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PROPOSAL OF A MIXED-METHODS RESEARCH DESIGN TO ANALYZE THE INTEGRATION OF GENERATIVE ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE INTO JOURNALISTIC ROUTINES

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: The integration of generative artificial intelligence tools is significantly transforming journalistic routines, introducing new dynamics in news production processes, work organization, and professional identity. Despite growing academic interest in this phenomenon, methodological limitations remain in systematically assessing its impact on everyday journalistic practices. This study proposes and justifies a mixed-methods research design aimed at analyzing the integration of generative artificial intelligence into journalistic routines and establishing an operational basis for its future empirical measurement. **Methodology:** The research adopts a triangulation approach combining three data collection methods: a survey of active journalists, in-depth interviews, and a daily log documenting the use of artificial intelligence tools in real work contexts. The study follows a comparative design between two media ecosystems: Andalusia (Spain) and British Columbia (Canada). Additionally, the Generative AI Impact Index in Journalism (IIGP, in Spanish) is proposed as a multidimensional operational framework that integrates different analytical dimensions of artificial intelligence impact on journalistic work. **Results:** The study presents, as its main result, a structured methodological model that integrates

professional perceptions, work experiences, and AI-use records in journalistic contexts. It also proposes the initial operationalization of the IIGP as a multidimensional framework structured around eight dimensions: intensity of use, perceived efficiency, editorial autonomy, human supervision, ethical risk, artificial intelligence literacy, cognitive load, and organizational context. Its future empirical application will require validation of the dimensional structure and the use of procedures compatible with the ordinal nature of the data. **Discussion:** The proposed methodological model offers a replicable analytical tool for future research in journalism and communication studies, enabling more systematic measurement of AI's impact. Its application across different media contexts can enhance understanding of ongoing professional transformations.

Keywords: Generative artificial intelligence; journalistic routines; mixed methods; digital journalism; technological innovation.

1. INTRODUCTION

The technological transformation of journalism has accelerated significantly over the last decade, driven by the progressive integration of automated systems and artificial intelligence tools into newsrooms. From early experiments with automated journalism and algorithmic news generation, the field has evolved into an information ecosystem increasingly mediated by technologies capable of processing, analyzing, and producing news content autonomously or semi-autonomously (Carlson, 2015; Dörr, 2016). In this context, generative artificial intelligence marks a new phase in the automation of journalism, defined by the ability of these systems—powered by advanced language models—to produce complex texts, images, or analyses (Hermida, 2024; Lewis et al., 2019; Pavlik, 2023).

The introduction of these technologies is driving significant shifts in the professional routines of journalists. Research indicates that the automation of journalistic tasks can alter the division of labor within newsrooms, reshape news production processes, and redefine the professional role of the journalist in relation to algorithmic systems (Diakopoulos, 2019; Thurman et al., 2017). Consequently, academic literature emphasizes that the integration of artificial intelligence into media organizations should not be viewed merely as a technological innovation, but rather as a process of organizational and cultural transformation within journalistic enterprises (Broussard et al., 2019; Veglis & Maniou, 2019).

In recent years, the emergence of generative artificial intelligence tools—such as large language models—has intensified this debate by significantly expanding the possibilities for automating journalistic work. These tools can generate news drafts, summarize documents, translate content, and assist in information-gathering processes. While this creates new opportunities to improve the efficiency of newsrooms, it also raises questions regarding the quality, accuracy, and transparency of content produced with algorithmic support (Gutiérrez-Caneda et al., 2023; Lewis et al., 2025; Segarra-Saavedra et al., 2019). Consequently, the use of generative artificial intelligence in journalism lies at the heart of an academic debate concerning professional autonomy, journalistic ethics, and media credibility (Tandoc et al., 2020).

In the Spanish context, various studies have begun to analyze the impact of artificial intelligence on newsrooms and professional journalistic practice. This research highlights that the adoption of algorithmic technologies within Spanish media remains in a phase of uneven development, influenced by factors such as available resources, newsroom size, and the level of technological innovation within journalistic organizations (López-García et al., 2017; Noain-Sánchez, 2022; Romera-Fadón et al., 2024). In this regard, the Spanish literature emphasizes that the integration of artificial intelligence tools entails changes not only to news production processes but also to the professional competencies that journalists must develop to work in increasingly digitized media environments (Sánchez-García & Tejedor, 2022).

At the same time, recent studies have highlighted the growing relevance of local and regional digital media within the contemporary news ecosystem—particularly in contexts such as Spain, where digitalization has fostered the emergence of new media players and the transformation of journalistic business models (Negredo et al., 2023; Salaverría, 2020). This process of structural change is especially significant for analyzing the impact of artificial intelligence on journalism, as the adoption of these technologies can vary considerably depending on the size of the media outlet, its geographical scope, or the organization's level of technological innovation.

Despite the increasing academic interest in artificial intelligence as applied to journalism, a significant portion of the existing literature has focused on exploratory studies—relying on professional perceptions, case analyses, or conceptual reviews of the phenomenon. Consequently, there remain methodological limitations in systematically understanding how these technologies are actually influencing journalists' professional routines and the day-to-day operations of newsrooms (Romera-Fadón et al., 2024). As various authors have noted, it is necessary to develop methodological approaches that combine different research techniques to examine both the perceptions of professionals and the actual practices surrounding the use of these technologies in journalistic work (Cristòfol, 2026; Lewis et al., 2019; Pavlik, 2023).

In this context, this article proposes a comparative methodological design for analyzing the integration of generative artificial intelligence into professional journalistic routines. The study's contribution is primarily methodological: rather than presenting empirical results from a full-scale application of the study, it outlines a replicable research strategy for future investigations into the professional use of these technologies. The design employs a methodological triangulation approach, combining surveys of journalists, in-depth interviews, and logs documenting the use of artificial intelligence in real-world work settings. This approach allows for the integration of various levels of analysis—professional perceptions, work experiences, and daily practices—with the goal of establishing a systematic foundation for studying the impact of artificial intelligence on journalistic practice.

Furthermore, the research adopts a comparative perspective across two regional media ecosystems: the Canadian province of British Columbia and the autonomous community of Andalusia, in Spain. These cases were selected due to their significance as distinct territorial contexts, characterized by unique media systems, the presence

of local and regional outlets, a mix of traditional and digital players, and potentially varied professional conditions regarding technological innovation. The comparison does not aim to establish full equivalence between the two environments; instead, it seeks to explore how institutional, organizational, linguistic, cultural, and labor-related factors may influence how journalists incorporate generative artificial intelligence tools into their professional routines.

From this perspective, the article is conceived as a methodological inquiry focused on the design and substantiation of analytical instruments. Its primary contribution lies in articulating a mixed-methods model that allows for the observation of the phenomenon across three complementary dimensions: the self-reported perceptions of professionals, the qualitative interpretation of their experiences, and the documentation of specific uses of generative artificial intelligence in daily professional practice. This delineation is essential to prevent the study from being interpreted as a completed empirical measurement, and instead positions its contribution within the development of tools applicable to future research.

1.1. The Automation of Journalism and the Transformation of Professional Routines

The integration of digital technologies into journalism has profoundly transformed the professional routines of journalists over the last few decades. From the widespread adoption of the internet to the development of digital platforms and social media, news production processes have undergone increasing automation and digitalization—shifts that have altered both professional practices and the organization of work within newsrooms (Salaverría, 2020). In this context, the development of algorithmic systems capable of processing large volumes of data and generating news content has ushered in a new phase in the evolution of digital journalism (Hermida, 2024).

The automation of journalism began to take hold in the early 21st century with the development of systems for the automatic generation of news based on structured data. These systems—commonly referred to as "automated journalism" or "robot journalism"—enabled the production of news texts from databases, utilizing templates and natural language processing algorithms (Carlson, 2015). Various studies have noted that these systems were initially employed in highly structured journalistic domains—such as financial, sports, or weather reporting—where available data could easily be transformed into automated journalistic narratives (Graefe, 2016).

From a theoretical perspective, the automation of journalism has been interpreted as part of a broader process of transformation in news work within increasingly digitized media environments. In this regard, various authors have analyzed how the introduction of algorithmic systems alters the division of labor within newsrooms and redefines the role of the journalist in relation to news production technologies (Diakopoulos, 2019). Rather than completely replacing journalists, automation often gives rise to hybrid models in which humans and algorithmic systems collaborate during different phases of the news production process.

This process has sparked an academic debate regarding the impact of automation on the professional identity of journalism. Some studies have noted that the introduction

of algorithmic technologies can reinforce certain traditional journalistic functions—such as interpretation, contextualization, or fact-checking—while automating repetitive or data-driven tasks (Lewis et al., 2019). Other authors, however, warn that an increasing reliance on automated systems may alter the dynamics of authority and editorial control within news organizations (Carlson, 2015).

In the European and Spanish contexts, various studies have examined how the digitalization of media has transformed professional journalistic routines and introduced new requirements regarding technological competencies and organizational adaptation. The literature indicates that journalists must develop increasingly complex skills related to data analysis, the use of digital tools, and the management of information flows within hybrid media environments (Sánchez-García & Tejedor, 2022). In this sense, technological innovation entails changes not only to the tools used for news production but also to professional profiles and the organizational culture of media outlets.

Furthermore, the development of digital journalism has fostered the emergence of new media actors, particularly within the realm of digital-native media outlets. In the Spanish context, recent research has identified a growing diversity of digital journalistic projects operating at local, regional, and national levels—a trend that has contributed to transforming the media ecosystem and the dynamics of news production (Negredo et al., 2023). This context is particularly relevant for analyzing the adoption of artificial intelligence (AI) technologies in journalism, as the capacity for technological innovation can vary significantly depending on a media outlet's size, resources, and organizational structure.

Against this backdrop of technological transformation, artificial intelligence has emerged as a primary driver of change in contemporary journalism. The ability of AI systems to process vast volumes of information, identify patterns, and generate content has expanded the potential for automating various journalistic tasks—ranging from data collection to the drafting of news stories (Broussard et al., 2019). However, academic literature emphasizes that the adoption of these technologies is driven not solely by technical factors, but also by organizational, strategic, and cultural decisions within media organizations.

In this sense, the impact of artificial intelligence on journalism must be examined in relation to the professional routines that structure news work. The concept of "journalistic routines" has been widely employed in communication research to describe the organized processes through which journalists select, process, and produce information within newsrooms (Shoemaker & Reese, 2013). The integration of automated technologies introduces new dynamics into these routines, as it alters both workflows and the tools used to produce journalistic content.

Therefore, understanding how artificial intelligence technologies are integrated into the professional routines of journalism is essential for analyzing their actual impact on journalistic practice. This approach makes it possible to move beyond overly deterministic views of technology and to situate the analysis within the interplay between technological tools, professional practices, and organizational contexts. In

this framework, research on artificial intelligence and journalism has begun to explore how journalists incorporate these technologies into their daily work and how they negotiate their use within the professional dynamics of newsrooms.

1.2. Generative Artificial Intelligence in Newsrooms

The recent development of generative artificial intelligence models has ushered in a new phase in the relationship between technology and journalism. Unlike journalistic automation systems based on templates or structured data, generative AI tools employ large-scale language models capable of producing complex text, summarizing documents, translating content, or generating analyses from vast amounts of information (Lewis et al., 2025; Segarra-Saavedra et al., 2019). This technological advancement has significantly expanded the potential applications of artificial intelligence within newsrooms, enabling these tools to play a role in a wider range of stages throughout the news production process.

The emergence of systems such as ChatGPT, Claude, Gemini, and Copilot has made automated text-generation tools more accessible to journalists and media organizations. Against this backdrop, various studies have begun to examine how these technologies are being integrated into newsroom workflows and what their primary applications are within the field of journalism (Beckett & Yaseen, 2023). Common uses identified in the literature include drafting news stories, editing and rewriting text, crafting headlines, translating content, and conducting preliminary document analysis. The case of "Sophi"—developed by *The Globe and Mail*—demonstrates that the implementation of AI within a journalistic organization must be analyzed in the context of editorial values, organizational decision-making, and the processes of professional adaptation (Hermida & Simon, 2025; Mateos Abarca & Gamonal Arroyo, 2024).

From an organizational perspective, the adoption of generative artificial intelligence tools is linked to broader processes of technological innovation within the media (Segarra-Saavedra et al., 2019). Contemporary newsrooms operate in highly competitive environments, characterized by accelerating news cycles and the pressure to continuously produce content for multiple digital platforms. In this context, artificial intelligence emerges as a technology capable of enhancing the efficiency of news production processes and supporting journalists in repetitive or time-intensive tasks (Pavlik, 2023).

However, the integration of these technologies into journalism also raises significant questions regarding their professional and ethical implications. Various authors have noted that the use of generative artificial intelligence in the production of news content can create risks related to the accuracy of information, editorial transparency, and the professional accountability of journalists (Gutiérrez-Caneda et al., 2023). Generative language models can produce seemingly coherent texts that contain factual errors or misinterpretations of information, which necessitates that journalists carefully review the content generated by these tools.

Furthermore, the use of artificial intelligence in journalism has reignited the debate regarding the professional authority of journalists and the role of algorithms in news

production. Previous research has shown that public perception of news credibility can be affected when news content is produced or assisted by automated systems (Tandoc et al., 2020). In this regard, some authors argue that the integration of artificial intelligence into journalism necessitates the development of new transparency and accountability practices, enabling audiences to understand the role these technologies play in the production of news.

Moreover, the use of generative artificial intelligence also presents challenges concerning professional competencies. Recent literature suggests that journalists must develop new skills related to interacting with algorithmic systems, critically evaluating content generated by artificial intelligence, and integrating these tools into news production processes (Sánchez-García & Tejedor, 2022). Consequently, the effective use of artificial intelligence in journalism depends not only on technological availability but also on the ability of professionals to understand its limitations and manage its application within their daily work routines.

In both Europe and Spain, research on generative artificial intelligence in journalism has intensified in recent years, shifting from primarily exploratory approaches toward investigations focused on specific professional applications, journalists' perceptions, and experiences with integration within media organizations. Within the European context, Ufarte Ruiz and Murcia Verdú (2024) provide an overview of the research landscape regarding artificial intelligence applied to journalism between 2013 and 2023, situating this phenomenon within an expanding field of study. Similarly, Canavilhas (2022) examines the "A European Perspective" project as an example of AI application in journalism, illustrating how these technologies can be integrated into the selection, organization, and dissemination of news content across transnational environments.

In Spain, recent research has analyzed both professional perceptions regarding the use of AI within specific media ecosystems—such as in the Basque journalistic landscape—and its application within public service media and journalistic innovation projects, including RTVE (Modrón-Lecue & Sánchez-García, 2026; Pérez Dasilva et al., 2026). These studies indicate that the adoption of artificial intelligence in media typically begins with experimental applications or support for specific tasks, before being progressively integrated into the standard workflows of newsrooms.

The incorporation of artificial intelligence into public media represents a particularly significant area for examining the relationship between technological innovation, editorial responsibility, and service to the public. The case of RTVE has been approached from various perspectives: on one hand, through experiments with automated news writing during the coverage of the 2023 municipal elections, and on the other, through multimodal innovation projects applied to fact-checking, documentation, and the automation of news production (Aramburú Moncada et al., 2023; Modrón-Lecue & Sánchez-García, 2026). These studies are especially useful for contextualizing the present research, as they demonstrate that the integration of artificial intelligence into journalism affects not only text production but also work organization, editorial oversight processes, transparency, and the definition of new professional competencies.

In this context, understanding how journalists actually use these tools in their daily work has become a central issue for communication research. While many studies have focused on analyzing the technological capabilities of artificial intelligence or exploring professional perceptions regarding its impact, there remains a need for research that systematically examines how these technologies are integrated into the professional routines of journalism.

This methodological gap is particularly relevant in the case of generative artificial intelligence, whose rapid proliferation within the professional sphere has, in many instances, outpaced the capacity of academic research to analyze its impact on journalistic work. For this reason, several authors have highlighted the need to develop methodological approaches that allow for the simultaneous study of journalists' perceptions, the actual practices surrounding the use of these technologies, and the organizational contexts in which these transformations take place (Lewis et al., 2019; Pavlik, 2023).

Recent evidence also underscores the need to design instruments capable of capturing not only the frequency with which these tools are used, but also the professional conditions under which they are integrated. Studies focusing on professional perceptions, integration within newsrooms, specific media ecosystems, and the institutional application of artificial intelligence demonstrate that this phenomenon must be analyzed by considering distinct dimensions. In the context of the Spanish radio ecosystem, Gómez López (2026) examines the perceptions held by professionals and audiences regarding current usage, shifts in routines, and ethical dilemmas—a finding that reinforces the importance of incorporating dimensions related to professional practices, oversight, ethical risk, and social reception into the research design. Consequently, the methodological framework proposed in this article encompasses dimensions such as the specific tasks for which AI is employed, the level of human oversight, perceived utility, ethical risks, artificial intelligence literacy, internal policies, and the impact on the journalist's professional identity (Baloğlu & Budak, 2025; Gómez López, 2026; Pérez Dasilva et al., 2026).

In this context, the present study proposes a methodological design for analyzing the integration of generative artificial intelligence tools into professional journalistic routines, employing a combination of various research instruments. This approach aims to contribute to the development of more robust analytical methods for studying the impact of these technologies on contemporary journalistic practice.

1.3. Professional Practices, Editorial Independence, and Ethics in Algorithmic Journalism

The study of professional routines has occupied a central place in journalism research since the development of sociological approaches to news production. Journalistic routines can be understood as the organized procedures through which journalists select, process, and transform information into news products within newsrooms (Shoemaker & Reese, 2013). These routines help manage the complexity of news work by establishing relatively stable patterns of news production within specific organizational contexts.

The inclusion of digital technologies has progressively modified these routines, altering both news production processes and the relationships between journalists, media organizations, and audiences. The integration of algorithmic tools into journalism has intensified this transformation by introducing systems capable of intervening directly in various phases of news work—from data collection and analysis to content generation (Diakopoulos, 2019). In this sense, contemporary journalism increasingly unfolds within hybrid environments where human journalists, automated systems, and digital platforms interact.

One of the most debated aspects in the academic literature on artificial intelligence and journalism concerns its impact on the professional autonomy of journalists. Traditionally, editorial autonomy has been considered a fundamental principle of journalistic practice, as it ensures that journalists have the capacity to make editorial decisions based on professional and ethical criteria (Carlson, 2015). However, the growing presence of algorithmic systems in news production processes necessitates a distinction between editorial autonomy, human supervision, and quality control. Autonomy refers to a journalist's ability to maintain professional judgment in the selection, prioritization, and interpretation of information; human supervision refers to the active review of outputs generated by automated systems; and quality control pertains to editorial procedures designed to verify the accuracy, coherence, contextualization, and ethical appropriateness of content assisted by artificial intelligence.

Various studies have noted that the introduction of automated systems into journalism can alter the dynamics of professional authority by redistributing certain tasks between journalists and algorithms (Lewis et al., 2019). In some cases, these technologies allow for the automation of routine or data-intensive tasks, which can free up time for journalists to focus on higher-value activities, such as analysis, contextualization, or investigative journalism. Nevertheless, there is also concern that reliance on automated systems could influence how information is selected, interpreted, or presented.

Another relevant aspect of the academic debate on artificial intelligence and journalism concerns the ethical challenges associated with the use of these technologies. The literature has identified several potential risks related to the application of artificial intelligence in news production, most notably the generation of incorrect information, the reproduction of algorithmic biases, and a lack of transparency in news production processes (Broussard et al., 2019). In particular, generative artificial intelligence models can produce plausible-sounding text that contains factual errors or inaccurate interpretations of information, posing significant challenges for journalistic verification processes.

In this context, various authors have underscored the need to develop ethical principles and regulatory frameworks to guide the responsible use of artificial intelligence in journalism. Such proposals include adopting transparency policies regarding the use of algorithms in news production, establishing editorial oversight mechanisms for content generated by artificial intelligence, and promoting professional practices that ensure journalistic accountability to audiences (Pavlik, 2023).

This ethical dimension has become especially relevant with the expansion of general-purpose generative tools, as their integration into newsrooms raises specific issues regarding verifiability, attribution, confidentiality, and editorial responsibility. In this regard, professional policies on artificial intelligence emphasize that outputs generated by these systems should be treated as unverified material until they have been reviewed by journalists; they also recommend avoiding the input of confidential, sensitive, or unpublished information into external tools. These guidelines are directly linked to the need to assess not only the general perception of ethical risk but also concrete practices concerning human supervision, transparency toward the audience, and data protection within news production processes. Such concerns are not limited to journalism; rather, they are part of a broader debate on artificial intelligence, public communication, and citizenship. In the field of digital advertising, Braza Delgado (2026) demonstrates how AI introduces new theoretical, ethical, and social challenges related to personalization, segmentation, and persuasive discourse. Although the subject of study differs from that of news journalism, this perspective is useful for framing transparency, accountability, and the protection of citizens as universal dimensions of communication mediated by artificial intelligence.

Beyond issues concerning editorial autonomy and professional ethics, the incorporation of artificial intelligence into journalism raises implications for workplace well-being, efficiency, and cognitive load. These dimensions must be analytically distinguished. Efficiency relates to the reduction of time spent on repetitive or low-value-added tasks; workplace well-being concerns the perception of support, pressure, or stress associated with the use of these technologies; and cognitive load refers to the additional effort required to oversee, verify, and contextualize content generated by artificial intelligence. Some research suggests that the use of advanced technological tools can improve efficiency in newsrooms, while other studies warn that the constant supervision of automated systems may impose new cognitive and professional demands on journalists (Gutiérrez-Caneda et al., 2023).

Furthermore, the integration of artificial intelligence technologies into journalistic routines necessitates the development of new professional competencies. Journalists must acquire skills related to interacting with algorithmic systems, critically formulating prompts, evaluating AI-generated content, detecting errors or biases, and understanding the technical and editorial limitations of these tools (Baloğlu & Budak, 2025; Sánchez-García & Tejedor, 2022). In this sense, artificial intelligence literacy should not be equated solely with a self-perception of technical competence; rather, it also encompasses the ability to supervise outputs, identify appropriate use cases, recognize risks, and apply editorial criteria within contexts where news production is partially automated.

In this sense, analyzing the impact of artificial intelligence on journalism requires simultaneously considering various dimensions of professional practice. Beyond technological shifts, it is necessary to examine how these tools influence journalists' editorial autonomy, the perception of ethical risks, the development of digital competencies, and working conditions within newsrooms. These dimensions are key to understanding how artificial intelligence is integrated into the professional routines of contemporary journalism.

Based on this conceptual framework, this study proposes a methodological design aimed at analyzing the integration of generative artificial intelligence into journalistic routines, using an approach that distinguishes between the professional, organizational, and ethical dimensions of the phenomenon. Specifically, the research introduces a composite index designed to operationalize—for future empirical applications—several dimensions of the potential impact of these technologies on journalistic work: intensity of use, perceived efficiency, editorial autonomy, human oversight, ethical risk, artificial intelligence literacy, cognitive load, and organizational context. This reformulation avoids an overly aggregated conception of technological impact and facilitates a more transparent and replicable measurement.

2. OBJECTIVES

The general objective of this research is to develop and justify a mixed-methods research design aimed at analyzing the integration of generative artificial intelligence into professional journalistic routines.

Based on this general approach, the research is structured around the following specific objectives:

• To design a mixed-methods strategy for analyzing the extent to which generative artificial intelligence tools are integrated into the professional routines of journalists.

• To propose data collection instruments designed to examine professional perceptions regarding productivity, editorial autonomy, ethical risks, digital competencies, human oversight, and workplace well-being in relation to the use of generative artificial intelligence.

• To develop an analytical model—based on a composite index—that allows for the operationalization of various dimensions of the potential impact of generative artificial intelligence on journalistic work, while establishing the methodological conditions necessary for its future empirical application..

3. METODOLOGY

3.1. Research Design

This research adopts a mixed-methods approach designed to develop an analytical framework for the integration of generative artificial intelligence into professional journalistic routines. The design is conceived as a convergent methodological proposal, in which various data collection instruments—surveys, in-depth interviews, and usage logs—allow for the examination of a single phenomenon from complementary analytical perspectives. Methodological triangulation is not merely an accumulation of techniques, but rather a process of integrating quantitative and qualitative data to compare stated perceptions, professional experiences, and documented practices regarding the use of artificial intelligence. This approach enables the study of complex phenomena from multiple viewpoints, helping to mitigate the biases inherent in relying on a single research instrument (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018; Denzin, 1978; Flick, 2018).

In the field of communication research, combining quantitative and qualitative methods is particularly useful for studying professional and organizational processes within media outlets. A mixed-methods approach allows for the integration of structured data—obtained through surveys—with qualitative information derived from interviews or observational techniques, resulting in a more comprehensive understanding of the phenomena under analysis (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). In this study, this approach is structured as a methodological framework designed to simultaneously analyze three dimensions of the phenomenon: journalists' stated perceptions, their professional experiences with generative artificial intelligence, and the specific ways in which these technologies are integrated into their daily work.

The research is framed from a comparative perspective, examining two regional media ecosystems: the Canadian province of British Columbia and the autonomous community of Andalusia, in Spain. The selection of these two cases is based on a comparative logic involving territorial contexts with distinct media structures, the presence of local and regional media, the coexistence of traditional organizations and digital-native projects, and potentially different institutional and professional conditions regarding the adoption of emerging technologies. British Columbia represents a major media environment on Canada's West Coast, characterized by local, regional, and national news activity, linguistic diversity, and the presence of journalistic initiatives focused on digital innovation. Andalusia, meanwhile, serves as a regional media ecosystem within the Spanish news landscape, defined by the coexistence of traditional media, digital-native projects, regional public media, and local-level news structures. This comparison allows for an exploration of how various contextual variables—such as media market structure, professional culture, working languages, internal policies on artificial intelligence, organizational resources, and working conditions—may influence the integration of generative artificial intelligence tools into journalistic routines.

The research design begins with an initial mapping of the media ecosystem in both geographical contexts. This mapping encompasses print media, radio, television, news agencies, digital-native outlets, and local or regional journalistic projects. The objective of this phase is to identify potential participants to ensure a diverse sample of active journalists involved in news production, while excluding individuals whose primary role lies in institutional or strategic communication outside the field of journalism.

The combination of these elements forms a comparative methodological design aimed at studying how generative artificial intelligence can be incorporated into professional journalistic routines within two regional media contexts that possess distinct characteristics. The model does not assume full equivalence between Andalusia and British Columbia; rather, it employs comparison as an analytical strategy to identify potential contextual variations in the adoption, oversight, and professional assessment of these technologies. In this way, the design allows for the observation not only of the intended level of use of generative artificial intelligence but also of the organizational, professional, and ethical conditions that may influence its integration into specific journalistic environments.

3.2. Data Collection Instruments and Strategy

The data collection strategy is based on three complementary research instruments: a survey directed at practicing journalists, in-depth semi-structured interviews, and a logbook for recording the use of artificial intelligence in real-world work situations. Each instrument addresses a specific analytical level: the survey allows for the measurement of general patterns of use and professional perception; the interviews facilitate the interpretation of experiences, editorial decisions, and ethical tensions associated with the integration of these tools; and the logbook enables the documentation of specific practices within everyday work contexts. The combination of these instruments is structured through a convergent mixed-methods design, in which quantitative and qualitative data are collected in a complementary manner and subsequently integrated using a correspondence matrix linking objectives, variables, categories, and instruments.

The first instrument consists of a quick-response survey designed to gather general information on the use of generative artificial intelligence tools in journalistic work. The survey includes questions regarding the participants' professional profiles, the type of media outlet where they work, their professional experience, their organizational context, and the extent to which artificial intelligence tools are integrated into various journalistic tasks. It also incorporates Likert-type scales intended to operationalize the dimensions that structure the analytical model: intensity of use, perceived efficiency, editorial autonomy, human supervision, ethical risks, artificial intelligence literacy, cognitive load, and organizational context.

The target sample for this phase of the study consists of approximately 200 active journalists, with a balanced distribution between the two territorial contexts: around 100 participants in Andalusia and 100 in British Columbia. Participants are selected based on a prior mapping of the media ecosystem, using purposive sampling designed to ensure a diversity of professional profiles, media types, journalistic beats, career backgrounds, and areas of coverage. The study design excludes individuals whose primary activity falls outside of journalistic work, in order to maintain consistency between the scope of the analysis, the study’s objectives, and the professional routines being examined.

The second research instrument consists of a series of in-depth, semi-structured interviews with practicing journalists. These interviews allow for a detailed exploration of professional experiences regarding the use of generative artificial intelligence tools in journalistic work, and provide a deeper look into aspects that a survey can only capture in the aggregate. Such interviews are a widely used technique in qualitative research for analyzing perceptions, interpretations, and professional practices within specific organizational contexts (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015). In this study, the interviews focus on the integration of artificial intelligence tools into the journalistic workflow, transformations in professional routines, human oversight of generated content, ethical tensions, editorial autonomy, cognitive load, and journalists' perceptions regarding the future of their profession.

The interviews are conducted on an individual basis and last approximately 45 to 60 minutes. With the participants' consent, the conversations are recorded and subsequently transcribed for qualitative analysis. The qualitative analysis of these interviews may be supported by natural language processing tools to assist in the preliminary organization of thematic units, always under the interpretive supervision of the researchers. Previous experience in other areas of qualitative research has demonstrated the utility of these techniques for handling large textual corpora; however, their use requires human supervision, contextualization, and a critical review of the results obtained (Sancho Escrivá et al., 2020). The sample planned for this phase comprises approximately twenty interviews, distributed equally across both geographic contexts.

The third research instrument consists of a log documenting the use of artificial intelligence in journalistic routines. This technique allows for the systematic recording of how generative artificial intelligence tools are used in real-world work situations, reducing reliance on retrospective perceptions. Unlike surveys—which capture reported frequency and assessments—or interviews—which delve into experiences and interpretations—the log enables the documentation of specific uses, tasks performed, tools employed, time spent, perceived utility, satisfaction, and any issues encountered during a workday.

Each entry includes information regarding the journalistic task performed, the tool used, the approximate time dedicated to the activity, the perceived utility of the tool, and the level of satisfaction with the outcome. Additionally, an open-ended question is included to capture any problems encountered while using these technologies, such as errors in the generated information or difficulties in interpreting the context. The sample for this phase of the study consists of twenty journalists: ten in Spain (in Andalusia) and ten in Canada (in British Columbia).

To analytically integrate some of the information obtained through the questionnaire, this research proposes a composite indicator termed the Generative AI Impact Index in Journalism (IIGP). At this stage of the study, this index is not presented as an empirically validated measure, but rather as a proposed operationalization intended for future applications. This methodological approach aligns with recent proposals that emphasize the need to connect theoretical constructs, analytical dimensions, observable indicators, and validation procedures to study the impact of generative artificial intelligence on specific journalistic routines (Cristòfol, 2026). Its purpose is to synthesize—in a transparent and replicable manner—various dimensions of the potential impact of generative artificial intelligence on professional journalistic routines.

The IIGP is structured around eight analytical dimensions: intensity of use, perceived efficiency, editorial autonomy, human oversight, ethical risk, artificial intelligence literacy, cognitive load, and organizational context. Expanding from six to eight dimensions addresses the need to distinguish between aspects that, while related, should not be conflated analytically. Specifically, a distinction is made between editorial autonomy and human supervision; between productive efficiency and cognitive load; and between general digital competencies and specific artificial intelligence literacy.

Each dimension is operationalized through questionnaire items measured on five-point Likert-type scales. Given the ordinal nature of these responses, the analysis will be conducted in a manner that respects the data's level of measurement. Consequently, the scores will not be interpreted as ratio-scale measurements, nor will it be assumed that the distance between consecutive categories is necessarily equivalent. To describe each item and dimension, frequency distributions, percentages, medians, and interquartile ranges will be used—complemented, where appropriate, by statistical techniques suitable for ordinal data.

In this phase, the IIGP is conceived as a multidimensional operationalization framework rather than as a composite score derived from the simple sum or direct average of ordinal responses. The eight dimensions—intensity of use, perceived efficiency, editorial autonomy, human oversight, ethical risk, artificial intelligence literacy, cognitive load, and organizational context—will initially be examined separately. Any future development of a composite score would require prior empirical validation of the instrument's dimensional structure, as well as the application of statistical procedures compatible with the ordinal nature of the data.

In future empirical applications, the internal consistency of each dimension should be assessed using estimators suitable for ordinal items and, where appropriate, reliability coefficients based on polychoric correlations. Furthermore, the internal structure of the index may be examined through exploratory or confirmatory factor analysis, depending on the sample size and the distribution of the data. In comparative studies between Andalusia and British Columbia, it is advisable to test for measurement invariance to ensure that the dimensions of the index can be interpreted equivalently in both contexts.

Tabla 1.

Definition of the Proposed Dimensions in the Model

Dimension	Operational Definition	Sample Questionnaire Items	Criteria for Interpretation and Analysis
Intensity of use	Frequency and diversity of use of generative AI tools in journalistic tasks.	3.3; 5.1-5.8	Higher categories indicate a greater reported frequency and diversity of AI use. Their interpretation should respect the ordinal nature of the responses.
Perceived efficiency	Perceived improvements in speed, productivity, documentation, and task management.	6.1-6.5	Higher categories indicate a greater reported perception of efficiency, without assuming equivalent intervals between the response categories.

Editorial autonomy	Perceived professional control over editorial decisions and final content.	7.1; 7.2; 7.4; 7.5	Items 7.1, 7.2, and 7.4 require a nuanced interpretation, as a higher perceived influence of AI does not necessarily equate to lower editorial autonomy. These items should not be automatically aggregated without prior validation of their dimensional structure.
Human supervision	Degree of review, verification, and editorial supervision applied to AI-generated results.	7.3; posibles nuevos ítems sobre revisión, verificación y protocolos	It would be appropriate to move item 7.3—currently placed under "autonomy"—to this section.
Ethical risk	Perceived errors, biases, transparency issues, and effects on credibility.	8.1-8.5	Higher categories indicate a greater reported perception of ethical risk, while maintaining an ordinal interpretation of the responses.
AI literacy	Self-perception of critical thinking skills and training to use, evaluate, and manage AI tools.	9.1; 9.2; 9.4; 9.5	Item 9.3 should be treated with caution or as a standalone item, as expressing a need for improvement may reflect critical awareness.
Cognitive load and well-being	Perceptions of pressure, stress, additional effort, complexity, and support in day-to-day work.	10.1-10.5	Positive items related to facilitation and negative items related to burden or pressure should be analyzed separately; they should not be automatically combined into a single score.
Organizational context	Existence of internal policies, training, defined criteria, ethical debate, and organizational pressure.	2.7; 2.8; 11.1-11.4	This allows for linking individual uses with environmental conditions.

Fuente: Elaborated by the authors.

Table 1 is operational in nature and will need to be adjusted following a pilot test of the questionnaire. This test will allow for the review of item clarity, the detection of redundancies, the assessment of the internal consistency of the dimensions, and an evaluation of whether the proposed theoretical structure aligns with the observed empirical structure. In this sense, the IIGP should be understood as a multidimensional framework currently in the design phase. The potential subsequent construction of a composite score will depend on the empirical validation of the dimensions and the application of procedures compatible with the ordinal nature of the data.

The development of the IIGP will follow a progressive validation strategy. In the first phase, the eight dimensions will be analyzed separately, respecting the ordinal nature of the items that comprise them. The possible construction of a composite score will only be considered after empirically verifying the internal coherence of the dimensions, their factor structure, and the appropriateness of the aggregation procedures. This

precaution is necessary to avoid simplified or misleading interpretations that might arise from treating ordinal responses as if they were continuous or ratio-scale measurements.

Data integration will be carried out using a correspondence matrix linking objectives, instruments, and analytical dimensions, as presented in Table 2. This matrix makes it possible to explicitly state what each technique contributes to the analysis, how results are cross-referenced, and how any convergences or divergences between quantitative and qualitative data will be interpreted.

Tabla 2.

Correspondence Matrix

Analytical Dimension	Survey	Interviews	Usage Log
Intensity of Use	Reported frequency and tasks	Contextualization of practices	Daily record of specific uses
Perceived Efficiency	Productivity and time-saving scales	Experiences with changes in workflow	Time spent and perceived usefulness
Editorial Autonomy	Items regarding professional control and editorial decisions	Accounts of decision-making	Comments on human intervention
Human Supervision	Items regarding review and supervision of outcomes	Verification protocols, criteria, and experiences	Problems identified and corrections made
Ethical Risks	Scales concerning biases, errors, and transparency	Cases and dilemmas reported by journalists	Record of errors, biases, or problems
AI Literacy	Self-perception of competencies and training	Training needs and critical interpretation	Documented usability issues
Cognitive Load and Well-Being	Scales concerning pressure, stress, and complexity	Experiences with workload	Time, satisfaction, and usability issues
Organizational Context	Internal policies and the media outlet's approach	Professional culture and internal standards	Comments on usage conditions

Fuente: Elaborated by the authors.

3.3. Statement on the Use of Artificial Intelligence Tools

During the preparation of the manuscript, ChatGPT 5.5—developed by OpenAI—was used in a limited, auxiliary capacity during May and June 2026. The tool was employed exclusively for linguistic support, the refinement of academic phrasing, assistance with translating specific passages into English, and the organization of editorial feedback received during the preliminary review process.

The use of this tool played no role in defining the research problem, constructing the theoretical framework, designing the methodology, formulating the "Generative AI Impact Index in Journalism," selecting the bibliography, or developing the study's scientific conclusions. All conceptual, methodological, and argumentative decisions were made by the authors.

The authors manually reviewed, cross-checked, and verified the entire final content of the manuscript, including text refined with linguistic assistance, bibliographic references, methodological coherence, and the appropriateness of responses addressing editorial feedback. Consequently, the authors assume full responsibility for the final version of the text.

4. RESULTS: METHODOLOGICAL OUTPUTS OF THE DESIGN

The results section presents the methodological outputs derived from the proposed design, rather than empirical findings regarding the actual impact of generative artificial intelligence on journalistic routines. In line with the methodological nature of the article, the results consist of four main contributions: the definition of a convergent mixed-methods research architecture; the design of three complementary data collection instruments; the proposal of a Generative AI Impact Index in Journalism (IIGP); and the development of an integration matrix designed to link objectives, analytical dimensions, and instruments. This formulation helps define the scope of the study and prevents the results from being interpreted as empirical evidence already obtained.

The first methodological output is a questionnaire aimed at practicing journalists. The instrument is structured into sections designed to gather information on professional profiles, control variables, general use of generative artificial intelligence, specific tools employed, frequency of use across various tasks, perceived efficiency, editorial autonomy, human oversight, ethical risks, AI literacy, cognitive load, workplace well-being, and organizational context. This structure allows the survey to serve a dual purpose: first, to identify general patterns in the adoption and use of generative artificial intelligence within journalistic work; and second, to provide the items necessary for the initial development of the IIGP. Furthermore, the inclusion of a final open-ended question allows for the collection of participants' qualitative insights regarding perceived changes in journalistic work, which can then be cross-referenced with qualitative data obtained from interviews. The complete instrument is provided in Annex I.

The second methodological product is an interview guide for in-depth, semi-structured interviews. This instrument is designed to complement the survey by qualitatively exploring professional experiences, supervisory practices, ethical dilemmas, shifts in editorial autonomy, effects on cognitive load, and perceptions regarding the future of journalism. The guide is organized into thematic blocks that facilitate the reconstruction of a participant’s professional trajectory, the organizational context of the newsroom, specific uses of generative artificial intelligence, changes in workflows, forms of editorial control, and tensions related to professional identity. Within the convergent research design, its purpose is to provide interpretive depth to patterns identified through the survey, allowing for a comparison between aggregate perceptions and narrated experiences. The complete guide is provided in Annex 2.

The third methodological product is a log for tracking the use of generative artificial intelligence within journalistic routines. This instrument is intended to record specific interactions between journalists and AI tools in real-world work settings, thereby

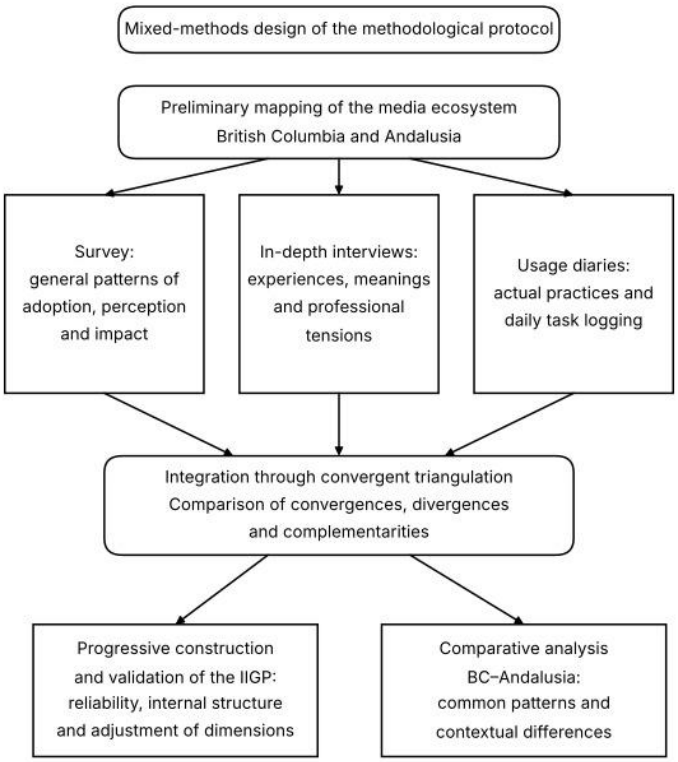
reducing reliance on retrospective accounts. Each entry documents the task performed, the tool employed, the approximate duration of use, perceived utility, level of satisfaction, and any issues encountered—such as incorrect information, biases, a lack of precision, or difficulties in understanding the context. In the proposed research design, this log serves a particularly significant function, as it enables a comparison between the uses reported in the survey and those actually recorded during the workday. The complete template is included in Annex 3.

The integration of these three instruments stands at the core of the proposed convergent mixed design. The survey allows for the identification of general patterns of use and perception; the interviews enable the interpretation of the professional meanings associated with these patterns; and the usage log facilitates the recording of concrete practices within the everyday work context. Integration, therefore, is not limited to a mere juxtaposition of techniques; rather, it relies on a systematic comparison of self-reported data, professional accounts, and activity records. This strategy makes it possible to identify convergences, complementarities, or divergences between what journalists claim to do, how they interpret their own experiences, and the specific uses they document during their professional practice.

The fourth methodological output is the proposed Generative AI Impact Index in Journalism (IIGP)—conceived at this stage as a multidimensional operational framework for future empirical applications, rather than as a pre-validated, composite score. Its structure incorporates eight analytical dimensions: intensity of use, perceived efficiency, editorial autonomy, human supervision, ethical risk, artificial intelligence literacy, cognitive load, and organizational context. These dimensions provide a systematic way to organize various professional, ethical, and organizational aspects related to the integration of generative artificial intelligence into journalistic routines. Its empirical application will require initially analyzing each dimension separately and then assessing its internal consistency, dimensional structure, and suitability for eventual integration into a composite measure. Figure 1 summarizes the conceptual architecture of the IIGP.

Figura 1.

Generative AI Impact Index in Journalism (IIGP)



Fuente: Elaborated by the authors.

Taken together, the methodological findings presented here offer an analytical framework for systematically studying the integration of generative artificial intelligence into the professional routines of journalism. The article's contribution lies in the articulation of instruments, dimensions, and indicators that can be applied, tested, and refined in future research. Including the complete instruments in the appendices enhances the transparency of the research design and facilitates its replicability in other media contexts.

5. DISCUSSION

The increasing adoption of generative artificial intelligence tools within the field of journalism presents new analytical challenges for communication research. Although the number of studies examining the relationship between artificial intelligence and news production has grown in recent years, a significant portion of the existing literature still relies on conceptual approaches, case studies, or analyses based primarily on the perceptions of professionals. In this context, this research offers a methodological contribution aimed at systematically studying the integration of generative artificial intelligence into professional journalistic routines by combining quantitative and qualitative techniques.

The primary contribution of this article lies in the development of a convergent mixed-methods research design based on three complementary instruments: a survey, semi-

structured interviews, and a usage log. This combination allows for the observation of the phenomenon from three distinct perspectives: the self-reported perceptions of journalists, the qualitative interpretation of their professional experiences, and the documentation of specific usage practices within everyday work environments. In this way, the proposed model helps overcome certain limitations of previous studies that relied on a single research technique by establishing an explicit strategy for integrating declarative, narrative, and observational data.

A second key element of the study's contribution is the proposal of the Generative AI Impact Index in Journalism (IIGP) — a multidimensional framework for operationalizing future empirical research. The model incorporates eight analytical dimensions: intensity of use, perceived efficiency, editorial autonomy, human supervision, ethical risk, artificial intelligence literacy, cognitive load, and organizational context. These dimensions make it possible to distinguish between the professional, ethical, and organizational aspects of integrating these technologies. Unlike an aggregate score derived directly from ordinal responses, this approach advocates for an initial, separate analysis of each dimension. This decision addresses the need to preserve the measurement level of the items and to ensure that the numerical transformation of the response categories does not, as such, imply that the intervals between them are equivalent.

The potential utility of the IIGP lies, therefore, in providing a common framework for organizing dimensions that otherwise appear scattered throughout the literature on artificial intelligence and journalism. Its primary value at this stage does not lie in generating a single, unified score, but rather in establishing an explicit correspondence between theoretical constructs, observable items, and data collection instruments. Future applications should empirically test the consistency of each dimension, review the appropriateness and orientation of the items, analyze their internal structure, and assess whether there is sufficient evidence to justify any subsequent integration procedure. In comparative studies, it will also be necessary to examine whether these dimensions maintain an equivalent meaning across different media contexts.

This methodological caution is particularly relevant in a field where a significant portion of research has relied on professional perceptions, case studies, or exploratory approaches. The proposed design seeks to address these limitations—not by prematurely producing a synthetic measure, but by triangulating three sources of evidence: structured questionnaire responses, experiences reconstructed through interviews, and specific practices recorded in a usage log. Consequently, any discrepancy—for instance, between a self-reported assessment of efficiency, a journalist's qualitative account, and the time spent or problems encountered while using a tool—would not necessarily be viewed as a measurement error. Instead, it would be considered an analytically significant finding, one that sheds light on the complexity of integrating artificial intelligence into professional routines.

As with any methodological proposal, the model has limitations that should be considered in future applications. First, the design focuses on active journalists involved in news production; therefore, it does not include other profiles within strategic, institutional, or corporate communication. This scope reinforces the

coherence of the analytical universe, though it limits the model's applicability to other professional communication fields. Second, comparing Andalusia and British Columbia requires careful attention to the structural differences between the two media ecosystems. Third, the rapid evolution of generative artificial intelligence tools means that the proposed instruments must be periodically reviewed to incorporate new practices, tools, and emerging risks.

6. CONCLUSIONS

This article proposes a mixed-methods design for analyzing the integration of generative artificial intelligence into professional journalistic routines. Its primary contribution lies not in presenting empirical results regarding the adoption levels of these technologies, but in formulating a replicable methodological architecture that combines surveys, semi-structured interviews, and usage logs.

Regarding the first specific objective, the study defines a convergent mixed-methods strategy that allows for the analysis of generative artificial intelligence integration across three complementary levels: stated professional perceptions, work experiences as interpreted by journalists, and specific usage practices recorded in real-world work settings. The integration of these three sources represents one of the design's key contributions, as it enables the triangulation of declarative, narrative, and observational data within a single analytical framework.

In relation to the second specific objective, three data collection instruments are proposed, aimed at examining professional, ethical, and organizational dimensions associated with the use of generative artificial intelligence. The questionnaire captures patterns of use and perception; the interviews delve into experiences, editorial decisions, and professional dilemmas; and the usage log records specific practices within the everyday work context. The alignment between these instruments and the dimensions facilitates an explicit triangulation of the information obtained.

Regarding the third specific objective, the article presents an initial operationalization of the Generative AI Impact Index in Journalism (IIGP), structured into eight dimensions: intensity of use, perceived efficiency, editorial autonomy, human supervision, ethical risk, artificial intelligence literacy, cognitive load, and organizational context. At this stage, the IIGP should be understood as a multidimensional framework under development, rather than a validated composite score. Its future application will require empirical verification of the consistency of these dimensions, their internal structure, and the appropriateness of any integration procedures, while respecting the ordinal nature of the questionnaire items.

Overall, the proposal offers a methodological foundation for further research on generative artificial intelligence and journalism, particularly for comparative studies across different media contexts. Its primary value lies in making explicit the connection between objectives, analytical dimensions, and research instruments, while also defining the conditions necessary for future empirical validation. However, the evolving nature of the technologies under analysis necessitates periodic revisions of the proposed instruments and categories to ensure they remain relevant to new professional practices, tools, and emerging risks.

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