1-.

Consumption of slow journalism

Among the people who read slow journalism, the most referenced media names out of those suggested were: Jot Down (44%), La Marea (33%), Gatopardo (20%), Yorokobu (18%) and Panenka (14%). On the other hand, Anfibia (1%), Coroto (2%), Puercoespín (3%) and Frontera D (3%) were the least mentioned. There are significant differences in terms of the gender of those surveyed. Jot Down is known to 54% of the male population, whilst among the female population it is appreciably lower: 38%. Panenka was mentioned by 24% of men who read slow press; however, only 5% of women were familiar with it. Furthermore, La Silla Vacia was significantly more popular among women (16%) tan men (5%). There are no great differences in the age factor regarding the consumption of particular media brands, but it is worth highlighting that Yorokobu was mentioned, among the most popular media outlets, by 23% of the population between 35-49 years old, but only by 8% of those in the 50-65 age group. Similarly, Etiqueta Negra is known to 16% of the youngest population that reads slow press (18-34 years of age), whilst among the middle age group (35-49) nobody had heard of it.

There are, however, differences relating to the educational level of those surveyed. As much as 60% of those who consume Jot Down hold postgraduate degrees, but only 27% of participants with Further Education qualifications and 0% of those with only compulsory education mentioned it. However, the opposite is true of La Marea; whilst it is known by 50% of the participants with compulsory education who read slow press, it was mentioned by only 30% of the population with Postgraduate qualifications. For its part, Gatopardo is also more popular among the population with the lowest level of education: 75% among those with compulsory education against 30% of postgraduates.

Most of the people surveyed who read slow press do so at least 1 to 3 days per month (30%). These are followed by those who read it 1 to 2 days a week (23%), whilst in third place are those who read it once a month (19%). Only 7% claimed to read it on a daily or almost daily basis. The most significant differences can be found in relation to age, since only 4% of the 18-34 age group and 6% of the 35-49 age group read slow press every day or nearly every day; however, this percentage rises to 15% in the 50-65 age group - see Figure 2-.

Figure 2: Slow press reading frequency
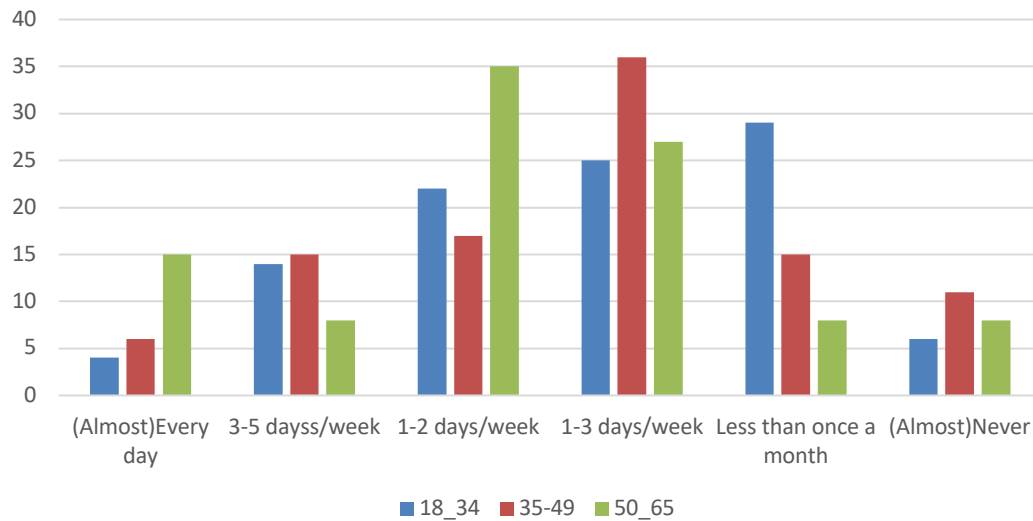
Source: Own elaboration

In terms of reading time, the majority of those surveyed (46%) spends between 15 and 30 minutes on the slow press each time; 34% spend between half an hour and an hour; whilst 16% stated they spend less than 15 minutes. Only 4% admitted to spending between one and two hours reading slow press each time. The lower reading time spent (between 15- 30 minutes) is more prominent among the population between 35-49 years old (26%); whilst on the other hand this lower reading time is far less popular among the 50-65 age group (8%). Likewise, a mere 4% of the youngest readers (18-34) spend between one and two hours reading slow press, whilst over 12% of those in the 50-65 age bracket spend this amount of time.

If we look at the educational level of the analysed population, more differences can be observed. For example, over 24% of those with university education claim to spend less than 15 minutes each time on slow press, but this percentage drops to 0% among the population with compulsory education. On the other hand, 46% of the participants with a university qualification spend between 15-30 minutes reading it each time, whilst only 25% of the population with compulsory education does so. Likewise, as much as 75% of the people with compulsory education spend between 31 minutes and an hour reading each time, this percentage falls to 26% among those with university qualifications -see Figure 3-.

Figure 3: Time spent reading each time
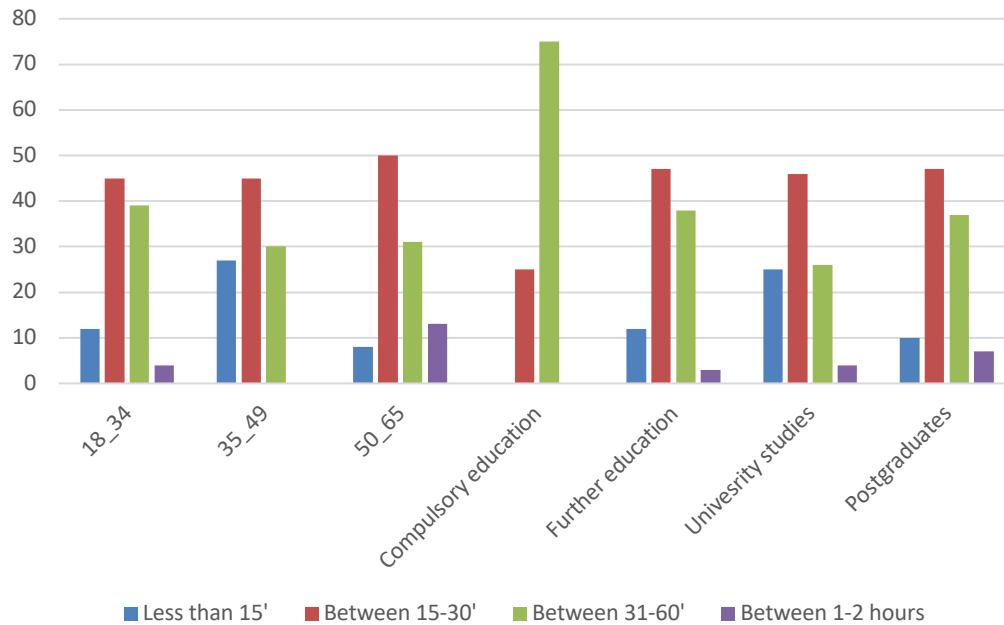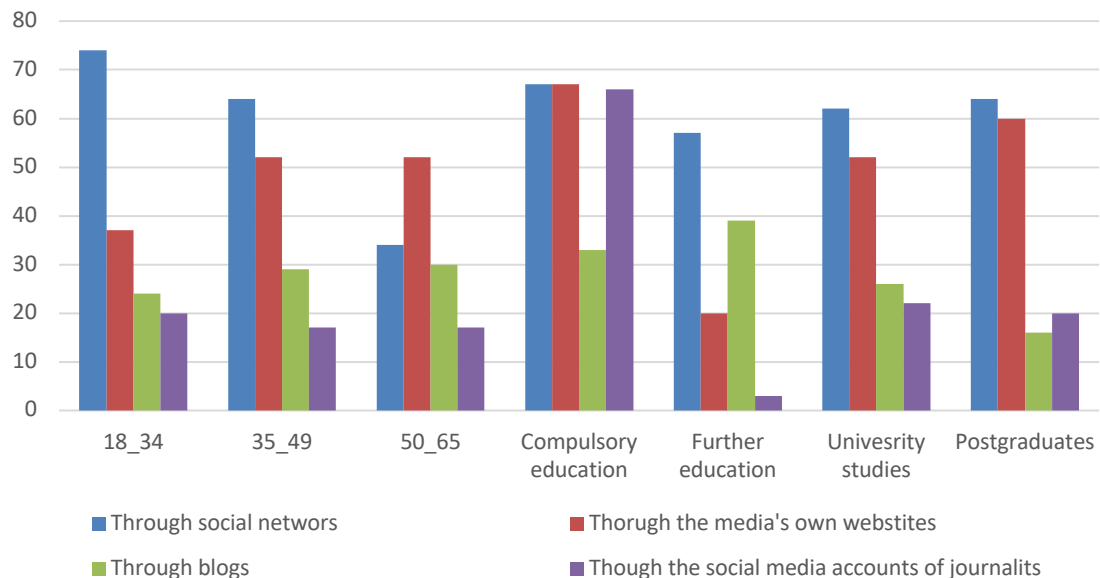

Source: Own elaboration

When and where is this type of journalism consumed? Most of the surveyed participants read the slow press at weekends (45%), whilst a minority of 21% do so during the week. In the middle is the 34% that reads it equally during the week or at weekends. The most important differences regarding this habit can be found in relation to the educational level, employment situation and age of readers. On the one hand, whilst 75% of the participants with a compulsory education or less read slow press at weekends, 39% of university graduates do so. On the other hand, whilst 26% of university graduates read it during the week, this percentage drops to 0% among readers who have gone through Further Education. Therefore, it would appear that people with a lower level of education choose to read slow press at weekends, and the higher the educational level the greater the tendency to read it during the week. This result is related to the differences detected between employed or unemployed participants. That is, whilst 22% of employed people read slow press during the week, a mere 9% of unemployed participants share this habit. Furthermore, whereas 43% of the working population claims to read this type of journalism at weekends, this proportion rises to 64% among unemployed participants. Finally, age is also a characteristic feature in terms of when reading occurs. Some 27% of the 18-34 age bracket prefers to read during the week, compared to a mere 15% of those aged 50-65. In fact, as much as 42% of the older population reads indistinctly during the week or at weekends, while 29% of the youngest age group chose this option.

There is variation regarding where reading takes place. The habitual residence (86%), the workplace (25%) and public transport (14%) are the most popular; whilst on the other hand, libraries (9%) and places with free Wi-Fi (8%) are the least. This last option is more popular among women (14%) than men (2%).

Similarly, whilst 14% of the younger participants mentioned places with free Wi-Fi, a mere 4% of the oldest age group chose this answer. The workplace was mentioned by 34% of those aged 35-49, but this proportion drops considerably to just 4% among the 50-65 age bracket. For its part, public transport is the chosen place for reading slow press for at least 20% of the younger population analysed (18-34 years of age), whilst this option was chosen by only 4% of the older age group (50-65).

The digital format is the one most used for reading slow press (80%), followed by paper (13%), and in third and last place, both (7%). In terms of the most significant differences, the ones that stand out are those related to the educational level and employment status of those surveyed. On the one hand, 25% of those with compulsory education choose a paper medium, compared to just 7% of university graduates. On the other hand, whilst 14% of the working population prefers to read slow press in paper format, this proportion falls to 0% among the unemployed. Among the users of digital devices, the majority use a Smartphone (64%), followed by laptop (46%) and desktop computer (41%). Tablets (25%) and e readers (4%) are the least used devices. Among these devices, tablets and laptops are more popular among men than women. For example, 29% of the men surveyed use a tablet, while 18% of women do so. There are relevant differences in terms of age bracket. Mobile phones or Smartphones are used by 78% of the younger participants (18-34 years old), whilst this proportion drops to 48% among the older generation (50 65 years old). Similarly, the desktop computer is used by 29% of those in the 18-34 age group to read slow press, and by 48% of those between ages of 50-65. Furthermore, tablets are used by 36% of those between 35-49 years old, being reduced to almost half (15%) among the youngest age bracket (18-34).

Figure 4: Slow media access platforms

Source: Own elaboration

The most popular platforms for accessing slow journalism are social media (61%) with as much as 73% of participants in the 18-34 age group using it, against just 35% of those aged 50-65 -see Figure 4-. The websites of the media outlets themselves are the second access option most used (46%), by 53% of men against 39% of women. This option is followed by blogs (27%) and the social media accounts of particular journalists (18%). Differences can be seen in terms of educational level as regards this last access platform for slow media, since at least 67% of those surveyed with a compulsory education said they use journalists' own social media accounts, whilst this percentage is reduced to 20% among postgraduates. The opposite is true of blogs, as just 16% of those with a postgraduate degree use them to access slow media, against 39% of those with a Further Education qualification.

Readers of slow journalism look for many different subjects. Culture (62%), politics (51%) and society (45%) were the most selected options, whilst economy (23%) and sport (19%) the least. Of those who read the society section, 57% are women and 37% men. At the same time, this subject is popular among 58% of participants between the ages of 50-65, whilst that percentage drops to 24% among the 35-49 age group. Likewise, over 53% of men read the science and technology sections, but only 35% of women do so. We see a similar gender difference relating to the sports section: it is read by 29% of the male population, but only by 10% of the female. If we take into account the educational level of the surveyed population, culture stands out among those with only compulsory education, at 75%, whilst this figure falls to 60% among those with a postgraduate degree. Similarly, the sports section is read mainly by the group with a lower level of education (compulsory, 25%), and the least by those with the highest level of education (postgraduates, 13%).

Table 1: Elements offered by slow journalism

Elements offered by slow journalism	Men (%)	Women (%)	Non-binary (%)	18-34 (%)	35-49 (%)	50-65 (%)
Critical opinion	63	50	40	51	55	65
Reflective attitude	54	52	60	55	51	54
Quality/informative clarity	53	43	40	45	51	46
Analysis capacity	54	40	40	41	53	46
Specialization	42	40	0	35	47	35
Context information	37	41	20	39	47	23
Editorial independence	45	28	20	39	32	35
Creativity	25	44	0	39	23	39
Transparency	27	22	40	22	23	35
Dynamic narratives	22	22	20	25	23	15
Information on neglected stories	22	16	0	16	19	19

Source: Own elaboration

Among the elements offered by slow journalism, most of the surveyed participants underline "critical opinion" (56%) - 63% of men and 50% of women - and "discerning attitude" (53%) -see Table 1-. They also highlight the quality/clarity of the information (48%) and the analytical capacity (47%) of slow press. In truth, there are differences in terms of the gender and age of the participants, as well as the 'editorial independence' and 'creativity' elements of slow journalism. Over 44% of men rate this first aspect positively, whereas this can be said of only 28% of women. The second element is mentioned by 25% of men but over 43% of women. As far as age is concerned, the "dynamic narratives found in slow journalism" are popular among 25% of the youngest readers (18-34 years old), but only 15% of the eldest group (50-65). The opposite is true when the transparency of slow journalism is considered, in that it stands out among the older population (35%) but is slightly less valued among the youngest (22%). There are also relevant differences in the results relating to educational level. As much as 73% of the postgraduate population underlines the "discerning attitude" of slow journalism, in comparison with just 25% of the population with only a compulsory educational level. The quality/clarity of the information was selected by 57% of the participants with a higher level of education, but this drops to 25% among those with a lower level. Similarly, whereas 60% of the participants with postgraduate qualifications value positively the analytical capacity of slow journalism, this element is important for only 29% of those with Further Education studies.

The most preferred genres among readers of slow journalism are: reportage (33%), analysis (21%) and story (16%). Interview (11%) and opinion (15%), on the other hand, are the least popular. There are no great differences in terms of gender among those surveyed, but there are relating to age and educational level. Among others, the reportage is significantly important among those with compulsory education (50%), but considerably less so among the postgraduate population (33%). Furthermore, the analysis genre is important for over 33% of participants with the highest level of education (postgraduate), compared to only 15% of those with a Further Education qualification. For its part, the interview stands out among the youngest population surveyed (14%) but its popularity is lower among the 35-49 age range (6%). This last age group particularly prefers the report (40%) in comparison with the oldest group (19%).

Who has a subscription to a digital slow media outlet and who doesn't? Only 10% of those surveyed recognise having one, with differences in terms of age and gender; since the majority of subscribers are women (62%) between the ages of 18-34 (62%). Likewise, the percentage of 50-65 age-range people with a subscription to a slow digital media is of 0%. However, general consumer assessment of slow journalism is good. To be more exact, on a Likert scale of 1 to 5, slow journalism achieves an average of 3.9 points; its credibility/independence/quality in relation to other hegemonic media obtains an average of 3.4; the quality of the media outlet scores 3.8 points; and possibilities for the future for this kind of journalism 3.6 points. There were no significant differences regarding the gender, age, habitat, employment situation and/or educational level of those who took part in the study.

Attitudes and opinions about journalism and slow press

Of those surveyed, 55% claim to share content socially or interact with the media, although 31% do so only occasionally. What is significant is the proportion of press consumers that neither socialise the information

content, nor interact with the media in particular: some 45%. There are no significant differences that stand out as regards the gender and/or age of the analysed population, but there are in terms of educational level. To be specific, the higher the level of education is, the higher the number of people who socially share content or interact with the media. Some 19% of those surveyed with a Further Education qualification or vocational training claim to, whilst this percentage rises to 33% among the postgraduate population. Similarly, whereas 21% of those with compulsory education or less share content socially or interact with the media, this percentage rises to 36% among postgraduates. Surprisingly, some 28% of the population with compulsory education or less can be seen to share content socially or interact with the media.

Some 66% of the analysed population is particularly interested in the comments made on the news in the digital press. However, there are differences relating to the gender and educational level of these people; given that 70% of the women surveyed showed an interest, against 63% of men. Likewise, whereas 55% of the population with compulsory education is interested in these comments, this rises to 70% among the population with a university degree.

When it comes to paying more for the quality of slow journalism, the majority are not willing to do so: 73% responded negatively to this question. However, it is worth highlighting the 27% of those surveyed who would be prepared to pay for it. Similarly, there are more people within the postgraduate population prepared to pay for the quality of slow journalism (33%), compared with those who only have a compulsory education or less (21%). Furthermore, a willingness to pay is found above all in the oldest age bracket (50-65 years old, 29%) and in areas with a medium number of inhabitants (50,000-500,000, 32%). Finally, among the readers of the slow press, 45% responded positively, whilst 55% responded negatively. That is, the willingness to pay for this kind of journalism is significantly stronger within its own readership community.

Regarding the opinion about whether audiovisual and/or multimedia resources help in understanding the news, 81% of those surveyed state that they do. However, there are disparate responses as to whether the media adequately incorporates these resources. Whereas 31% of the population believes they do, a total of 69% thinks they either don't (40%) or they don't know (29%). If we look at the educational level of the population, 52% of those with a postgraduate degree reply that the media doesn't adequately incorporate multimedia resources, but this proportion drops to 31% among those with just compulsory education or less. Similarly, whilst 45% of the population with the lowest educational level (compulsory or less) say they do not know whether these resources are adequately incorporated or not; this proportion is only 19% among the participants with the highest level of education (postgraduate). Finally, there are more men (47%) than women (32%) within the group that believes the media do not adequately incorporate multimedia resources.

How can this situation be improved? Is there a traditional media outlet that fits within digital slow journalism? The vast majority (78%) say no (31%) or doesn't know (47%). Indeed, this lack of knowledge is predominant among the female population (51%) and the eldest (50-65 years old, 55%). In terms of educational level, differences can be seen among the participants surveyed. Whereas 14% of the population with compulsory education thinks that none of the traditional media fit within digital slow journalism, this percentage increases to 37% among the population with the highest level of education (postgraduate). For their part, just 22% believe that yes there are traditional media that fit in this new journalistic trend. This response is especially popular within the non-binary gender population (43%). But which traditional media are they referring to? Nearly half those surveyed did not know or did not answer this question (47%), whilst others simply mentioned "print or digital press" (15%). Among the examples given, in addition, there wasn't

a large variety of digital slow media. What is more, those mentioned belong to the pure classical model: television (7%), El País (7%) or radio (4%), for example.

Figure 5: 'Should journalism lead to narrative journalism on the Internet?'
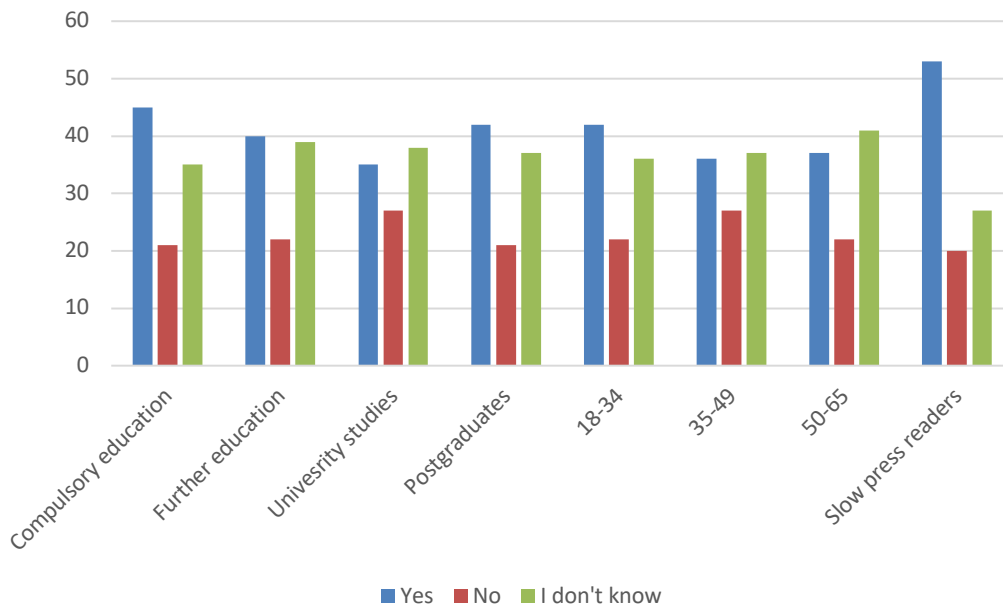
Source: Own elaboration

In this vein, 38% believe that journalism should redirect itself towards slow journalism on the Internet; although the majority think the opposite (62%), responding either "no" (24%) or "don't know" (38%) -see Figure 5-. The results reflect that the youngest population (18-34 years old, 42%) and those with a lower level of education (compulsory or less, 45%) would particularly agree more with this idea. Those who were not sure could be found within the unemployed population (48%) and the eldest (41%). For their part, the people who live in an area with more than 500.000 inhabitants are the most strictly opposed to this idea (31%). Finally, within the readers of the slow press specifically, a large majority believe that journalism should redirect itself towards slow journalism on the Internet: 53%.

It is interesting to see the reasons given both for valuing digital slow journalism, and for not valuing it. Those who do value it highlight the importance of the Internet for attracting more readers, since this journalistic format is accessible to a greater number of people in many different places (24%). Furthermore, the same population underlines its quality, as it offers greater truthfulness and/or counteracts fake news (19%). To a lesser extent, they also value digital slow journalism because: it aids the understanding of events (8%); it develops and expands the information (8%); it helps with innovation and/or updating, and/or because it is fashionable (8%). However, the least valued aspects were: digital information is immediate; digital slow journalism allows interaction; it expresses different perspectives or explores diverse sources. All these reasons were cited by just 1% of the analysed population. Among the people who believe that

journalism should not redirect itself towards slow press on the Internet, the largest group replied that there should be two types of journalism or varieties of style: 28% of the population. Secondly, there is a 13% who think that news should be disseminated immediately and be read quickly. Thirdly, 11% think that slow journalism is boring or tedious. Finally, there were other replies related to the idea that journalism is fine just as it is (8%), and 8% have a preference for traditional media. Those participants who did not have a clear opinion also provide us with some clues, since 17% do not know what digital slow journalism really is and still 10% need immediate, brief news due to a lack of time for reading press. Moreover, 7% think that this kind of journalism is not attractive to a large readership.

Conclusion

The results of this research reveal important information concerning the consumer habits of Spanish readers in relation to digital slow journalism. In relation to our objectives and research questions, we have come to the following conclusions:

R1 - It should be pointed out that digital press is the habitual media of the analysed population to stay informed about current affairs. However, over half of the consumers of journalism in general do not know what slow journalism is. To be more exact, 60% of the people surveyed. Only 40% claimed to have read or heard about this kind of journalism. Therefore, slow journalism has not established itself yet as a clear concept within its readership, which makes its promotion and positioning more difficult. Thus, we believe there is a need for a clear and widely accepted definition; as much for the academic community as for media professional.

R2 - It is worth paying attention to the reasons why those surveyed do not value online slow journalism. The majority believe that both kinds of journalism or varieties of style should exist. Notably, there are those who think that news should be disseminated immediately and lend itself to being consumed rapidly, which is combined with the view that slow journalism is boring or tedious. The undecided population can also provide us with clues, given that as much as 17% do not know what digital slow journalism is.

The reader community, for its part, mainly seeks critical opinion and a discerning attitude in this type of journalism. They also highlight the quality/clarity of the information and the analytical capacity slow journalism has. In terms of genres, the readers of slow journalism prefer reportage, analysis and stories. Interview and opinion, on the other hand, are the least mentioned. And the vast majority of the analysed population are not willing to pay for slow journalism (73%). This result clearly shows the need to look for alternative financing methods for slow media. At the same time, there are significant differences in terms of the age and educational level of the readers analysed. Among others, there are more people prepared to pay for the quality of slow journalism who have postgraduate qualifications compared with those who only have a compulsory education or less. In addition, it is worth underlining that willingness to pay is most prominent among the older population. Finally, there is a strong willingness to pay among the readers of slow press, where 45% would readily pay for it. This information can undoubtedly provide some clues for the future development of these news companies.

R3 - Those who do read slow press spend a limited amount of time on it: between 15-30 minutes. A mere 4% admits to spending between one and two hours each time. Furthermore, within the same population, the majority only read it 1 to 3 days a month. Just 7% claim to read it every day or almost every day. These

figures show that the audience attraction and retaining capacity of slow journalism is quite limited at least within the analysed population. There is also a second fact behind this result: reading time appears to be independent of content quality. In that sense, the patterns of 'fast' reading typical of the traditional media are repeated in slow journalism. This situation could change if the needs of digital slow journalism readers were more deeply analysed, since it is important to adapt content and production models to the type of reader.

Similarly, it is significant that the higher the educational level or academic training, the greater the trust of readers of the press in general, and thus their tendency to share content socially and/or interact with the media. Also, the lower the educational or training level, the more participation decreases. This phenomenon may influence the consumption of digital slow journalism, since social participation and interaction will be fundamental to its promotion within this complex communicative spectrum. In this sense, moreover, the same population underlines that the audiovisual resources used in slow content help to improve understanding of the information, but they do believe there is room for improvement. However, there were no suggestions as to where or how this could be done.

In view of all this, further research is necessary in order to find innovative strategies that promote digital slow journalism and its consumption, not to mention the social participation or interaction with this media. This research work in particular suggests focussing on the reach and dissemination of digital slow media in order to answer the following further questions: (1) There is a lack of knowledge on behalf of the readership concerning what kind of journalism they are consuming: shat can be done about this situation? What technology should be prioritised, and in what format? (2) What business models should be chosen? (3) What kind of tools can be used to obtain more information about the reading community?

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