



Authorship and Collaboration Guidelines in Journalism Research: A Gender Analysis of the Most Cited Publications

Pautas de autoría y colaboración en las investigaciones en periodismo. Análisis de género de las publicaciones más citadas




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Abstract:

This study analyzes gender dynamics in the authorship of high-impact journalism research, based on 200 articles from Scopus-indexed journals published between 2013 and 2023. To conduct the analysis, gender classification algorithms were used, complemented by manual verification based on textual self-expression. The results reveal a male predominance, with 65% of publications authored by men, who predominantly occupy the first and last positions of authorship. Collaborations exclusively among men and mixed collaborations (men and women) are more common, while collaborations solely among women are less frequent. The topics covered primarily focus on innovations and economic and technological changes in journalism, as well as its relationship with political communication. There is a notable scarcity of publications addressing gender inclusion and diversity. No significant differences were identified in topic selection based on the authors' gender.

Keywords:

Journalism; Scientific Production; Authorship Gender; Gender Gap; Scopus.

Resumen:

Este estudio analiza las dinámicas de género en las autorías de las investigaciones de más impacto en periodismo, basándose en 200 artículos de revistas indexadas en Scopus, publicados entre 2013 y 2023. Para el análisis, se utilizan algoritmos de clasificación de género, complementados con una verificación manual basada en la autoexpresión textual. Los resultados muestran una predominancia masculina, con un 65% de publicaciones firmadas por hombres, que ocupan mayoritariamente las primeras y últimas posiciones de autoría. Predominan las colaboraciones exclusivamente entre hombres y las colaboraciones mixtas (hombres y mujeres), mientras que las colaboraciones únicamente entre mujeres son minoritarias. En cuanto a las temáticas abordadas, se centran en las innovaciones y cambios económicos y tecnológicos en el periodismo, así como en su relación con la comunicación política. Se observa una escasez de publicaciones sobre inclusión de género y diversidad. No se identifican diferencias significativas en la selección de temáticas según el género de la autoría.

Palabras clave:

Periodismo; Producción científica; Género de las autorías; Brecha de género; Scopus.

1. Introduction

The reduction of the gender gap is a priority in the field of research and science. For this reason, the European Union has launched, within the Horizon Europe Programme, the *Horizon Europe guidance on gender equality plans* (European Commission, 2021), which helps organizations meet the eligibility criterion of having a Gender Equality Plan for research. This initiative highlights the importance of sex and gender analysis in promoting equality within the new European Research Area. In addition, the European Commission's triennial reports *She Figures* (2021, 2018, 2015, 2012) underscore the need to monitor progress toward equity.

In parallel with these initiatives, various actions have been implemented to improve education and gender equality in communication and journalism, most notably the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing (United Nations, 1995). This conference emphasized the importance of women's participation in decision-making environments and in the media. Other projects, such as the UNESCO-UNITWIN Network on Gender, Media and ICTs (García-Ramos *et al.*, 2020), seek to reduce the gender gap in the field of journalism research and to train students and researchers in this area from a gender perspective.

Despite these advances in the study of gender inequality within communication research (Feeley & Yang, 2021; Rajkó *et al.*, 2023; Freelon *et al.*, 2023), it has been observed that there are still few academic studies that analyze this gap specifically in the field of journalism. Therefore, this study aims to analyze gender dynamics in the authorship of the most influential publications in journalism between 2013 and 2023, using the Scopus academic database. In particular, it focuses on gender-based collaboration dynamics among the authors of these publications, while also analyzing the thematic areas addressed in these academic articles.

The following objectives have been defined, along with their corresponding research questions:

O.1 To analyze the gender of authorship of the most cited scientific publications in the field of journalism indexed in Scopus. Research questions for this objective:

- What is the overall distribution of authorship by gender in the publications analyzed?
- How does the position of co-authorship vary according to the gender of the authors?
- What gender-based collaboration patterns occur among authors?

O.2 To examine the topics addressed and their possible relationship with the gender of the authorship. Research questions for this objective:

- What are the most recurring topics in the analyzed articles based on the keywords?
- Is there a relationship between the gender of the authorship and the choice of topics?
- In the following section, the existing literature is reviewed with an emphasis on gender inequality in academic production, paying special attention to this gap in the field of communication and journalism. Next, the methodology and the tool used to identify the gender of the authorship of the publications are described. Then, the results are presented, followed by a discussion of the obtained data. Finally, the conclusions, limitations, and directions for future research are outlined.

2. Theoretical Framework

2.1. *The Gender Gap in Science*

In recent years, various initiatives have been adopted to reduce the gender gap. Among them, Resolution 70/212 (United Nations, 2016), which promotes the International Day of Women and Girls in Science, stands out. This resolution seeks to address the exclusion of women from science and the so-called “Matilda Effect,” named in honor of the American suffragist

and feminist critic Matilda J. Gage, who at the end of the 19th century observed this phenomenon whereby the work of women scientists has historically been overlooked (Rossiter, 1993; Lincoln *et al.*, 2012).

This gender inequality persists, as evidenced by the underrepresentation of women in prestigious programs, in research group leadership positions (Rodríguez-Baiget *et al.*, 2024), and in decision-making roles (Azizi *et al.*, 2021; Fauzi *et al.*, 2024), in a context where research evaluation bodies have also demonstrated gender biases (Foss & Olsen, 2023; Bustelo & Salido, 2024; James *et al.*, 2024).

Among these biases, studies have shown that certain stereotypes and prejudices tend to associate high-level intellectual ability more frequently with men than with women (Bian *et al.*, 2017; Nyul *et al.*, 2024). Furthermore, academic dynamics have often failed to prioritize work-life balance, which can make it more difficult for women with caregiving responsibilities to maintain the same level of academic productivity (Ahmad, 2017; Gallardo, 2020; Pecis & Touboulic, 2024). In addition, the lack of effective measures and bias against research promoting equal opportunities among researchers have created additional barriers to inclusion (Cislak *et al.*, 2018).

This lack of interest in addressing inequalities leads to a loss in knowledge production and innovative discoveries, as equal opportunities are not offered to those who are capable and qualified (Joshi, 2014). The *She Figures* report (European Commission, 2021) indicates that in Europe, women occupy only 26% of senior positions in the university sector. Furthermore, according to UNESCO data (2021), women represent only 33.3% of researchers worldwide. This figure is linked to the phenomenon of the “sticky floor” (Dahlvig *et al.*, 2024), which describes how many women remain stuck in precarious jobs with limited career prospects. The situation worsens when considering intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1989), as multiple forms of discrimination – such as gender, class or race– reinforce these inequalities, particularly benefiting cisgender men from the Global North.

The data show that women researchers still face obstacles in advancing in prestigious careers and have less access to collaboration networks and leadership roles (Segovia-Saiz *et al.*, 2019). The subtle limitation of women’s career advancement within organizations has been termed the “glass ceiling” or “leaky pipeline,” a phenomenon that highlights how gender disadvantages become more pronounced as a woman attempts to move up the hierarchy (Cotter *et al.*, 2001; Dahlvig *et al.*, 2024). For all these reasons, and considering that perceptions of the gender gap vary according to fields of specialization (García-González *et al.*, 2019), it is necessary to continue providing data on the roles and positions that women researchers occupy across different areas and research topics today.

2.2. *The Gender Gap in Academic Production and Citation*

When evaluating the roles that women researchers occupy and the development of their careers, several factors that have traditionally been used to measure academic authority and recognition are typically considered –primarily, the number of published articles and the citations those articles receive (academic citation). Various investigations on the gender gap in science have highlighted an imbalance in the number of articles produced by men and women (Hagemann, 2022; Castonguay, 2023) by studying these indicators. This imbalance is more pronounced in those articles that receive more citations, and in the first authorships (Bendels *et al.*, 2018; Chary *et al.*, 2021). On the other hand, some studies indicate that performance in terms of publications is comparable between men and women, suggesting that these similarities are not sufficient to justify the

observed inequalities in attaining academic ranks (Frandsen *et al.*, 2020). It has also been noted that, in any case, the gender gap in academic authorship is complex and varies depending on the region, field of study, and level in the academic career (Chan & Torgler, 2020; Demeter & Toth, 2020).

Studies examining the number of citations that publications receive are more consistent and show a more evident gender inequality. These investigations indicate that some male authors have self-citation rates much higher than would be expected (Ghiasi *et al.*, 2018). In addition, male authors tend to collaborate primarily with other men, creating networks in which they cite each other (Broderick & Casadevall, 2019; Dinu, 2021). These male networks also facilitate hiring and promotion through so-called “old boy networks” (Friedmann, 2018), a term that has been used to describe informal collaboration networks in which men support each other, benefiting those who share the same educational background or academic or social circles. For these reasons, it is important not to focus solely on reviewing authorship and productivity but to thoroughly investigate the collaboration dynamics and relationships among authors across various disciplines, considering a gender perspective.

2.3. The Gender Gap in Publications in the Field of Journalism and Communication

Esparcia *et al.* (2012) found that, although the gender gap in academic production in communication and journalism was decreasing and the pace of publication was becoming more balanced, male authorship still predominated in academic articles in this field. An imbalance has also been noted in the number of citations that publications receive —this time more evident— between citations of men and women (Knobloch-Westerwick *et al.*, 2013; Goyanes *et al.*, 2024), as well as inequality in access to collaboration networks (Potthoff & Zimmermann, 2017; Feeley & Yang, 2021).

Other studies (Rajkó *et al.*, 2023; Song *et al.*, 2023) have delved into gender bias by analyzing data on academic performance in communication at an international level, noting that although articles by female academics are viewed more often, they are cited less than those of their male colleagues. Furthermore, these studies show that female academics have less influence on social networks due to their exclusion from influential networks and their limited use of social connections.

In line with these research trends, this article aims to explore the collaboration dynamics in the field of communication with an analysis based on the gender of the authorship of the 200 most cited publications in journalism between 2013 and 2023. The analysis of authorship and collaborations is complemented by a study of topics, to determine whether a correlation can be established between the gender of authors and the choice of topics and subfields of study.

Considering gender bias through a binary dichotomous division is currently a subject of debate and is widely questioned within academia. Beyond gender diversity, the relevance of continuing to rely on this model is challenged due to the impact that such a delimitation has on results (Westbrook & Saperstein, 2015; Magliozzi *et al.*, 2016; Lindqvist *et al.*, 2020). Aware of this issue, this research nevertheless recognizes the need to continue providing data that, while not disregarding the importance of a greater understanding of gender diversity, allow for awareness and action regarding the structural biases that facilitate men’s professional advancement over other identities. As Cook and Cusack (2011) point out, the presence of stereotypes, traditions, and legislation in most societies continues to reinforce these biases, despite corrective policies and actions implemented by institutions and states.

3. Methodology

The data were collected in early January 2024 using the Scopus academic database, due to its broader coverage of social science journals than Web of Science (Mongeon & Paul-Hus, 2015). The 200 most cited articles containing the keyword “Journalism” were selected in the title, abstract, or keywords to cover all forms of journalism.

Articles published between January 2013 and December 2023 were considered to allow for an adequate accumulation of citations because, in the social sciences, the dissemination and accumulation of citations tends to be slower than in other fields (Dorta-González & Gómez-Déniz, 2022). The sample of the most cited publications was selected because, although the number of citations is not a clear indicator of research quality, there is generally a positive relationship between the two (Thelwall *et al.*, 2023).

The indexing of all publications in journals ranked in the top quartiles was verified to ensure the relevance of the sample to correct for potential biases.

The 200 most cited publications out of 11,824 articles for this period represent the intellectual core of the field and allow the formation of a manageable and representative set with a sufficient number of citations, following previous studies with similar samples (Hernández-González *et al.*, 2022; Mavrovounis *et al.*, 2023).

Additionally, specific criteria were applied to ensure the relevance of the sample: only articles in the social sciences were included using Scopus’ “Subject Area” filter. Articles outside this field were excluded to focus the study on journalism as an academic discipline, which is typically classified within the social sciences (De Filippo & Sanz-Casado, 2018).

Publications that were not academic articles, such as book chapters, conference papers, and letters, were also excluded because Scopus specializes in indexing scientific journals. Additionally, recent studies indicate that the coverage of books and other formats is limited in this database (Pranckutė, 2021).

After obtaining the document set, the gender of the authorship of the 200 most cited scientific publications in the field of journalism was analyzed by extracting first names and surnames from the “authors” field. In order to assign the gender of each author based on the name field, the NamSor app V.2 tool was used (Namsor™ Applied Onomastics, NamSor SAS, Versailles, France). NamSor uses artificial intelligence to provide detailed information about the gender of a name, allowing the statistical determination, from a large dataset of 7.5 billion references, of whether a name is more likely to be male, female, or unknown (NamSor, 2024). This tool was selected because various comparative analyses of similar applications rank it among the best for gender classification, with an error rate below 5% (Santamaría & Mihaljević, 2018) and one of the lowest inaccuracy rates (Sebo, 2021).

It is important to note that a binary gender system (male/female) was used, which does not consider gender self-identification or the inclusion of non-binary categories which is a limitation of this research.

A manual search validated the results to reduce errors in the automatic gender assignment. Profiles on ResearchGate and Google Scholar were consulted, and the affiliated university webpages were reviewed, looking for textual self-expression evidence such as the use of pronouns. The comparison between the gender assignment performed by NamSor and the manual assignment based on textual self-expression evidence revealed n= 17 discrepancies between the two methodologies.

This represents a sample error proportion of 5.67% ($\hat{p} = 0.0567$). Considering this value, the sample size ($N = 300$), and a 95% confidence level, a confidence interval for the error proportion was calculated, indicating that the true error percentage is, with 95% certainty, between 3.06% and 8.28%. Therefore, the observed error proportion in the sample (5.67%) falls within this interval, which reinforces the validity of the analysis.

Among the 17 discrepant results of the name assignments, the manual identification revealed a greater presence of male authors compared to female authors, relative to the gender distribution provided by NamSor. Additionally, the geographic diversity of the names with non-matching results was assessed, showing that ten of them are of Asian origin, five are of European origin, and one is of African origin. Name and surname strings of Asian origin exhibited the highest number of divergent results.

Once the gender disambiguation of authorship was completed, the 200 publications were analyzed according to three dimensions:

1. Representation of Authorship by Gender.
2. Gender-Based Collaboration Dynamics.
3. Publication Topics and Their Possible Relationship with the Gender of Authorship.
4. The indicators defined for each dimension are presented below.

Dimension 1: Representation of Authorship by Gender

This dimension analyses the representation of authorship by binary gender, using the following indicators: total number of authorships (N), number of female authorships (n_2), and number of male authorships (n_1). To do this, the list of all authors was first extracted and their gender assigned. Then, each article was assigned the total number of authorships, specifying the number of female and male authorships and their positions (first author, intermediate authors, or last author).

Dimension 2: Gender-Based Collaboration Dynamics

The next step is to analyze gender-based collaboration patterns, that is, how authorship is structured in multi-author publications. Three types of collaborative patterns were considered: if the authorship includes only women (female), if it includes only men (male), and if at least one man and one woman collaborate (mixed).

Dimension 3: Topics and Characteristics of the Publications

A narrative synthesis of the 200 titles and abstracts was conducted, relating them to the gender and collaboration pattern of the authorship of each article in order to analyze their possible influence on topic selection. Subsequently, the most frequent keywords were grouped into three major thematic blocks. A total of 1,209 keywords were identified, of which 150 appeared more than once. Of these 150, those referring to methodologies or theoretical approaches, such as “discourse analysis,” were excluded in order to focus solely on thematic trends rather than on the tools or methods used in the research.

4. Results

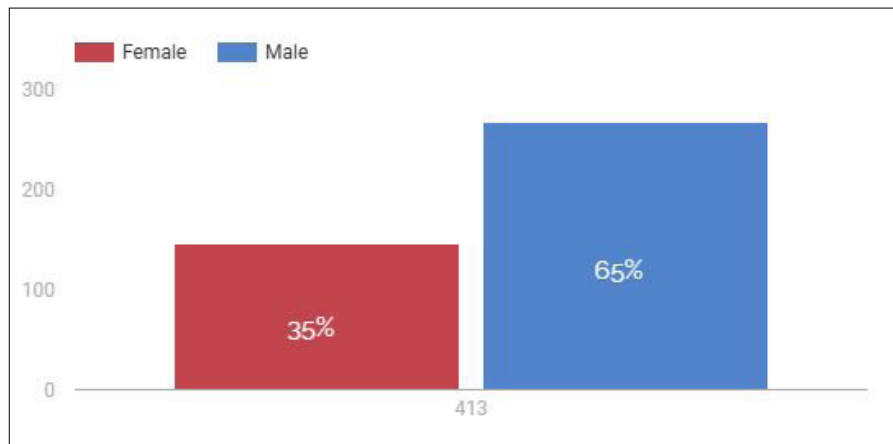
The results of the analysis of the 200 articles are presented below, according to the dimensions and indicators described in the Methodology section.

4.1. Representation of Authorship by Gender

The 200 articles in the sample account for a total of $N = 413$ authorships, with a mean of $X = 2.06$ authors per article. The standard deviation is $SD = 0.7$, indicating that most articles have between 1.3 and 2.7 authorships. However, the sample includes articles with up to 11 authorships as well as others with a single author. Figure 1 shows the gender distribution of the $N = 413$ authorships, with $n_1 = 267$ (65%) male authorships and $n_2 = 146$ (35%) female authorships. The ratio between female and male authorships indicates that there are 1.8 male authorships for every female authorship.

If we analyze the total number of distinct authors involved in the articles, a total of $N = 300$, the ratio decreases slightly to 1.5 male authorships per female authorship. Thus, of the $n = 300$ total authors, $n_1 = 179$ (60%) are men and $n_2 = 121$ (40%) are women (the data are presented without a figure, as they are considered sufficiently clear in the text; Figure 1 corresponds only to the overall distribution of the 413 authorships).

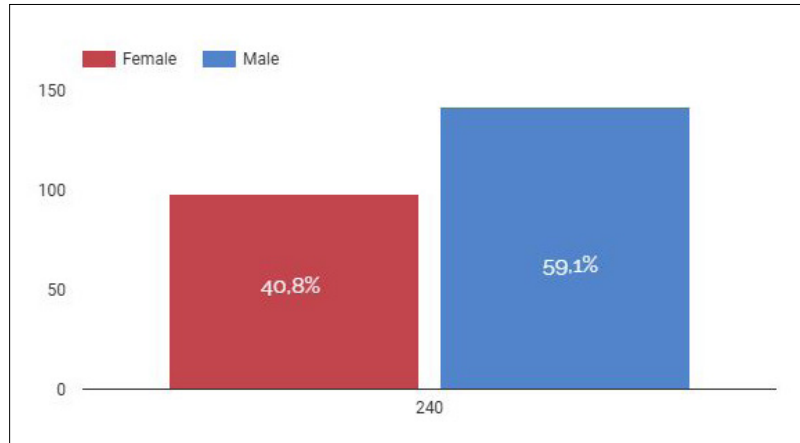
Figure 1. Distribution of Article Authorship by Gender ($n = 413$)



Source: Own elaboration

When examining in greater detail the gender distribution among authors who have published a single article (Figure 2), a total of $n = 240$ individuals are identified. Of these, $n_2 = 98$ (40.8%) are women and $n_1 = 142$ (59.1%) are men. The male-to-female ratio in this category is 1.5, indicating that single-publication authorship maintains a ratio similar to that observed previously.

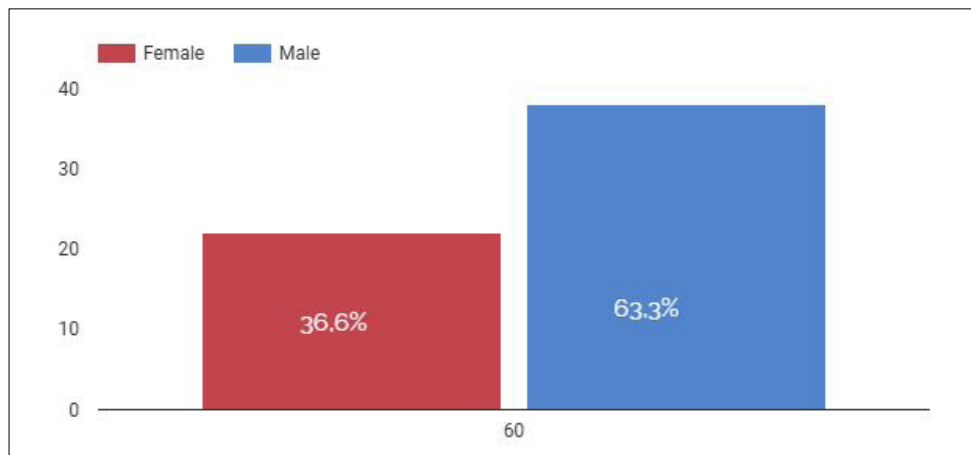
Figure 2. Authors with a Single Publication ($n = 240$)



Source: Own elaboration

The number of the $n = 300$ individuals who authored more than one article totalled $n = 60$. Figure 3 shows their distribution by gender: $n_2 = 22$ are women authors (36.6%) and $n_1 = 38$ are men authors (63.3%). This represents a ratio of 1.72 men publishing more than one article for every woman doing so, indicating a considerably higher proportion of men than women among authors who appear as signatories on more than one article.

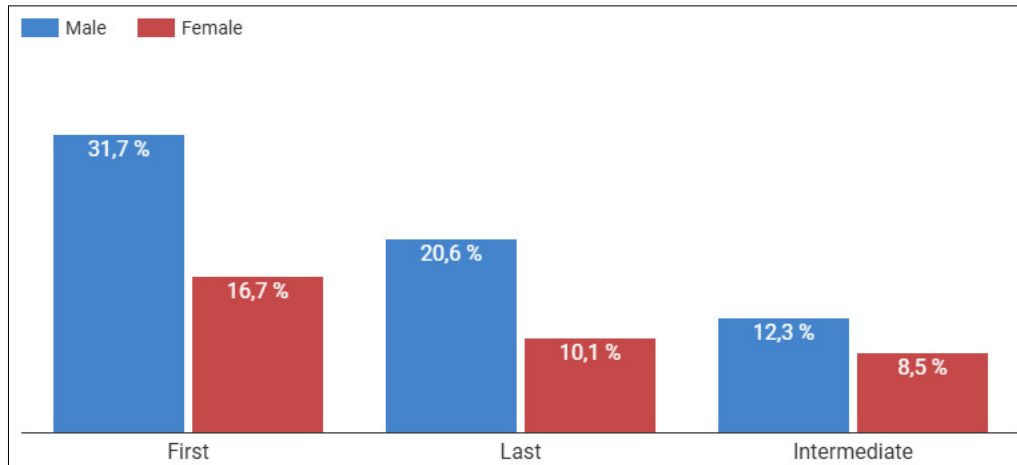
Figure 3. Authors with More Than One Publication (n= 60)



Source: Own elaboration

It is observed that as the number of publications increases –that is, as an author appears as a signatory of more than one article in the sample– authorship becomes increasingly masculinized. Thus, among authors with more than two articles, 66.6% are male authors (figures at this level are not included). If we examine authors who have signed more than five articles, they are exclusively men.

In the authorship positions established in the analyzed articles, the order of authorship is identified based on the gender variable.

Figure 4. Authorship Positions Held by Women and Men in Each Article ($n= 413$)

Source: Own elaboration

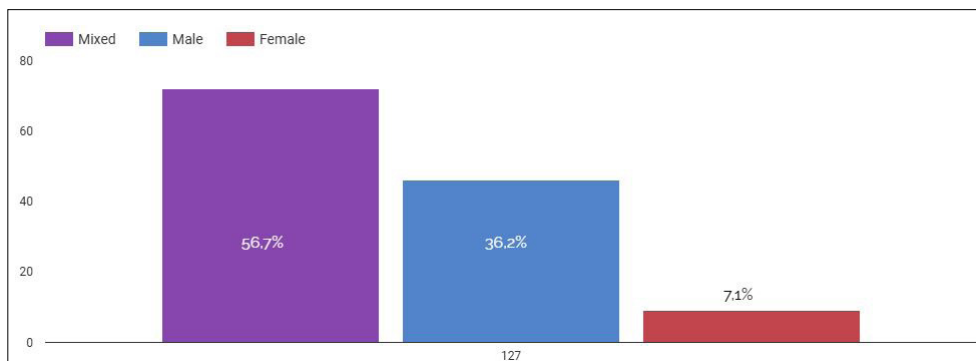
Figure 4 shows that $n_1= 131$ male authors appear as first authors, representing 31.7% of the total, in contrast to $n_2= 69$ female authors, who account for 16.7%. This indicates a ratio of nearly twice as many male as female authors in this position. In intermediate positions, a smaller difference is observed, with $n_1= 51$ male authors (12.3%) and $n_2= 35$ female authors (8.47%), corresponding to a percentage difference of only 3.83 points between male and female intermediate authorships. However, in last-author positions, the disparity becomes more pronounced again, with $n_1= 85$ male authors (20.58%) and $n_2= 42$ female authors (10.1%), representing a percentage difference of 10.48 points between men and women.

4.2. Gender-Based Collaboration Dynamics

The data presented so far summarize the representation and positions of authorships based on gender. This information can be complemented by identifying collaboration patterns among researchers of different genders in the publication of the articles. Prior to this analysis, it should be noted that, of the $N= 200$ articles analyzed, a total of $n= 127$ articles –i.e., 63.5% of the sample– were developed as multi-author collaborations.

Figure 5 analyzes the percentage of the three types of gender-based collaboration in these publications.

Figure 5. Collaboration Patterns in Multi-Author Articles (N= 127)



Source: Own elaboration

It is observed that $n = 72$ publications (56.7%) were mixed collaborations, involving authorships of both genders; $n = 46$ publications (36.2%) were developed by male authors only (male collaboration pattern); and only $n = 9$ publications (7.1%) were collaborations exclusively among female authors (female collaboration pattern).

A disparity in the positions held by men and women can again be identified in the composition of the mixed collaborations.

Of the total publications in this category (72), in the first-author positions, $n_1 = 42$ of the authorships are male (55.5%), while $n_2 = 32$ are female (44.4%), indicating a gender gap of nearly 10 percentage points. This discrepancy is repeated in the last-author positions, where $n_1 = 39$ (54.1%) are male authors compared to $n_2 = 33$ (45.8%) female authors, again showing a difference of almost 10 percentage points (no figure is presented at this level). These data suggest a systematic trend in the gender distribution of authorship positions, with men occupying a higher proportion in both first and last positions.

4.3. Research Topics and Characteristics

The results of the second research objective, which aims to analyze the topics and their possible relationship with the gender of authorship, are presented below.

To identify the topics, the keywords, titles, and abstracts of the 200 articles were reviewed, as explained in the corresponding section of the Methodology. The keywords were grouped into three major thematic blocks, which are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. Thematic Blocks and Keywords of the Articles

Thematic Block	Keywords
1. Technological and Economic Transformation	Social media, computational journalism, Twitter, data journalism, digital journalism, automated journalism, algorithms, technology, robot journalism, online news, big data, innovation, algorithm journalism, platforms, computing assisted reporting, Facebook, data, virtual reality, automation, immersive journalism, media economics, natural language generation, authority, software development, platforms, online journalism, innovation journalism, Youtube, mobile journalism
2. Audience Transformation	Audience, engagement, emotion, metrics, user comments, branding, analytics, user generated content, web analytics, news perception, interactivity, counter publics, native advertising, web metrics, reciprocity, personal branding
3. Ideological Transformation and Critical Perspective	Political communication, fake news, objectivity, misinformation, participatory journalism, transparency, democracy, fact-checking, gatekeeping, journalism ethics, journalistic roles, verification, credibility, disinformation, hackers, citizen journalism, role conception, public sphere, news values, investigative journalism, open source, norms and routines, social movements, populism, verification, hackers, politic news, professionalism, cultural capital, ethics, expertise, climate change, science journalism, institutions accuracy, trust, professional ideology, professional norms, partisanship, power, gender, online harassment, professional ideology, sensationalism

Source: Own elaboration

From the analysis of the publications, it is observed that in recent years, the transformations journalism has undergone to adapt to the new media environment are being addressed. Topics explored include the impact of the platform economy, interaction with increasingly fragmented audiences, the evolution of the journalistic profession, and the ethical and critical perspectives on these changes. Additionally, a notable portion of these articles focuses on how these transformations influence political communication.

Furthermore, the gender of individual authorships (female or male) and collaboration patterns (female, male, and mixed) were analyzed in relation to the topics, with no observable relationship found between the gender variable and the choice of research topics. In short, no substantial difference between women and men could be verified regarding the topics addressed. On the other hand, topics related to gender and diversity inclusion have a very limited presence in the analyzed sample, with only three articles explicitly addressing these issues. This scarcity contrasts with the predominance of research focused

on political power, misinformation, and the influence of large technology corporations—areas traditionally associated with power dynamics linked to masculinity.

5. Discussion

In recent years, growing inequities in academia have been observed, characterized by hyperproductivity, extreme competition, and the increasing precarization of research staff within a neoliberal context (Jones & Floyd, 2023; Lombardo *et al.*, 2024). This system evaluates academic career progression through quantitative indices of productivity and citation, which, according to various studies (Alcalde-González & Belli, 2024; Johansson *et al.*, 2024), can lead to situations of inequality that disproportionately affect women. Historically, women have been made invisible in academia (Rossiter, 1993; Lincoln *et al.*, 2012) and continue to face multiple structural barriers limiting their advancement (Ahmad, 2017; Gallardo, 2020; Pecis & Touboulic, 2024). These barriers are reflected in the lower presence of women in prestigious academic programs, scientific leadership positions (Rodríguez-Baiget *et al.*, 2024), and decision-making spaces (Azizi *et al.*, 2021; Fauzi *et al.*, 2024), within an evaluative system with persistent gender biases (Foss & Olsen, 2023; Bustelo & Salido, 2024; James *et al.*, 2024). Stereotypes associating high intellectual capacity with men (Bian *et al.*, 2017; Nyul *et al.*, 2024) and the limited institutional attention to work-life balance further disproportionately affect women.

The research presented here reveals that authorships in the most cited academic publications in journalism remain inequitable, with a male overrepresentation in the distribution of the sample. Furthermore, it was observed that in the selected sample, as the number of publications by an author increases—that is, when an author appears as a signatory on more than one article—the male presence in authorships also increases.

These findings are consistent with previous studies (Bendels *et al.*, 2018; Chary *et al.*, 2021; Wang *et al.*, 2021), which indicate that gender inequality in authorship is particularly evident in highly competitive articles, those with the highest citation counts, and is accentuated when women are first authors.

These conclusions also align with the results of this study, which confirm that in the most cited publications in journalism, men predominantly occupy the first and last authorship positions. This is significant because authorship position is considered a measure of research staff productivity, with the first and last positions being the most relevant. The first author is the most visible, while the last author is generally assigned to the “senior” author or the group leader (Bendels *et al.*, 2018; Albarracín *et al.*, 2020).

Regarding gender-based collaboration dynamics, it is observed that researchers of the highest-impact journalism publications follow different patterns depending on gender. This aligns with previous research (Broderick & Casadevall, 2019; Bosco *et al.*, 2023) indicating that women researchers tend to work more in mixed-gender teams, whereas men tend to collaborate primarily with other men. These dynamics occur in a context where, although women’s work receives more views, it is less cited and less visible in academic networks due to their lower participation in collaborative structures (Rajkó *et al.*, 2023; Song *et al.*, 2023). Additionally, some male authors exhibit higher than expected self-citation rates (Ghiasi *et al.*, 2018), and collaboration among men tends to be preferential, generating closed citation networks (Broderick & Casadevall, 2019; Dinu, 2021). Regarding the topics addressed in the most cited journalism publications, no significant differences were observed in research topic

selection based on the gender of authorship. Both men and women publish on economic and technological changes driven by major digital giants and their impact on political communication. Topics include the influence of algorithms (Diakopoulos, 2014; Bailo *et al.*, 2021; Reuning *et al.*, 2022), audience fragmentation and the emergence of new forms of audience interaction (Fletcher & Nielsen, 2017), the impact of fake news on the political and media ecosystem (Waisbord, 2018), and the ongoing transformation of the profession (Deuze & Witschge, 2017).

This may be related to the publication period, as 2018 is identified as the year with the most articles published in the selected sample. This period is linked to two political and social events that significantly impacted the communication field: Donald Trump's rise to power and the 2016 Brexit referendum. Both events generated a large number of articles addressing misinformation in political communication and electoral processes (Bennett & Livingston, 2018). Another notable event that year was Facebook's algorithm changes, prioritizing content shared by friends and family over that of media organizations. This affected the influence of the 'platformization' of journalism and highlighted the dependence of traditional media on these platforms' algorithms (Nieborg & Poell, 2018). Newsrooms had to adapt their content and distribution strategies, marking a period when relying on social media for news dissemination became more complex and costly.

Finally, there is limited attention to gender and diversity inclusion, likely because these topics are not always considered priorities compared to other areas of study. This situation, along with the lack of effective measures and existing bias against research promoting equal opportunities among researchers, has created additional barriers to gender equity (Cislak *et al.*, 2018).

6. Conclusions

This research analyzed publication dynamics and collaboration patterns based on gender among authors in the most influential journalism articles published between 2013 and 2023. The results expand on previous studies of gender inequalities in leading scientific publications within this field. Additionally, after identifying the topics of the articles it explored whether any relationship exists between the gender of authors and the selection of topics in each publication.

Next, we reflect on the objectives set for this research to assess the degree to which they were met: Regarding Objective 1, focused on authorship gender, the results indicate an imbalance in the authorship of the most cited journalism articles, with 60% of authors being men, representing 65% of all authorships. Concerning authorship positions, men occupy the first author position in 65.5% of publications—almost double that of women (35.5%). Although the difference is smaller in intermediate positions, it increases again in the last-author positions.

Regarding author collaboration dynamics, mixed-gender authorships, involving both men and women, predominate, representing 56.7% of the sample. Exclusively male collaborations, with only men participating, constitute 36.2%, while exclusively female collaborations account for only 7.1%. These data indicate that men tend to collaborate primarily with other men, whereas women participate more in mixed-gender teams.

Concerning Objective 2, which analyzes article topics, 2018 stands out as the year with the highest number of most-cited articles. The discussion section has already addressed possible reasons for this surge in articles and citations, which not

only marked a turning point but have continued to serve as a crucial reference in journalism studies over time. No gender differences were observed in the topics addressed. Male and female researchers both investigate the impact of technological and economic transformation on journalism and political communication, addressing phenomena such as the platform economy, misinformation, computational journalism, and process automation. On the other hand, only three of the 200 analyzed publications included keywords related to gender analysis or diversity inclusion.

These results align with previous findings showing the lack of balanced representation of women in authorships in communication and journalism, especially among the most cited authorships and publications. Furthermore, the gender gap is greater when considering collaboration dynamics between men and women, with men collaborating more with other men, while women tend to work in mixed-gender groups.

Additionally, there is a noticeable lack of publications focused on gender inclusion and diversity, in contrast to the prevalence of studies centered on topics such as political power, misinformation, and the influence of large technology companies.

Overall, the study highlights the importance of adopting new perspectives to address structural inequalities in journalism. Some practices that are focused on the field of journalism and communication could be applied to reduce the gender gap in academic publications across any discipline:

Promote research in communication and journalism from a gender perspective, taking into account the historical inequality in access to opportunities between men and women.

Collect and publish reliable, gender-disaggregated information on the participation of men, women, and people with diverse gender identities in research teams, especially in the field of journalism and communication studies. This data should be publicly accessible, easy to visualize, and regularly updated.

Encourage the development of assessments and publications that address the situation of women and the persistence of the gender gap in the field of journalism and communication, based on research projects and groups.

Contribute to making the work of women researchers visible by including full names in bibliographic references; in particular, international citation styles that display full names rather than initials should be promoted.

Promote parity in research teams, both in terms of gender and professional categories, through concrete measures (scholarships, research projects, etc.), encouraging the participation of women and young people with diverse gender identities in science, supporting women in leadership roles within teams and research projects, and fostering the creation of networks and collaborative spaces among women researchers.

Encourage the inclusion of gender studies experts in research projects and groups, as well as on editorial boards, advisory committees, and scientific committees of academic journals.

Eliminate any gender bias present in scientific materials and communications, as well as in management documents.

Promote the creation, where appropriate, and dissemination of protocols among research communities (universities and research teams) that facilitate the use of inclusive language in reports and articles produced by the teams.

7. Limitations and Future Research

It is important to note that a binary gender system (male/female) was used, which does not consider gender self-identification or the inclusion of non-binary categories which is a limitation of this research. This approach does not capture the existing gender diversity, as it relies on statistical criteria to assign the gender of authors. Additionally, the margin of error associated with such tools must be taken into account. In this study, a manual verification detected a 5.67% error rate, primarily concentrated in the disambiguation of names of Asian origin.

Future research could explore the practices and perceptions of women authors to better understand the gaps observed in the sample, as well as implement gender self-identification surveys for a more precise, non-binary, and inclusive categorization.

Additionally, the frequency of women’s publications in journals of different impact levels could be analyzed. It would also be relevant to study the influence of the authors’ country of affiliation, publication costs, and open access on gendered authorship. Furthermore, it would be useful to compare these results with random samples or less-cited publications to assess potential differences in gender authorship patterns.

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9. Contributions

	Name and surname
Conception and design of the work	Anna Ventura-Cisquella, Mari Vallez
Methodology	Anna Ventura-Cisquella, Mari Vallez, Pere Freixa y Llus Codina
Data collection and analysis	Anna Ventura-Cisquella, Mari Vallez, Pere Freixa y Llus Codina
Discussion and conclusions	Anna Ventura-Cisquella, Mari Vallez
Drafting, formatting, version review and approval	Anna Ventura-Cisquella, Mari Vallez, Pere Freixa y Llus Codina

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