

# EMPOWERING UNDERPRIVILEGED COMMUNITIES: A STUDY OF INNOVATIVE COMMUNICATION PRACTICES IN HIGHER EDUCATION POST-COVID-19



UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH OPPORTUNITY PROGRAM

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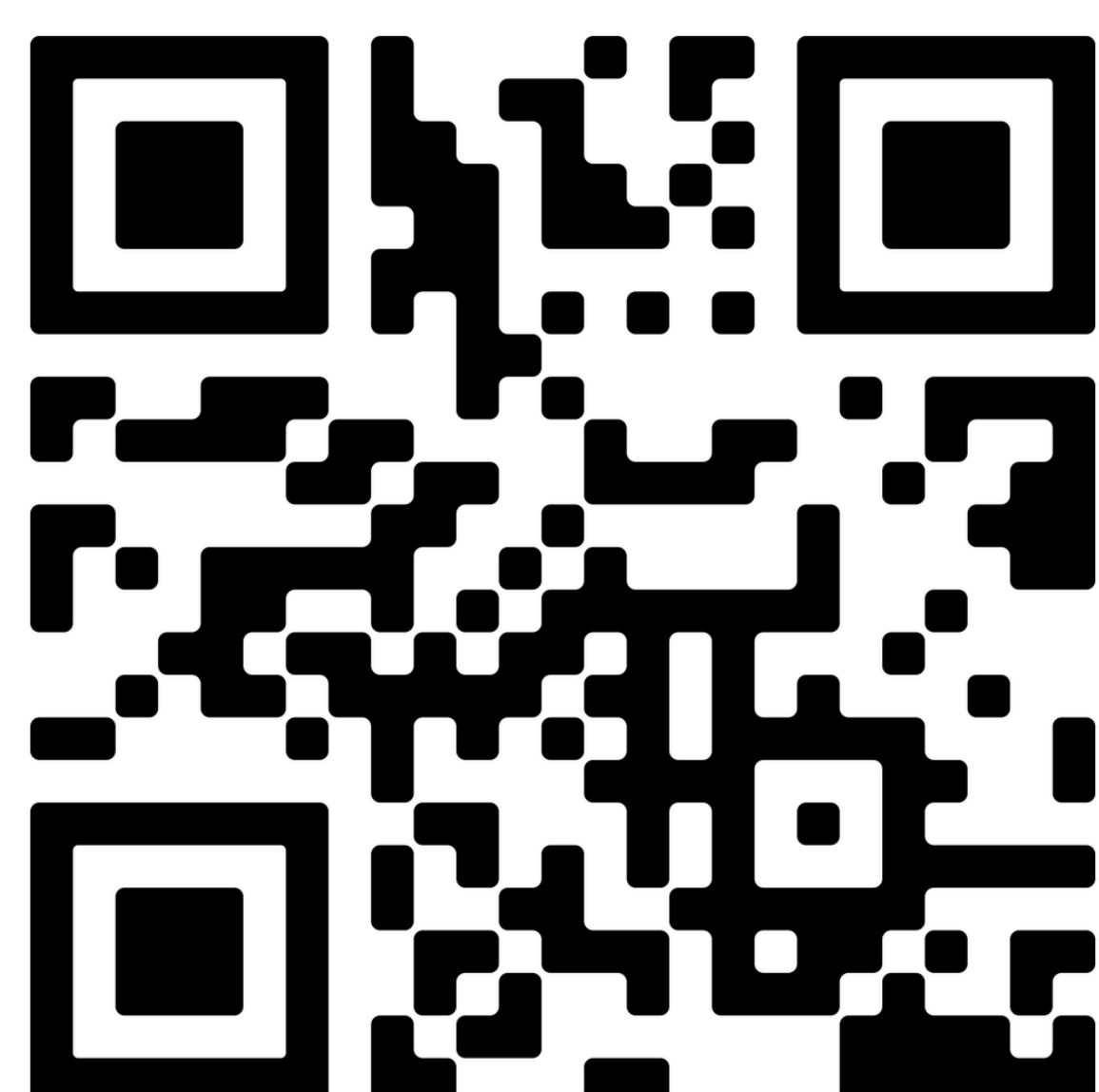
## Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic caused many major changes in higher education especially in journalism and communication programs. Universities around the world were forced to quickly move to online and remote learning which changed the way that students and professors communicated and used technology. This study examines how higher education institutions in the United States and Latin America responded to these challenges by adapting their teaching methods and use of digital technologies.

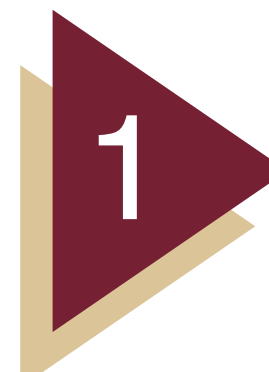
Key Points:

- Conducted between 2023-2025
- Compares U.S. universities and FELAFACS-affiliated schools in 20 Latin American countries
- Collaboration with ALMMCR
- Examines curriculum, teaching methods, and technology use (including AI)
- Identifies challenges and successful adaptations
- Aims to support flexible, inclusive communication programs
- Focus on preparing future journalists, especially in developing regions

## References



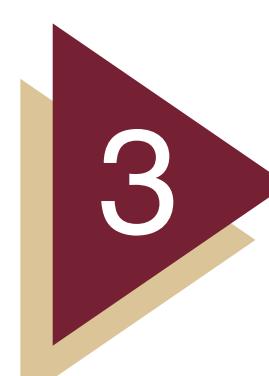
## Methodology



**1** Research Design - Created a cross-cultural study comparing communication and journalism programs in the U.S. and Latin America, focusing on curriculum, teaching methods, and technology use.



**2** Institution Selection - Included universities in the U.S. and schools affiliated with FELAFACS and ALMMCR across 20 Latin American countries (2023-2025).



**3** Data Collection - Used surveys (Qualtrics), reviewed curriculum documents, and gathered feedback from faculty and administrators about post-COVID changes.

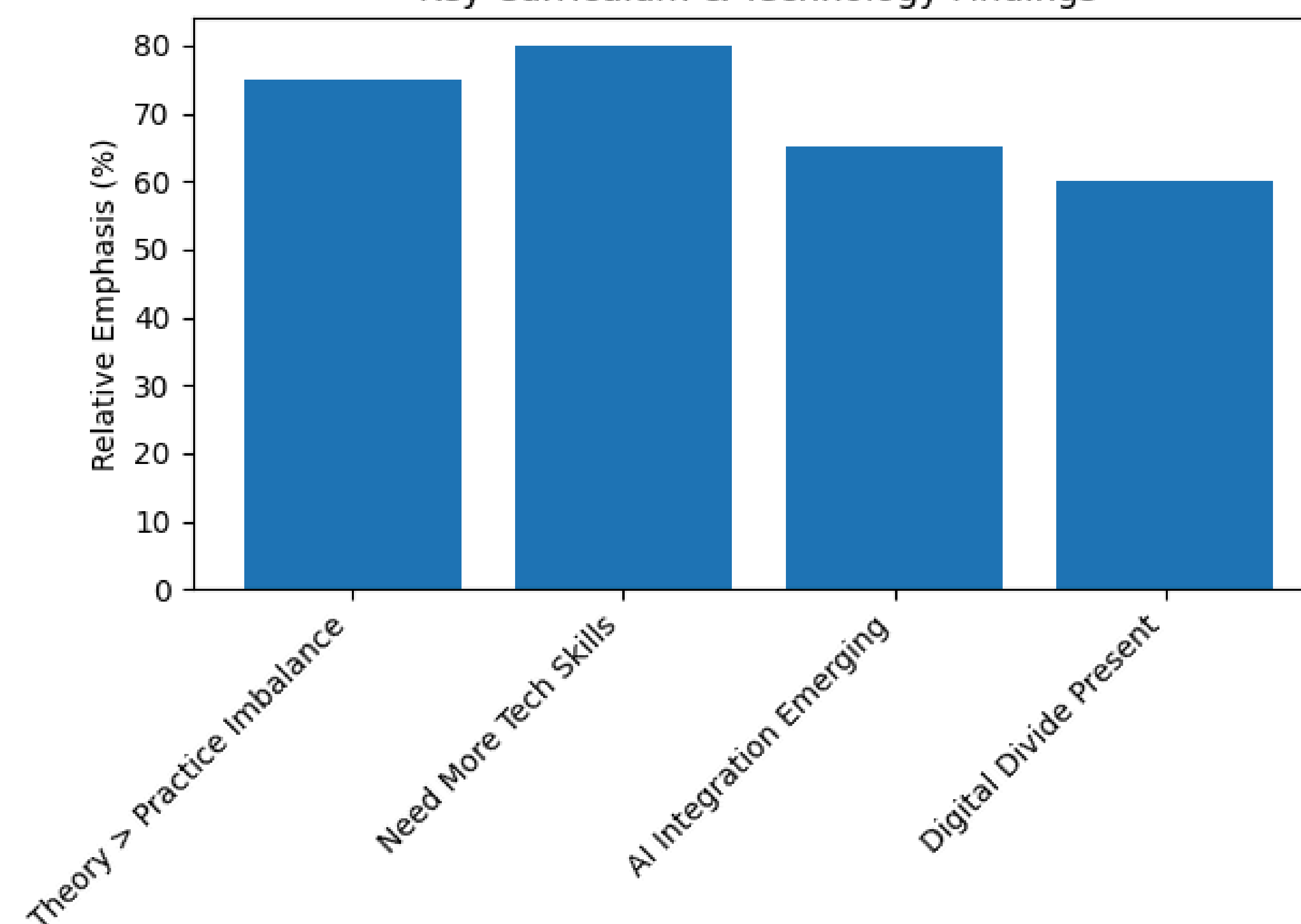


**4** Data Analysis - Compared results using basic statistics and identified common themes in technology use, AI integration, and teaching formats (in-person, hybrid, online).



**5** Recommendations - Combined findings to suggest improvements for stronger, technology-driven communication programs.

Key Curriculum & Technology Findings



## Results

- Ongoing curriculum updates across participating universities
- Continued imbalance between theoretical instruction and practical/technological skills
- Increased adoption of active methodologies
- Growing integration of digital tools and Artificial Intelligence in teaching
- Persistent digital divide affecting access and quality of learning
- Clear gap between academic training and labor market demands
- Rising need for hybrid professional profiles combining technical and creative skills
- Institutional efforts toward innovation, but uneven regional adaptation

## Conclusion

- Communication education has changed significantly after COVID-19
- Programs need to better connect classroom learning with real job market needs
- Students need both ethical foundations and strong digital/technical skills
- Artificial Intelligence should be used carefully and responsibly in teaching
- Universities should work more closely with industry and accreditation organizations
- Ongoing curriculum updates are necessary to stay current
- Improving programs will help prepare professionals who can positively impact society and democracy in Latin America
- Findings are based on participating institutions, so results may not represent all communication programs in Latin America or the U.S.
- Differences in national policies, resources, and technological access may affect comparisons across countries.

## Acknowledgements

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