

# Marketing Graduate Job Profiles in the Spanish Mass Consumer Market: A Content Analysis of Job Listings on the Internet

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## Abstract

**This Objective:** The aim of this study is to identify the skills and knowledge currently required to marketing graduates in job vacancies in the mass consumer market, as a result of the corporate world's response to the changes that globalisation and technological development demand. **Methodology:** The research described here employed a mixed methodology. The first step involved performing a documentary search, using desk research techniques, on the two leading job portals in Spain: Infoempleo and Infojobs. Following this, a content analysis was performed to quantify each one of the requirements appearing in the job listings analysed. **Results:** The results highlight the importance of knowing how to leverage social media effectively regarding to digital skills, the relevance of English language among meta-skills and a comprehensive knowledge of marketing strategies in relation to conceptual marketing knowledge requirements. As to the correlation between the experience and wage variables, this was observed to be especially strong. **Limitations:** As this study has been focused on the B2C market, its conclusions are not directly applicable to other markets. **Practical implications:** The value of this research lies in the importance that the latest skills required by the market have for university education in order to adapt curricula accordingly.

**Keywords:** Marketing; university education; skills and knowledge; job vacancies; B2C market.

**JEL codes:** M53.

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# 探讨西班牙消费品市场对市场营销学本科毕业生技能的要求： 网上招聘广告内容的分析

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## 文章摘要

**研究目的：**本研究目的是要确定现今在消费品市场上针对市场学本科毕业生的招聘广告的各资格要求，此反映了各企业面对经济全球化与科技发展带来的变迁所作出的相应调节。

**分析方法：**本研究以混合方法进行：第一阶段为案头调研，对西班牙两个最著名的招聘门户：Infoempleo 及 Infojobs 进行资料搜集。其后，我们对所获取的资料进行分析，对已被分析的相关招聘广告上的每一项要求进行量化。

**研究结论：**结果指出几个重点：在电子操作技能方面，使用社交网络尤其重要。此外，拥有英语沟通能力及掌握市场营销策划也是市场营销学当中最基本的要求。至于经验与薪水关系方面，结果发现两者之间有着重大关系。

**研究限制：**研究集中于B2C市场，结论并不能直接套用在其他市场。

**实际应用：**本研究的价值在于能为现时各大专院校提供有关市场上最新的技能要求的资讯，以便调整其课程内容。

**关键词：**市场学、大学教育、技能描述、招聘、资格及技能。

JEL 分类号: M53。

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## 1. Introduction

The complex and dynamic environments in which companies operate nowadays have given rise to a high level of uncertainty as to the scenarios in which they must compete not only in the short but also in the long term. Thus, marketing is currently concerned with interpreting correctly these environments so as to adapt to changes in the best way possible, something that continuously modifies the skills and knowledge required of professionals. According to Ventura (2013), the globalisation of the economy, which involves the unceasing internationalisation of the activities of companies, together with new technologies, are generating turbulent environments as a result of that complexity and dynamism.

This begs the question of how these determining factors affect the marketing policies of companies and, more specifically, the skills and knowledge that they currently require of candidates for different job vacancies. This is precisely the main concern of this study, although focusing exclusively on the requirements of the mass consumer market (hereinafter, B2C). In short, the intention here is to obtain information on the skill and knowledge requirements that have not been 'contaminated' by the demands of the organisational market. In this sense, studies such as those performed by García and Echegaray (2018) have provided a job profile for marketing professionals in the national market from a general perspective, leaving the door open to the analysis of the possible differences between the B2C and organisational markets.

Different authors have studied the skills and knowledge required by marketing departments and their alignment, or not, with the curricula of business schools, universities and university centres (hereinafter, university education) from different perspectives and approaches which will be described further on.

However, after reviewing the literature on this topic, there is still a dearth of more specific research or approaches aimed at gaining a better understanding of the skills set required by the B2C market. Consequently, this study focuses on the analysis of the skills and knowledge required of marketing professionals in this market, thus contributing as much as possible to gain further insights into this topic. Likewise, an attempt is also made to establish a correlation between the work experience required of job candidates in the B2C market and the salaries that they are offered.

In order to achieve these goals, the listings posted on the leading job portals in Spain were analysed. This is a field in which little research has been conducted to date, at a moment when both the number of selection processes for marketing professionals and the number of job vacancies available have increased with respect to 2016 (Dottle, 2018; Page, 2018).

It is hoped that the findings of this study will make a valuable contribution to university education, since those responsible for designing specialised curricula will be able to use the results presented here to adapt them to the current requirements of the B2C market. Furthermore, they should help to improve the skills and knowledge of those undergraduates who decide to pursue a professional career in marketing.

Similarly, it is also anticipated that this study will contribute to enhance co-operation, much needed but hitherto insufficient (Royle and Laing, 2014), between academia and the corporate world as regards marketing.

## 2. Theoretical framework

The impact that globalisation and the technological revolution have had on both the macro and micro environment has led to significant changes in the marketing skills and knowledge required to work in an increasingly more competitive and challenging environment with any guarantee of success (Schibrowsky, Peltier and Boyt, 2002).

According to Santesmases (2007), due to the generalised use of the Internet, new technologies and related databases, former transition marketing has become relationship marketing. Nevertheless, the development of personal skills in the digital marketing environment has not been without its difficulties in quite a few organisations. As Bakhshi and Mateos-García (2012) see it, the problems stemming from corporate culture and organisational competencies, which, in turn, have been compounded by the dynamism of and the quantity of analytical and mediation tools currently available, pose a new challenge for the development of digital marketing skills.

Before taking a look at the marketing skills and knowledge currently required as a result of this new scenario, it is necessary to specify what is understood here by 'skill', according to the definitions contained in the literature.

Thus, as noted by Palomo (2008), the relatively short history of the concept has led to differences of opinion as to its definition among the authors that have addressed this issue. In view of the different definitions proposed since 1982 and collated by Palomo (2008), three principal elements inherent to the term 'skill' have been identified: behaviours, knowledge and abilities. Having said that, there are plenty of authors who have employed these three elements indistinctly (Leeflang, *et al.*, 2014; Royle and Laing, 2014; Pefanis and Harich, 2010; Fuentes, 2009), and yet others who have added new ones, like, for instance, 'attributes' or 'requirements', to refer to the skills required of job candidates by business organisations.

It is quite common for marketing graduates to discover that there are few jobs in which they can harness the skills and knowledge that they have learned at university (Pefanis and Harich, 2010). To these conclusions should be added the findings of the research conducted by Harraway and Barker (2005), for whom there are huge differences between job requirements for university students holding degrees in marketing, economy and finance and the skills that they have acquired at university.

Given this situation, these authors are in favour of combining conceptual knowledge with practical skills with the aim of reaching the best compromise for students. In this same context, other studies, such as that performed by Davis, Misra and Van Auken (2002), claim that marketing students see themselves as being poorly qualified as to skills and overqualified as to designated knowledge areas.

A review of the literature makes it apparent that a significant number of researchers (Ortiz, Joyanes and Giraldo, 2016; Royle and Laing, 2014; Leeftang, *et al.*, 2014; Day, 2011; Brady, Fellenz and Brookes, 2008) have focused on the digital field and information technologies, while others have placed the spotlight on small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) (Boam and Sparrow, 1992; Gilmore, Carson and Grant, 2001). Other approaches to the analysis of skills and knowledge more aimed at specific jobs and responsibilities, such as product or brand management, among others (Wroblowska, 2016; Wroblowska and Ruda, 2015; Foxize School, 2014; Pefanis and Harich, 2010; Palomo, 2008) or marketing research or new product development (McNally, Durmusoglu and Calantone, 2013; Micu, *et al.*, 2011; Carbonell-Foulquié, Manuera-Alemán and Rodríguez-Escudero, 2004; Tzokas, Hultink and Hart, 2004) have also been identified.

In the field of information technologies and digital marketing, studies like those conducted by Royle and Laing (2014) have defined seven key skills or competencies, namely, a conceptual knowledge of corporate communication, client relationship management (CRM), forecasting and the ability to draw up contingency plans for the real-time management of tools such as blogs, social media profiles or forums, the wherewithal to perform macro environment analyses, the strategic integration of digital marketing skills (data monitoring, metrics, etc.) and, lastly, general technological knowledge (web development, search engine optimisation (SEO), video editing, mobile apps and so on and so forth).

The use of digital tools and technologies, a mastery of new metrics for measuring results, brand management in the digital environment and analytical skills comprise another important skills set detected by Leeftang, *et al.* (2014) generally figuring among the job requirements for marketing professionals and emerging from the profound and constant changes in the market. By the same token, other studies, such as that conducted by Brady, Fellenz and Brookes (2008), have turned their attention to information and communication technologies deriving from sales force automation (SFA). Specifically, the use of electronic data interchange (EDI) tools, CRM systems, databases, marketing information systems (MIS) and the digital environment or, more precisely, e-marketing figure among the skills cited by these authors.

Another category that the literature has dealt with has to do with company size, focusing on the skills and knowledge required by SMEs versus large companies. Thus, from the perspective of Carson (1990), the former possess an idiosyncrasy insofar as their marketing policies differ from those of the latter and, therefore, the skills and knowledge that both require of their employees do not necessarily coincide.

In the SME environment, networking is a tool of paramount importance (Gilmore, Carson and Grant, 2001) whose development leads to an improvement in communications between company executives and their competitors, increasing participation and engagement, which helps companies to boost their competitive position. Other slightly more theoretical studies, such as those performed by Carson and Gilmore, (2000), have focused on competencies in four areas: knowledge, basically

of the micro environment, communication, experience and good judgement, this being understood as the ability to measure the information obtained employing the three aforementioned skills and to make the most appropriate decisions. According to Carson and Gilmore (2000), this skills set would be supplemented by experiential learning.

Concerning studies analysing different positions of responsibility in marketing, such as brand or product manager, among others, in the research conducted by Foxize School (2014), on the basis of 38 interviews with relevant professionals in the Spanish market, a clear common denominator in job requirements was observed as regards six aspects: creativity, leadership, digital skills, flexibility, empathy and the ability to work in liquid organisations, this last aspect being understood as a necessary competency for adapting to change and for stimulating and accelerating a company's growth. Similarly, in a study performed on a sample of internationalised companies and dual-role respondents—university lecturers and marketing directors—García and Echegaray (2018) concluded that it is necessary to update the marketing curriculum at Spanish universities in order that students should acquire the skills and knowledge required by companies, such as social and communication skills, the ability to work in liquid organisations and digital marketing competencies. This being the case, further research in this same field, like that conducted by Palomo (2008), detected a set of seven skills inherent to marketing directors: strategic vision, decision-making, integrity and honesty, a customer-centric approach, flexibility, team management and building and relationships with others. Likewise, in their research on a sample of 500 job listings in the US market, retrieved from Monster.com, Pefanis and Harich (2010) structured their analysis around three main categories, to wit, 'technical job skills', 'meta-skills' and 'conceptual marketing knowledge', including all those requirements specified by companies in their job listings in each one of these categories. In the first ('technical job skills'), the most sought after were MS Office and Outlook skills; in the second ('meta-skills'), oral and written communications; and in the third ('conceptual marketing knowledge'), customer behaviour, promotion/advertising and sales management. Likewise, in a study performed on the Czech market, based on the jobs posted on the portal Jobs.cz between March and August 2014, Wroblowska and Ruda (2015) provided their own list of the skills most in demand by companies, namely, those pertaining to communication, negotiation, teamwork and analytical thinking.

Shortly afterwards, in a study analysing data gathered from a sample of 56 job listings posted on the same portal (Jobs.cz.), Wroblowska (2016) established four principal categories of analysis: 'requirements for education, 'technical knowledge and skills', 'general, transferable competencies' and 'required practice and work experience'. In light of the results of a statistical analysis of the skills in each category, the researcher concluded that the most sought-after skills in each one were as follows: a university degree, knowledge of technical disciplines, good/advanced/communicative English and, finally, work experience in marketing or experience with this position at least two years.

In a study encompassing new product research and development, Micu *et al.* (2011) put the accent on the transformations undergone by marketing research skills, a consequence of digitisation. Accordingly, new skills differing from those addressed in research conducted to date in the field of general and digital marketing and SMEs have emerged in the work environment. In this respect, McNally, Durmusoglu and Calantone (2013) focused their analysis on personality traits, on the understanding that they are a determining factor in the management of digital innovation, something that according to these authors ends up conditioning corporate decision-making.

Lastly, with respect to the wages of marketing professionals, the literature has centred its attention on the salesforce, in as much as it is one of the main problems facing business organisations (Torres, Tiffer and Sandoval, 2017; Cicera i Soler, 2009; Nomparte, 2003; Chiesa and Renart, 2000). However, other approaches have focused on the salaries of marketing directors (Bronwyn, 2003), albeit in markets very different from that of Spain. In this connection, human resource consultants have proved to be a valuable information source to determine the wage rates and perspectives of marketing professionals in the national market (Dottle, 2018; Page, 2018; Randstad, 2018). These reports are more interesting in so far as they divide the marketing function into several posts or categories (Dottle, 2018; Randstad, 2018), choosing to this end the markets of Barcelona, Madrid, Bilbao, Seville and Valencia and offering an average wage rate for each one of them. Even though these reports do not provide quantitative data on the correlation between wage rates and work experience, they do offer relevant information for understanding the evolution of the salaries of marketing professionals in the short term and the role that experience plays in this respect. Thus, among the most sought-after profiles, work experience, primarily in the relevant sector, is of utmost importance in job requirements with an impact on wage rates (Dottle, 2018; Page, 2018).

To conclude, it is only fair to note that a broad range of marketing skills and knowledge currently required by companies has been found in the literature reviewed here, and that it is also possible to establish differences between them depending on the research approach, whether this is of a general scope, in the area of SMEs, in the digital environment or in new product research and development. Nonetheless, it has not been possible to find any study of the relationship between the skills required and the type of market in which transactions are made, either basically between companies or between these and consumers. A circumstance that makes this study more interesting, since it is specifically concerned with the skills and wages in relation to work experience, required by the B2C market.

### 3. Research objectives

This research was performed with a general and other specific objectives in mind, which can be defined as follows:

- As a general objective, the study set out to define the skills and knowledge requirements listed in job vacancies for marketing graduates in the B2C market, posted on Spain's leading job portals (Infojobs and Infoempleo). An analysis of such requirements was performed in five Autonomous Communities in Spain making the largest contribution to the national GDP in 2017 at market prices, according to the National Institute of Statistics (INE, 2018): Catalonia, Madrid, Andalusia, the Valencian Community and the Basque Country.

Concerning the specific objectives, which were established with an eye to meeting the general objective, these were as follows:

- To define the requirements and specifications of job vacancies in the B2C market, posted on the leading job portals in Spain, with respect to candidates' technical skills.
- To define the requirements and specifications of job vacancies in the B2C market, posted on the leading job portals in Spain, with respect to candidates' meta-skills.
- To define the requirements and specifications of job vacancies in the B2C market, posted on the leading job portals in Spain, with respect to candidates' conceptual marketing knowledge.
- To determine the correlation between the work experience required of candidates and the salaries offered in job vacancies in the B2C market, posted on the leading job portals in Spain.

#### 4. Research hypotheses

The hypotheses on which this research rests are set out according to the most significant aspects of the state of the question, which have been described above in the theoretical framework section:

H1. Digital skills are the most characteristic requirement of job vacancies for marketing graduates seeking an entry-level job in the B2C market.

Due to the very close relationship between technical and digital skills, the development of this hypothesis will help to meet the specific objective relating to technical skills.

H2. Conceptual marketing knowledge is a very important requirement for marketing graduates seeking an entry-level job in the B2C market.

With this hypothesis, it will be possible to check the validity of the third specific research objective, given that if the conceptual marketing knowledge required is determined, from this the requirements relating to the said objective can be deduced.

H3. There is a very close correlation between the work experience requirements of job vacancies for marketing graduates and wage rates in the B2C market. The

confirmation, or not, of this hypothesis will at any rate make it possible to determine the correlation between wage rates and work experience, as envisaged in the fourth specific objective.

The second objective is covered in the first two hypotheses, insofar as the relevance and position of the categories relating to technical skills and conceptual marketing knowledge cannot be understood in any way other than in their interaction with the third category, i.e. meta-skills.

Likewise, these hypotheses that help to meet the specific objectives will, in turn, contribute to achieve the general research objective.

## 5. Methodology

This study stems from the observation and analysis of the skills and knowledge required of candidates for marketing job vacancies posted on Spain's leading job portals. These listings were retrieved employing desk research techniques, following which a content analysis was performed to categorise and tag the data obtained. Once the data had been ordered, categorised and tagged, the observations were quantified for the purpose of determining the importance that the labour market in the B2C sector gives each one of the categories analysed here.

It is therefore a descriptive study of a mixed nature, since it employs both qualitative (with regard to data search and elevation) and quantitative (with respect to data quantification) methods.

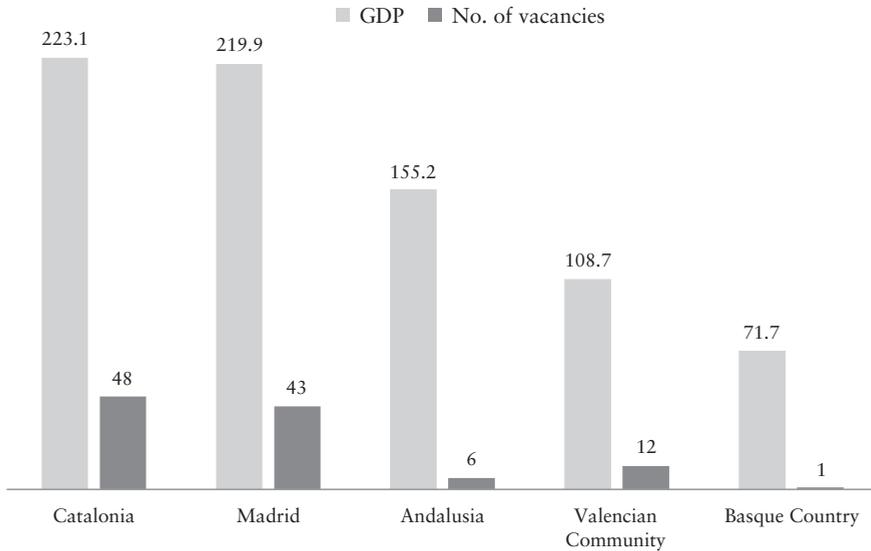
The data gathering procedure, on which the subsequent analysis is based, was developed in three stages.

Firstly, the Spanish Autonomous Communities in which the analysis was performed were selected, specifically, the five making the greatest contribution to Spain's GDP (at market prices), as can be observed in Graph 1.

The search process was performed online due to the fact that this way of seeking employment has become hugely popular, since it allows candidates to do so employing desk research techniques, thus greatly facilitating the task.

Following this, the leading job portals in Spain were identified. To this end, the portals Infojobs, Infoempleo, Laboris and Monster were monitored between December 2017 and April 2018, reaching the conclusion that Infojob and Infoempleo were the ones that had posted the greatest number of job vacancies and, subsequently, were those on which companies tended to rely.

Graph 1. Number of job vacancies by autonomous community versus their GDP in 2017 (at market prices)



Source: own elaboration.

Table 1. Portals monitored and the number of job vacancies posted

Portals used to perform searches	Total no. Vacancies in four months
Infojobs	98
Infoempleo	12
Laboris	0
Monster	6

Source: own elaboration.

Indeed, as can be observed in Table 1, there were marked differences in the number of job vacancies posted during the four month period, Infojobs coming in first place well ahead of the rest with 98 results, followed by Infoempleo with 12. All things considered, it could be claimed that the relevance of portals such as Laboris and Monster as regards marketing job vacancies is symbolic.

The selection of the job listings analysed here was carried out according to a series of criteria that determined, when these were met, their suitability to be included in the study:

- 1) The requirement of an undergraduate or graduate degree in marketing.
- 2) An undergraduate or graduate degree in marketing, while not being obligatory, was appreciated.
- 3) The field of activity of the company had to be B2C, this being clearly stated in the listing itself or on the corporate website of the company in question.
- 4) The selected job vacancies had to be for the following Autonomous Communities: Catalonia, Madrid, Andalusia, the Valencian Community or the Basque Country.

In order to search for marketing job vacancies on the different job portals the term ‘marketing’ was employed. The results obtained were then chosen as the units for the content analysis if they met the aforementioned criteria.

After selecting the two portals—Infoempleo and Infojobs—the relevant data for the content analysis were gathered employing the tables devised by Pefanis and Harich (2010) in a similar study performed in the USA. These tables, used here as organisational information models, were adapted to the study objectives and requirements. By using this type of table, research manages to be objective and systematic and, according to Krippendorff (1990, in Andreu, 2000), to develop explicit research rules applicable to all the units of analysis—objectivity, systematicity and quantification (Berelson, 1952)—resulting in reproducible inferences that may be applied in their context (Krippendorff, 1990). It is therefore an analysis of the explicit and latent messages of a body of content (Krippendorff, 2013; McQuail, 2013), i.e. a huge quantity of data that can be meticulously ordered by categories (Igartua, 2006).

It should be noted that the tables devised by Pefanis and Harich (2010) had to be constantly modified during the study time frame. This was due to the fact that during the process of extracting the units and, following their analysis, placing them in the different categories established, it was necessary to enlarge or complete the original tables in order to adapt the information. This adaptation was unavoidable bearing in mind that in the eight years that have passed since the tables were published, marketing competencies and skills have changed and, subsequently, so have job requirements. Notwithstanding this, the original categories were respected as regards the dimensions ‘job portal’, ‘company’, ‘job listing’, ‘geographical area’ and ‘years of experience’ as basic classification data, as well as the general categories ‘technical job skills’, ‘meta-skills’ and ‘conceptual marketing knowledge’. To these the wage category was added, thus helping to give jobs and their requirements an economic value, which included the following ranges: between €10,000 and €20,000; between €21,000 and €30,000; between €31,000 and €45,000; over €45,000; and unspecified.

The adaptation of Pefanis and Harich’s tables was carried out on the basis of the results of the content analysis *per se*, that is, the new items necessary for the analysis were added as they appeared in the body copy of the listings. In other words, tags unique to this study were introduced, such as the Autonomous Community in which there were marketing job vacancies, the number of years of work experience required of candidates and the salaries offered. As to technical skills, to those

described by Pefanis and Harich the following were added: CMS, HTML, graphic design, inbound marketing, e-mailing, affiliate marketing, growth hacking, Google AdWords, social media, Photoshop, Java, WordPress, Adobe and mobile marketing. In the meta-skills category, the following were included: flexibility, English, other languages, organisation and planning, teamwork, analytical capacity, proactivity, project management, influencer management and events. And in the conceptual marketing knowledge category, new items included training strategy, communication strategy, customer management, industrial marketing, revenue marketing, trade marketing and retail knowledge. To all this information was added an item that had to do with work experience, namely, wage rates in terms of the aspects relating to this topic observed in the analysis.



## 6. Results

The data analysis was divided into four categories, to wit, requirements relating to technical job skills, meta-skills, conceptual marketing knowledge and the experience/salary correlation.

### 6.1. Technical job skills

As can be seen in Graph 2, 22 skills were identified in the job listings analysed here with regard to this first category ('technical job skills'), ranging from digital skills, like growth hacking and inbound marketing, to other more classic ones coexisting with the former, e.g. MS Office and CRM.

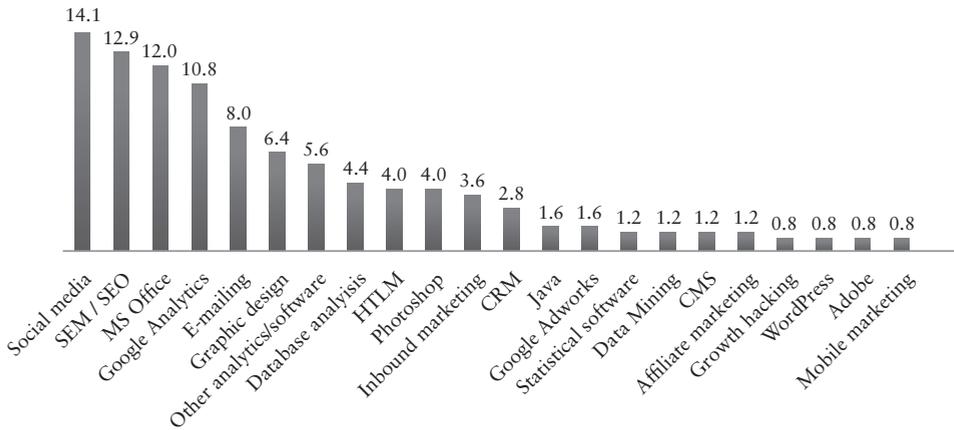
The five skills that companies most looked for in marketing graduates were as follows: social media management, SEO and search engine marketing (SEM), the MS Office suite, Google Analytics and e-mailing, which is in tune with the findings of previous studies, such as that performed by Leeflang *et al.* (2014) when pointing to digital tools and technologies as one of the skills that marketing professionals must possess. In other words, what most interested companies in this category, in addition to the correct use of basic tools (MS Office), were SEO and SEM, customer communication management (e-mailing) and metrics for measuring the results of marketing actions (Google Analytics).

On the other hand, skills like growth hacking, WordPress, the Adobe suite and mobile marketing were the least in demand, although their importance as emerging skills should be considered, especially in the case of growth hacking, WordPress and mobile marketing.

Lastly, two issues should be noted. On the one hand, the scant relevance given to mobile marketing (0.8%), a skill that, in the authors' view, will be much sought after by companies in the very near future. Furthermore, and although with very discrete percentages, except in the case of MS Office (12%), what is noteworthy is

the coexistence of technical skills much in demand in twentieth-century marketing, such as CRM, data mining, Photoshop and MS Office, with those relating to cutting-edge technology.

Graph 2. Technical skill requirements of job listings in the B2C market (relative frequency %)



Source: own elaboration.

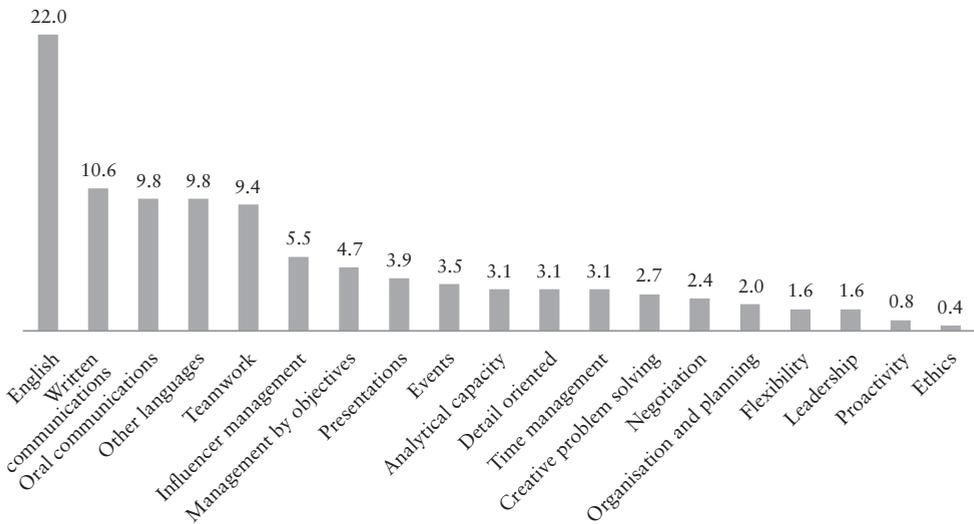
## 6.2. Meta-skills

As can be observed in Graph 3, a total of 19 skills were detected in the meta-skills category, featuring a group including English, written and oral communications, other languages and teamwork, in that order. So, it can be claimed that companies are most concerned with communication in general, something that is borne out by the findings of prior studies (Pefanis and Harich, 2010; Wroblowska, 2016).

On the other hand, the least important skills were ethical behaviour, proactivity, flexibility and leadership.

Likewise, it is important to note the emergence of a new meta-skill, i.e. influencer management, which has not been included in any prior study. This meta-skill makes sense when taking into consideration the growing use of social networking sites and blogs, as well as its importance in positioning brands by engaging target audiences.

Graph 3. Meta-skill requirements of job vacancies in the B2C market (relative frequency %)



Source: own elaboration.

### 6.3. Conceptual marketing knowledge

As can be seen in Graph 4, the conceptual marketing knowledge category included 26 skills required by companies.

The most sought-after skills were as follows: develop marketing plans, Internet marketing, promotion/advertising, industry-specific knowledge and business management. These data highlight two interesting aspects. On the one hand, the requirement that candidates have a mastery of the micro environment, represented by both promotion/advertising aimed at consumers and industry-specific knowledge or business management, understood here as working with customers. And on the other, it can be observed how technical skills are also associated with this third category due to the digital dimension of marketing plan development and promotion/advertising.

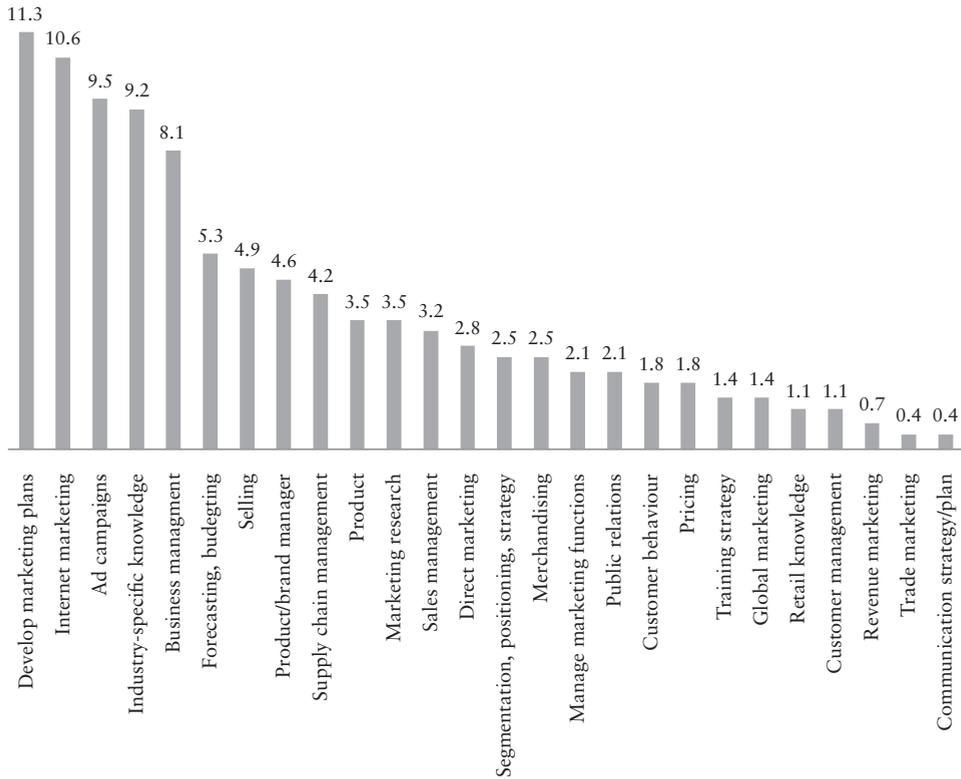
Conversely, the least required skills included communication strategy/plan, trade and revenue marketing, customer management and retail knowledge.

These data underscore the scant interest shown by companies in those skills pertaining to distribution, which are barely reflected in retail knowledge, trade marketing or sales promotion—this last skill being the most appreciated—focusing on push strategies.

Pricing (1.8%) occupied a fairly discrete position, while product-related skills, i.e. product and brand management (3.5% and 4.6%, respectively), were more in demand. For its part, the communication function was clearly present in skills such

as promotion/advertising, sales promotion, direct marketing and public relations, an aspect which, as before, is corroborated by previous studies, including those performed by Pefanis and Harich (2010) and Carson and Gilmore (2000).

Graph 4. Conceptual marketing knowledge requirements of job vacancies in the B2C market (relative frequency %)



Source: own elaboration.

Likewise, marketing also has a strong presence in skills such as business management and selling, although the former does not appear in the literature reviewed as a job requirement for marketing graduates.

#### 6.4. Experience/salary correlation

Several significant aspects can be observed in the data shown in Table 2 and Graph 5. The work experience usually required by companies was two or three years, four, five or more being the least required.

On the other hand, only 10 job listings that did not require any previous experience were found, accounting for 9% of all the listings. And if to these are added those listings requiring a year of experience, they accounted for 26% of the total. These listing would represent those vacancies to which marketing graduates looking for their first job after completing their internships would have access.

Table 2. Experience/salary correlation

Salary offered (€)	Experience							
	Not required	1 year	2 years	3 years	4 years	5 years	Over 5 years	
10,000 / 20,000	5	3	4	5	1	0	1	19
21,000 / 30,000	0	4	7	0	1	4	2	18
31,000 / 45,000	0	0	0	1	1	2	0	4
Over 45,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Unspecified	5	12	21	22	3	4	1	68
	10	19	32	28	6	10	5	110

Source: own elaboration.

With respect to wage rates, taken as an isolated variable, it can be seen that the most frequently offered salary ranged between €10,000 and €20,000, the lowest rate, an aspect that contrasts with the figures provided by the recruitment/job consultancy Randstad (2018), which are substantially higher than those registered here.

Finally, the most repeated job listing was that combining two years of experience with a salary ranging from €21,000 and €30,000.

Graph 5. Experience/salary correlation: no. of job listings (relative frequency %)



Source: own elaboration.

## 7. Discussion and implications

Given this study’s general objective, to define the requirements and skills listed in job vacancies for marketing graduates in the B2C market, posted on Spain’s leading job portals (Infojobs and Infoempleo), and in light of the results described above, the following conclusions have been reached:

The most sought-after professional skills are shown below in Table 3.

With respect to the technical skills category, it has been established that new digital skills coexist with those emerging in the twentieth century, which is consistent with the conclusions of previous studies (García and Echegaray, 2018).

Similarly, the required marketing profile in this category is that of a professional with a broad knowledge of Internet marketing, especially as regards social media, SEO and the use of the Microsoft Office suite.

Table 3. The 10 skills most frequently appearing in job listings

Skills	No. of times required
English	56
Social media	35
Develop marketing plans	32
SEO/SEM	32
Internet marketing	30
MS Office	30
Promotion/advertising	27
Written communications	27
Google Analytics	27
Industry-specific knowledge	26

*Source:* own elaboration.

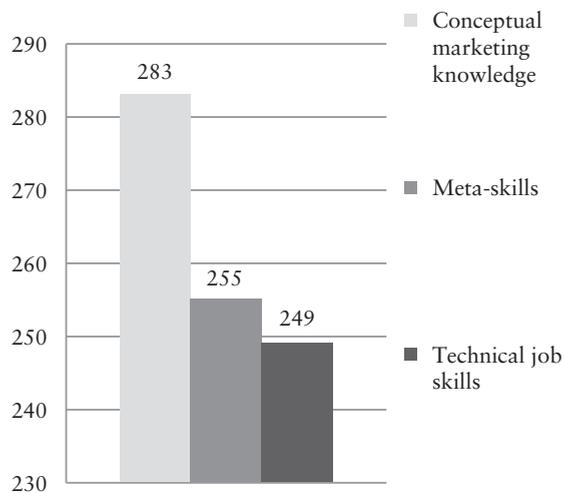
Additionally, it can be observed that of the 22 technical skills detected in the job listings analysed here, 12 are a result of digitisation, namely, they are skills that have recently emerged and which, only a few years ago, did not appear in practically any job vacancy (RRSS, SEO/SEM, Google Analytics, other analytics/software, CMS, inbound marketing, growth hacking, affiliate marketing, e-mailing, Java, WordPress and mobile marketing). In this respect, it should also be noted that other digital skills have also emerged in the other two categories. In this regard, influencer management in the meta-skills category and Internet marketing and the digital dimension of promotion/advertising in the conceptual marketing knowledge category are clearly new skills resulting from the ongoing digitisation of companies.

All considered, it can be concluded that the skills inherent to digitisation figure increasingly more often among job requirements. Both this skills set and its importance in relation to the rest of the skills bear this out. In the authors' opinion, however, it is still impossible to claim that digital skills have become the most important job requirement for marketing graduates in the B2C market, although everything points to the fact that this will indeed be the case in the near future. Nowadays, there are other skills sets or categories that are still more in demand than digital skills, as it will be seen below. Therefore, it is still impossible to confirm the initial hypothesis of this study, although there is every reason to believe that this will be fully confirmed in a few years.

In relation to the second category, that of meta-skills, the most sought-after profile in the B2C market is that of a good communicator, with strong skills in languages—above all English—written and oral communications and teamwork.

With respect to the third category, conceptual marketing knowledge, first of all its breadth should be noted, given that with 26 skills it is the largest. Moreover, these skills were required 283 times in all the job listings analysed here (see Graph 6), making it the most important category, followed by those of meta-skills and technical job skills, respectively. The initial hypothesis, according to which the skills relating to conceptual marketing knowledge are highly sought after by companies, would thus be confirmed.

Graph 6. Number of times that each one of the three categories was required in the selected sample of job listings, as the sum of all the requirements of each one of the skills included in them



Source: own elaboration.

The requirements appearing in the job listings were basically related to a mastery of the aspects comprising the micro environment, represented by skills such as industry-specific knowledge, business management and promotion/advertising.

On the other hand, it has been established that there was little interest in distribution- and pricing-related skills, in contrast to communication- and product-related ones.

The analysis performed on the experience/salary correlation clearly revealed several aspects. For instance, most companies required a job experience of two or three years, a requirement figuring in 54% of the job listing analysed here.

Similarly, it can be concluded that the options of marketing graduates attempting to find their first job, i.e. those who have recently completed their studies or internships, are reduced significantly, since those companies willing to hire candidates with only one year of work experience, or even without any experience, accounted for only a quarter (26%) of the job listings, obviously offering lower salaries.

To end with, it has also been established that those job listings that require more experience—four, five or more years—are better paid. However, it should be stressed that there is a paradox in the requirement of more than five years of experience: the vacancies including this requirement not only offered the highest salaries, but also medium-low or low ones in a large number of cases.

In view of the foregoing, it can be claimed that there is a close experience/salary correlation, since when the former increases, the latter also does so, as envisaged in H3.

This study has certain limitations. Given that it has focused on the B2C market, the conclusions reached here are not directly extensible to other markets, such as B2B or B2A. Therefore, these markets may constitute a relevant object of study with the aim of determining the importance and impact that their idiosyncrasies may have on the skills and knowledge required of marketing graduates.

Lastly, the results obtained in this study may help business schools and universities to update their curricula, creating new content or specialisations in terms of the requirements of companies in the B2C market.

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