

RESEARCH

Received: 12/25/2023

Accepted: 03/06/2024

Published: 22/04/2024

THE DEGREE IN ADVERTISING AND PUBLIC RELATIONS IN SPAIN. REVIEW OF TEACHING PLANS

El Grado de Publicidad y Relaciones Públicas en España. Revisión de Planes Docentes

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How to cite this article:

Pellicer Jordá, María Teresa. (2024). The Degree in Advertising and Public Relations in Spain. Review of Teaching Plans [El Grado de Publicidad y Relaciones Públicas en España. Revisión de Planes Docentes]. *Vivat Academia*, 157, 1-12. <http://doi.org/10.15178/va.2024.157.e1537>

ABSTRACT

Introduction: The need to review and update the curriculum of degrees in Advertising and Public Relations in Spanish universities is addressed in this paper. This need arises from the recent implementation of the Organic Law of the University System (LOSU), which requires an adaptation of educational plans to the current professional reality. This work provides a detailed overview of the current state of these degrees in the 37 Spanish universities that offer them, serving as a fundamental source for their adjustment to the contemporary demands of the industry. **Methodology:** Content analysis was adopted as the main methodology for this research, applied to the teaching plans of Advertising and Public Relations degrees from 37 Spanish universities, both public and private. Ninety-two thematic categories were established to classify all subjects, allowing for a unified and comprehensive study of current curriculum plans. **Results:** The research reveals diversity in the academic offers, with an average of 48.5 subjects per degree. Current curriculum plans maintain a structure similar to that established by the Official School of Advertising in 1964, both in the number of subjects and their content. Common subjects were identified, reflecting the most demanded competencies in the professional field, as well as the emergence of new subjects that respond to current trends and social needs, such as innovation and entrepreneurship. **Discussion and Conclusions:** The study emphasizes the importance of updating curriculum plans to align them with contemporary

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professional and social demands. Although there is a trend towards the inclusion of new topics, there are still areas, such as languages, that require greater attention. This analysis provides a solid foundation for educational reform in the field of Advertising and Public Relations in Spain, emphasizing the need for education that combines traditional knowledge with emerging competencies.

Keywords: advertising, university, teaching plan, education, communication.

RESUMEN

Introducción: Se aborda la necesidad de revisar y actualizar los planes de estudio de los grados en Publicidad y Relaciones Públicas en las universidades españolas. Esta necesidad surge de la reciente implantación de la Ley Orgánica del Sistema Universitario (LOSU), que exige una adaptación de los planes educativos a la realidad profesional actual. El trabajo proporciona una visión detallada del estado actual de estos grados en las 37 universidades españolas que los ofrecen, representando una fuente primordial para su adecuación a las demandas contemporáneas del sector.

Metodología: Para realizar esta investigación, se adoptó el análisis de contenido como metodología principal, aplicándolo a los planes docentes de los grados de Publicidad y Relaciones Públicas de 37 universidades españolas, tanto públicas como privadas. Se establecieron 92 categorías temáticas para clasificar todas las asignaturas, permitiendo un estudio unificado y exhaustivo de los planes de estudio actuales. **Resultados:** La investigación revela una diversidad en la oferta académica, con una media de 48.5 asignaturas por grado. Los planes de estudio actuales mantienen una estructura similar a la instaurada por la Escuela Oficial de Publicidad en 1964, tanto en el número de asignaturas como en su contenido. Se identificaron asignaturas frecuentes, reflejando las competencias más demandadas en el ámbito profesional, además de destacar la aparición de nuevas materias que responden a las tendencias actuales y necesidades sociales, como la innovación y el emprendimiento. **Discusión y Conclusiones:** El estudio subraya la importancia de actualizar los planes de estudio para alinearlos con las demandas profesionales y sociales contemporáneas. Aunque se observa una tendencia hacia la inclusión de nuevas temáticas, aún existen áreas, como los idiomas, que requieren mayor atención. Este análisis ofrece una base sólida para la reforma educativa en el ámbito de la Publicidad y las Relaciones Públicas en España, enfatizando la necesidad de una formación que combine conocimientos tradicionales con competencias emergentes.

Palabras clave: publicidad, universidad, planes docentes, educación, comunicación.

1. INTRODUCTION

The first universities were founded in Europe in the 13th century, when the world was on the threshold of the Renaissance. As to which was the first university to start up, experts in the field doubt whether it was Bologna or Paris, although what they all agree on is that Paris became a great intellectual center (Baladrón, 2018)

The term University comes from the Latin 'universitas', although this word was not used as such until the 13th century, to create what will be considered the first Spanish university that still exists today, the University of Salamanca.

The year that sets the beginning of university studies in Spain is 1212, with the University of Palencia, which would soon become extinct. Six years later, in 1218, King Alfonso IX of León set in motion the germ of what would become the University of Salamanca, known as 'scholas salmanticae'. These first studies had teachers in law, decrees, logic, grammar, physics, medicine, organ and library. Thus, the University of Salamanca became, together with Paris (1150) and Oxford (1096), one of the first European universities (Agís, 2008).

A few years later, in 1292, Sancho IV granted the study to Valladolid, where grammar, arithmetic, Latin and Sacred Scripture were taught, and the following year (1293) the Estudio General de Alcalá was created. Thus, Salamanca, Valladolid and Alcalá would be the three 'Major Universities of the Kingdom'. Subsequently, other university centers were set up, in addition to the three pioneering ones already mentioned, in other parts of Spain: Lleida University (public) (1300); University of Barcelona (public)(1450); University of Valencia (public) (1499); University of Santiago de Compostela (public) (1495); University of Seville (public) (1505); University of Granada (public)(1531); University of Zaragoza (public)(1542); University of Oviedo (public)(1608); Complutense University of Madrid (public) (1822).

After 64 years of pause, a new stage in the chronology of the Spanish university history began in 1886, at the hands of a private university, the University of Deusto, which became the first private university in Spain. It was followed, 18 years later, by a second private university, the Pontifical University Comillas, created in 1904.

After these two new institutions we included in the Spanish university sector, which are relevant because they were the first private centers to be set up, new universities were opened in other Spanish cities, according to the chronology below¹: University of Murcia (public) (1915); University of La Laguna (public) (1927); Pontifical University of Salamanca (continuation of the first University of Salamanca) (private) (1940); University of Navarra (private) (1952); Autonomous University of Barcelona (public), Autonomous University of Madrid (public), University of the Basque Country (public) and Polytechnic University of Valencia (public) (1968); Polytechnic University of Catalonia (public) and Polytechnic University of Madrid (public) (1971); University of Cantabria (public), University of Córdoba (public), University of Málaga (public) and National University of Remote Education (public - non-presential) (1972); University of Extremadura (public) and IE University (private) (1973); University of the Balearic Islands (public) (1978); University of Alicante (public), University of Cadiz (public) and University of Leon (public) (1979); University of Castilla La Mancha (public) (1982); Public University of Navarra (public) (1987); University of La Coruña (public), University Carlos III of Madrid (public), University of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria (public) and European University of Valencia (private) (1989); Pompeu Fabra University (public), University of Vigo (public) and Ramón Llul University (private)

(1990); University of Girona (public), Jaume I University (public), Rovira y Virgili University (public) (1991); University of La Rioja (public) (1992); University of Almería (public), University of Huelva (public), University of Jaén (public), University Francisco de Vitoria (private), University San Pablo CEU (private), University Abad Oliva CEU (private) and University Alfonso X El Sabio (private) (1993); University of Burgos (public), International University of Andalusia (private-special) and Open University of Catalonia (private-distance) (1994); University Antonio de Nebrija (private) and European University of Madrid (private) (1995); University Miguel Hernández de Elche (public), University Rey Juan Carlos (public), Catholic University San Antonio de Murcia (private) and Catholic University Santa Teresa de Jesús de Ávila (private) (1996); University Pablo de Olavide (public), University de Vic (private), International University of Catalonia (private) and Mondragon Unibertsitatea University (private) (1997); Polytechnic University of Cartagena (public) and Villanueva International University (private) (1998); Camilo José Cela University (private) (2000); Miguel de Cervantes European University (private) (2002); Catholic University San Vicente Martir (private) (2003); University San Jorge (private) (2005); Distance University of Madrid (private / distance) (2006); International University of La Rioja (private / distance) and International University of Valencia (private / distance) (2008); University Loyola Andalucía (private) (2010); European University of the Canary Islands (private) (2012); European University of the Atlantic (private) (2013); Fernando Pessoa-Canary Islands University (private) (2014); Mid-Atlantic University (private) (2015); Fernando III University (private / in the process of starting up again) (2022).

In relation to the territorial distribution of universities in Spain, the following data can be found: Andalusia: 10 universities (9 public and 1 private); Aragon: 2 universities (1 private and 1 public); Asturias: 1 university (public); Balearic Islands: 1 university (public); Canary Islands: 5 universities (2 public and 1 private); Cantabria: 2 universities (1 public and 1 private); Castile La Mancha: 1 university (public); Castile and Leon: 8 universities (5 public and 3 private); Catalonia: 11 universities (7 public and 4 private); Valencian Community: 8 universities (5 public and 3 private); Extremadura: 1 university (public); Galicia: 3 universities (public); Madrid: 14 universities (6 public and 8 private); Murcia: 3 universities (2 public and 1 private); Navarra: 2 universities (1 public and 1 private); Basque Country: 3 universities (1 public and 2 private); La Rioja: 1 university (public); Non-face-to-face and special universities (face-to-face/hybrid and non-face-to-face): 6 universities (1 public and 5 private).

2. OBJECTIVES

The main objective of this research is to offer a detailed x-ray of the curricula of the degree in Advertising and Public Relations currently offered by the different Spanish universities, both public and private, with a view to the modification of these curricula due to the LOSU.

As secondary objectives, the following should be highlighted:

- To know the subjects that are part of the degree studies of Advertising and Public Relations in Spanish universities and to be able to establish their catalog, as well as other data relating to their frequency of appearance and/or presence.
- To be a source of information for all the universities that offer the degree in Advertising and Public Relations with a view to modifying their teaching plans.
- To be a source of information for the elaboration of research and teaching projects that dozens of university professors in this area of knowledge must carry out every year.

3. METHODOLOGY

The methodology used to carry out this research was the content analysis of the teaching plans of the degree in Advertising and Public Relations currently offered by 37 Spanish universities, both public and private. In order to carry out this analysis, 92 thematic categories have been established in which to frame all the subjects of the curricula and to carry out a unified and exhaustive study of them. The categories used were as follows: 1. Art; 2. Communication. Introduction and basic notions; 3. Communication, gender and equality; 4. Communication and political marketing. History. Propaganda; 5. Persuasive communication; 6. Communication at the point of sale; 7. Institutional and corporate communication; 8. International communication; 9. Cultural communication; 10. Crisis communication; 11. Fashion communication; 12. Health communication; 13. Multimedia communication; 14 Oral communication; 15. Non-verbal communication; 16. Written communication. Advertising and media copywriting; 17. Marketing of audiovisual products; 18. Audiovisual and mass culture; 19. Creativity; 20. Christianity; 21. Advertising law; 22. Communication law; 23. Advertising discourse; 24. Design (principles); 25. Graphic design; 26. Audiovisual, web and multimedia design; 27. Communication management and spokesperson: 18 subjects; 28. Account management; 29. Art management; 30. Human resources management; 31. Commercial management; 32. Direction and management of quality and customer service; 33. Financial management; 34. Strategic management. Advertising and communication strategies; 35. Brand image management. Internal communication. Brand design; 36. Documentation and information management; 37. Documentary; 38. Statistics; 39. Applied economics; 40. Advertising and information enterprise. Systems and structures; 41. Professional ethics and corporate social responsibility; 42. Photography; 43. Press offices; 44. Management of academic papers; 45. History; 46. History of advertising and propaganda; 47. History of mass media; 48. English; 49. Innovation and entrepreneurship; 50. Market research and public opinion; 51. Language; 52. Advertising language; 53. Leadership and professional skills development; 54. Literature; 55. Marketing (fundamentals); 56. Strategic marketing; 57. Direct and promotional marketing; 58. Digital marketing; 59. Relationship marketing; 60. International marketing; 61. Emotional marketing; 62. Neuromarketing; 63. Retail marketing; 64. Mobile marketing; 65. Marketing. Pricing; 66. Cultural marketing; 67. Content marketing; 68. Media; 69. Audiovisual narrative and advertising; 70. Audiovisual production and post-production; 71. Journalism; 72. Protocol and event management; 73. Media planning; 74. Applied psychology; 75. Advertising, communication and marketing and public relations with social purpose; 76. External advertising; 77. Audiovisual production; 78. Social networks and digital content (content creation and web positioning); 79. International relations; 80. Public Relations (strategies, history and planning); 81. Radio and podcasting; 82. Mental health; 83. Applied sociology; 84. Communication and information theory; 85. Image theory; 86. Advertising and

public relations theory; 87. Advertising techniques; 88. Communication technologies; 89. Television and cinema; 90. Advertising trends (storytelling, branded content and below the line); 91. Video games; 92. Final Degree Project and Internships. In this way, all the subjects have been categorized, indicating whether they are optional or compulsory, as well as the frequency of subjects in each of the categories indicated.

4. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

4.1. Background: Official School of Advertising

The history of official advertising studies began in 1964 with the Official School of Advertising (its activity ceased in 1968, along with the publication of the General Advertising Law) and the creation of the National Advertising Institute (INP), an agency under the Ministry of Information and Tourism. In its regulations, published in the BOE (BOE, August 27, 1964), it is explained that the approval of the Advertising Statute made the creation of the INP essential, whose objective was "to promote and encourage cultural, technical and artistic progress in this important sector of the economic and business activity". Its functions were as follows:

1. Training of "competent" professionals, by teaching subjects that allowed them to obtain the degree of Advertising Technician.
2. Study and research of subjects related to advertising
3. Dissemination of knowledge, techniques and results.

As a result of the creation of the National Institute of Advertising, and as a consequence of its first function, the Official School of Advertising was created, which would be the first public teaching center to offer an academic degree in advertising. Its professors, appointed through public recruitment, were divided into three categories: professors, assistant professors and specialists in different subjects (the latter with contracts of less than one year and selected for specific subjects. They would be the equivalent of the current contractual figure of associate professor). Teaching was distributed over three academic years and included, in the last approved study plan, the completion of a final project by the students as an indispensable requirement for obtaining the degree (this would be the equivalent of the current Final Degree Project). In addition, it contemplated internships for students in companies and advertising agencies, as well as professional training courses, according to the needs of the profession at any given time. Likewise, and in view of the subsequent implementation of private schools, it contemplated the holding of extraordinary exams to obtain the official qualification.

During this period, three teaching plans were published in the BOE (1965-1966 and 1968), in order to adjust to the professional and teaching needs of the sector. Thus, with Mariano López Cepero as director, the first teaching plan of the Official School of Advertising contemplated different subjects per academic year.

In the first academic year, 19 subjects were planned, spread over two four-month periods: Introduction to Advertising; Elements of Sociology; Art and its styles;

Economic theory; National economic structure; Introduction to law; Mathematics applied to advertising; English; and French or German. History of Advertising; Elements of psychology; Commercial art; Business economics; International economic structure; Advertising law; Statistics applied to advertising; English; and French or German.

In the second academic year, 18 subjects are planned spread over two semesters: Advertising planning techniques; Advertising media techniques (press, external, direct, various); Organization and functions of the advertising agency; Market research; Motivation analysis; Ad composition technique; Practical classes (teamwork); English; and French or German. Marketing; Advertising media techniques (cinema, radio, television); Professional structuring of advertising; Market analysis; Semantics applied to advertising; Graphic arts; Practical classes (teamwork); English; and French or German.

In the third academic year, 18 subjects are planned spread over two semesters: Planning and development of the advertising campaign; Concept, Theory and technique of Public Relations; Copywriting technique; Advertising effectiveness measurement technique; Deontology; Practical classes (teamwork); English; and French or German. Critical study of campaigns; Public Relations and Advertising; Techniques of Advertising Illustration; Audiovisual Techniques; Techniques for measuring advertising effectiveness; Advertising ethics; Practical classes (teamwork); English; and French or German.

Just one year later, in 1966, a modification of that first curriculum of 1965 was published, which contemplated the following subjects in the first academic year (14 subjects): Introduction to advertising; Sociology I; Psychology I; Economics I; Marketing; English; and French or German.

Introduction to advertising; Psychology II; Sociology II; Economics II; Legal regime of advertising in Spain (Advertising Statute); English; and French or German.

In the second academic year, 14 subjects are planned spread over two semesters: Advertising copywriting I (fundamentals and techniques); Advertising illustration I (drawing and color); Graphic arts; Sociological research techniques; Advertising media I (press, outdoor, direct, various; English; and French or German. Advertising copywriting II (text analysis); Advertising illustration II (photo, graphics and innovation; Audiovisual techniques; Economic research techniques; Advertising media II (cinema, radio, television; English; and French or German.

In the third academic year, 14 subjects are planned spread over two semesters: Advertising strategy I (campaign planning); techniques for measuring advertising effectiveness; commercial art; professional structuring of advertising; public relations; English; and French or German. Advertising strategy II (campaign execution and analysis); Advertising effectiveness measurement techniques; Commercial art; Organization and functions of the advertising agency; Deontology; English; and French or German.

Training is completed with conferences, seminars, visits and trips.

In 1968, the BOE published the school's third and last syllabus. In the first course, 8 annual subjects are planned, which are as follows: Introduction to advertising; Applied sociology; Applied psychology; General and business economics; Introduction to marketing; Information media; Legal regime of advertising; and English.

In the second academic year, 8 annual subjects are planned which are the following: Advertising art; Advertising copywriting I; Theory and practice of graphic design; Marketing for advertising I; Advertising media; Professional structure of advertising; Public relations; and English II.

In the third academic year, 8 annual subjects are planned which are the following: Marketing for advertising II; Motivational research; Advertising copywriting II; Advertising strategy; Advertising creativity (idea); Advertising creativity (image); Advertising media technique; and English III.

As a new feature, in order to obtain the degree, each student is required to complete a final project consisting of the development of an advertising campaign, which will be presented before a panel of professors from the school.

Parallel to the creation of the Official School of Advertising, private centers offering similar training began to appear. In fact, the INP contemplates in its regulations that "the non-official schools in which advertising courses are taught may request and obtain the qualification of schools recognized by the Ministry of Information and Tourism and their students may take the final exams of revalidation" (extraordinary calls of which we have spoken in previous lines) of the Official School of Advertising and that will allow them to obtain the official title of Advertising Technician. However, some requirements were established for such recognition, such as adapting the curriculum to the one approved by the school, allowing inspections by the National Institute of Advertising and informing it about the cadre of professors teaching the subjects. The success of this type of schools (five private schools were recognized in 1965 and three more in 1966) was such that the Assembly of Teaching Centers was created, which would be held annually from 1967 onwards and which would actively participate in the reform of the teaching plans.

The establishment of the Official School of Advertising (1964) was subsequent to the creation of schools in communication areas such as the Official School of Journalism (1941) or the Official School of Cinema (previously called the Institute of Cinematographic Research and Experiences - 1947). This same trend is the one that will be followed in the incorporation of the university degree in Advertising and Public Relations, since it is initially included in the area in the studies of Information Sciences.

4.2. University studies in Advertising and Public Relations in Spain

On September 14, 1971, the BOE published the decree regulating the studies of Information Sciences, studies that included the area of advertising, cinema, television

and radio. This decree also implies the cessation (in a maximum of four years) of the official schools, which we have mentioned in the previous section. That same year, in October, the decree was approved that allowed the creation of the faculties of Information Sciences at the Complutense University of Madrid and the Autonomous University of Barcelona (1972). One month later, in November, the School of Information Science was created in Navarra (formerly the Institute of Journalism) and ten years later, in 1981, these faculties were created in Salamanca and the Basque Country². The official degree in Advertising was regulated by Royal Decree 1386/1991. There are currently 37 Schools of Communication and/or Information (including this term in their nomenclature) in Spain and the degree in Advertising and Public Relations is taught in 37 universities. Out of these 37 universities, all of them offer the face-to-face modality, except for six universities (3 public and 3 private). In 2 of them, only the non-face-to-face option is offered and in 4 the blended option. Out of these 37 universities, 19 are private and 18 are public.

With the aim of knowing the subjects studied in the degree of Advertising and Public Relations, as well as the trends in this regard. To this end, after analyzing the curricula of the degree in Advertising and Public Relations (we only studied those that respond to the nomenclature of Advertising and Public Relations and did not study the joint degrees) in all the universities in Spain that offer it and list all their subjects, we found 93 categories, in which we can frame the 1,796 subjects that add up to all the curricula analyzed.

5. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

After the research carried out, the following can be concluded:

There are 84 universities in Spain, of which 50 are public and 34 are private. Thus, 59.5 percent of the Spanish university offer is made up of public studies, while 40.1 percent is in private institutions. Salamanca, Valladolid and Alcala are the first three universities to be set up in Spain (all of them public) and which are still active today. The first private university in Spain appeared in 1886 (University of Deusto). It is curious that in Navarre a private university was started first and it took 35 years to have a public university in that territory. In 1972 the first (public) university with remote studies (Uned) was set up and since 1999 only private universities have been set up in Spain (13 in total).

Madrid (14), Catalonia (11), Andalusia (10) and Valencia (8) are the communities with the most universities in relation to the rest of the national territory. Andalusia is the community with the most public universities in Spain (9 public and only 1 private), while Madrid stands out for having more private than public universities in its territory (8 private and 6 public).

² The data come from the Ministry of Universities, following a request from the applicant for the place.

The current curricula for the degree in Advertising and Public Relations in Spanish universities follow very closely the same pattern as that of the Official School of Advertising (1964), both in terms of the number of subjects included in the teaching program and the number of subjects that comprise it.

The average number of subjects offered in the degree in Advertising and Public Relations is 48.5. In the distribution of subjects by administrative typology, the number of subjects classified as basic is 10 in all cases, except in 8 universities, where this number varies. The total number of subjects classified as compulsory is 833, while the number of electives is 540. Making percentage calculations and based on the arithmetic average, it can be said that an average degree in Advertising and Public Relations has 19.8 percent of basic subjects, 48.7 percent of compulsory subjects and 31.5 percent of optional subjects.

The degree is currently offered in 37 Spanish universities, of which 19 are private and 18 are public. The face-to-face teaching modality is the majority option, except in 6 universities (3 public and 3 private). In 2 of them, only the non-face-to-face option is offered and in 4 the blended option.

The analysis of all the subjects that make up the different degree courses in the different universities reflects the training aspects that are most relevant for the advertising profession today. Thus, the 20 most frequent or repeated subjects in the different plans are the following: Market research and public opinion (87); Advertising and information business (73); Creativity (64); Public relations (64); Brand image management (54); Social networks and digital content (47); Applied sociology (47); Communication and information theory (42); Professional ethics and corporate social responsibility (42); Media Planning (41); Graphic design (40); Strategic management (39); Marketing (37); Protocol and event management (36); Copywriting and written communication (36); Production and post-production (31); Political communication and marketing (30); Institutional and corporate communication (30); Applied psychology (30); and Language (27).

As a new element, recently modified subjects other than the traditional ones are appearing in the curricula, showing, once again, the new social and professional needs of the advertising field. Such is the case of Radio and podcast (13); Leadership and development of professional competences (11), Innovation and entrepreneurship (10); Communication, Gender and equality (6); Management of Academic Works (7); and Mental health (2).

Languages continue to be a weak point in the undergraduate curricula, since only 23 subjects on this field were recorded. If one takes into account that there are 37 teaching plans analyzed, it can be seen that there are many universities that still do not include this subject in their educational offerings. In this regard, it should be recalled that the Official School of Advertising not only offered English as a compulsory subject, but also added a second language as a compulsory subject, to be chosen by the student (French or German).

The curricula reflect the necessary relationship that advertising has with other professions and proof of this is the inclusion in their teaching plans of subjects, most of them compulsory, related to other fields of knowledge, such as Statistics, Psychology, Sociology, Law, Art, History, English, Language and Economics.

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AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS, FUNDING AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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Conceptualization: Pellicer Jordá, María Teresa. **Methodology:** Pellicer Jordá, María Teresa. **Formal analysis:** Pellicer Jordá, María Teresa. **Data curation:** Pellicer Jordá, María Teresa. **Drafting-Preparation of the original draft:** Pellicer Jordá, María Teresa. **Drafting-Revision and Editing:** Pellicer Jordá, María Teresa. **The author has read and accepted the published version of the manuscript:** Pellicer Jordá, María Teresa.

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ISSN: 1575-2844