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## Mapping Mobile Journalism in Academia: A Scoping Review

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**Abstract:** Mobile journalism (MoJo) has become an increasingly relevant topic in the evolving landscape of media. This study investigates the interest and involvement of researchers from higher education institutions in Central and Eastern Europe in the field of Mobile Journalism. Utilizing a quantitative approach, the research analyzes the scientific output of these scholars over the past decade (2014–2024), focusing on the frequency of publications indexed in the Web of Science and Scopus databases related to MoJo. Additionally, a qualitative analysis was conducted on 28 identified articles to explore the main thematic areas addressed by these scholars, offering a comprehensive overview of key topics and trends in the academic literature surrounding MoJo. The findings corroborate the hypothesis that there is a notable lack of published research on mobile journalism by Central and Eastern European scholars, as no relevant articles were discovered from authors affiliated with universities in this region. The thematic categories identified highlight a tendency to focus on the impact of technology on journalism and changes within the industry, indicating significant gaps in other important areas that warrant further exploration.

**Keywords:** mobile journalism, mojo, scoping review, Central Eastern Europe.

### Introduction

We are increasingly dependent on mobile devices. Regardless of profession, the smartphone has become an essential tool, always present in our pockets, a fact confirmed by global statistics: 97.6% of internet users aged between 16 and 64 own a smartphone (Kemp, 2024). [1] This massive proliferation of mobile devices has a significant impact on the media market, both in terms of consumption (Wolf & Schnauber, 2015) [2] and journalistic production (Molyneux, 2014) [3]; (Vaz Álvarez, 2017). [4] Gradually, yet inevitably, the public is increasingly turning to mobile phones for news consumption, as evidenced by the fact that 98.1% of internet users access media content on these devices (Kemp, 2024). [5]

Furthermore, smartphones not only change what we consume but also how we consume information, favoring practices such as news „snacking” or „grazing,” which involves frequent and brief access to information (Molyneux, 2018). [6]

Journalistic practice is significantly shaped by modern devices that possess advanced technical capabilities. These devices are not as costly compared to traditional professional equipment, making them accessible for many journalists (Mills et al., 2012). [7] Thus, they always have an effective tool at hand to film, record, or photograph at superior quality. In practice, the smartphone is compared to a „Swiss Army knife,” highlighting its versatility (Quinn, 2011). [8] The emergence of these devices has facilitated the development of mobile journalism, a phenomenon that has generated numerous discussions in both academic and industry settings (Campbell, 2013) [9]; (Rodrigues et al., 2021) [10]; (Salzmann et al., 2021). [11] This transformation has changed the way information is collected and distributed, adapting to the needs and expectations of an increasingly connected audience.

The concept of mobile journalism (MoJo) was introduced in Europe by Reuters and BBC (Quinn, 2009) [12], with the earliest groups of journalists utilizing mobile phones in their work emerging from these organizations. However, MoJo has predominantly developed in Western Europe, as well as in Australia, Asia, and the USA. For instance, in a ranking conducted by a British broadcaster titled „51 mobile journalists you should follow,” only two journalists from Central and Eastern Europe were included: Darko Flajpan, an international trainer from Croatia, and Jack Parrock, a correspondent and presenter from Poland (Kunova & Jacob, 2021). [13] It appears that in Central and Eastern Europe, information about the use of mobile journalism in newsrooms, as well as its approach in the academia, remains quite limited. This lack of representation in both practical and academic realms raises significant questions about the barriers faced by researchers and practitioners in these regions. It suggests that the discourse surrounding MoJo is not only underdeveloped but may also lack the diverse perspectives that could enrich the field.

Therefore, the primary purpose of this study is to examine the level of interest and involvement of researchers affiliated with higher education institutions from Central and Eastern Europe [14] in the topic of Mobile Journalism (MoJo). Specifically, the research aims to analyze the scientific output of scholars from this geographical area over the past decade (2014–2024) and identify how frequently they have published work indexed in the Web of Science and Scopus databases that focus on Mobile Journalism.

Moreover, the study seeks to explore the main thematic areas that these scholars have addressed in their scientific articles, providing a comprehensive overview of the key topics and trends that have emerged in relation to MoJo within academic literature. By analyzing the thematic content of these publica-

tions, the study aims to contribute to a better understanding of the role MoJo plays in academic discourse within Central and Eastern Europe.

The specific objectives of this study are as follows:

*Quantitative Assessment:* To quantify the number of academic publications by researchers affiliated with higher education institutions from Central and Eastern Europe that focus on Mobile Journalism and have been indexed in international academic databases (Web of Science and Scopus) between 2014 and 2024. This objective will help determine the extent of scholarly engagement with the topic in this region.

*Thematic Analysis:* To identify and analyze the primary thematic areas addressed by researchers in their Mobile Journalism-related scientific articles during the same period. This objective focuses on uncovering the key topics and trends in the academic exploration of Mobile Journalism

*Geographical and Institutional Mapping:* To map the geographical and institutional affiliations of the researchers who have published on Mobile Journalism, examining whether Central and Eastern Europe is adequately represented in global academic writings on the subject.

The central hypothesis of this study is that the number of researchers from Central and Eastern Europe who have published work on Mobile Journalism in the past decade is relatively small. This limited scholarly output indicates a potential gap in the academic literature on Mobile Journalism from this specific geographical area, suggesting that Mobile Journalism has not yet been fully embraced as a subject of academic inquiry within Central and Eastern Europe.

This hypothesis builds on the assumption that the discourse on Mobile Journalism has been more prominently shaped by researchers from Western European countries, which may imply an underrepresentation of perspectives from Central and Eastern Europe in global academic discussions. The study aims to confirm whether this gap exists and, if so, to what extent it may impact the broader understanding of Mobile Journalism.

Another hypothesis of the research is that the academic literature in Central and Eastern Europe does not sufficiently address themes that examine the practical perspective of field experts, such as journalists, and actors involved in media education, such as students and professors in the academia, in the context of Mobile Journalism (MoJo) practice. Additionally, we believe there is a lack of research dedicated to the analysis and use of the main mobile applications (iOS and Android) utilized by journalists in the production and post-production processes of journalistic content.

*Research questions:*

1. How many researchers affiliated with institutions from Central and Eastern Europe have published scientific articles in academic journals (Web of Sci-

ence and Scopus), with the term „mobile journalism” in the title, in the past 10 years?

2. What are the main themes addressed in scientific articles on „mobile journalism” published in academic journals (Web of Science and Scopus) over the past 10 years?

### *Methodology*

To identify the corpus, the search engines of two of the most well-known academic databases internationally, Scopus and Web of Science, were utilized. The advanced search function was employed, with the time frame (2014 – 2024) and search terms: mobile+journalism (the „+” sign was used between words to search for the exact phrase) being entered. The search was conducted only in the title. Following the search, the generated results were exported into two Excel documents. From the search on the Web of Science platform, 17 results were generated, while the Scopus platform delivered 54 results, of which two were excluded as they were erratum.

The research aimed to conduct a strict qualitative analysis of scientific articles published in journals; thus, books, book chapters etc., were eliminated. The two databases downloaded from Web of Science and Scopus were combined in the next step. The material was counted only once for articles indexed in both databases, resulting in 28 articles.

Quantitative and qualitative methods were applied to obtain conclusive results regarding the research questions and hypotheses posed. Thus, quantitative content analysis was applied to the entire corpus, while qualitative content analysis was applied to the corpus consisting solely of scientific articles. By applying these two research methods, a complementary approach was pursued, presenting statistics regarding the state of mobile journalism in the academia, as well as the main themes addressed by the authors in their articles.

Regarding qualitative content analysis, a preliminary reading of the articles was conducted to identify emerging themes. After the first reading, thematic categories that appeared frequently were noted. Based on the preliminary reading, an analysis grid was developed, including a list of codes for the thematic categories and several sub-themes tracked in each analyzed article. After defining the grid, the articles were re-read and coded according to the grid, associating text segments with thematic categories and encountered themes. Coding was done manually, without the use of dedicated software.

After completing the qualitative analysis, a database was set up in an excel document. Each article was assigned a code (A1 – article indicator and article number), and all thematic categories and themes identified during the analysis were inserted into the document.

## Results

The search on the Web of Science platform generated 17 results, consisting of the following document types: articles in journals (10), book chapters (4), proceeding paper (1), review article (2). On the Scopus platform, 54 results were generated: 10 articles in journals, 14 book chapters, 5 conference papers, 4 books, 2 reviews, 1 Erratum, and 1 Retracted. The last two were eliminated, leaving 52 results (See Fig. 1 for a comparative perspective).

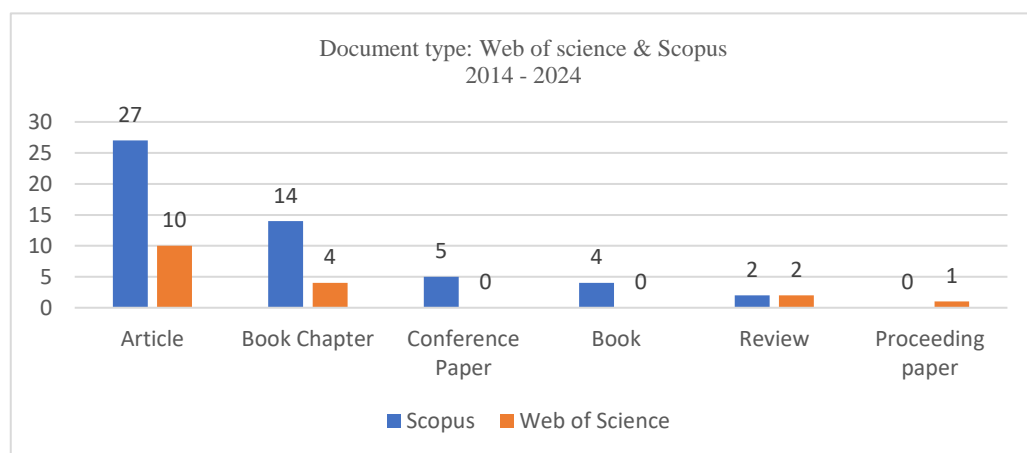


Fig. 1. Type of documents indexed Web of Science & Scopus

During this ten-year period, four books indexed in Scopus were published, while no volume containing the phrase „mobile journalism” in the title was identified in Web of Science. The books were published in the following years: 2015, 2018, 2020, and 2021. The publishers most interested in this topic are Taylor and Francis, with three volumes, while Peter Lang published the other volume.

The authors of the volumes are affiliated with educational institutions from the following countries: USA (1), Australia (1), UK (2), Norway (1), and Germany (2). All volumes were published in English. The authors of the 28 articles published in scientific journals are affiliated with universities in the following countries: USA (15), Spain (10), Norway (6), Portugal (5), Germany (4), Jordan (3), Australia (2), India (2), Kazakhstan (2), UK (1), Switzerland (1), Ghana (1), and New Zealand (1) – (Fig. 2).

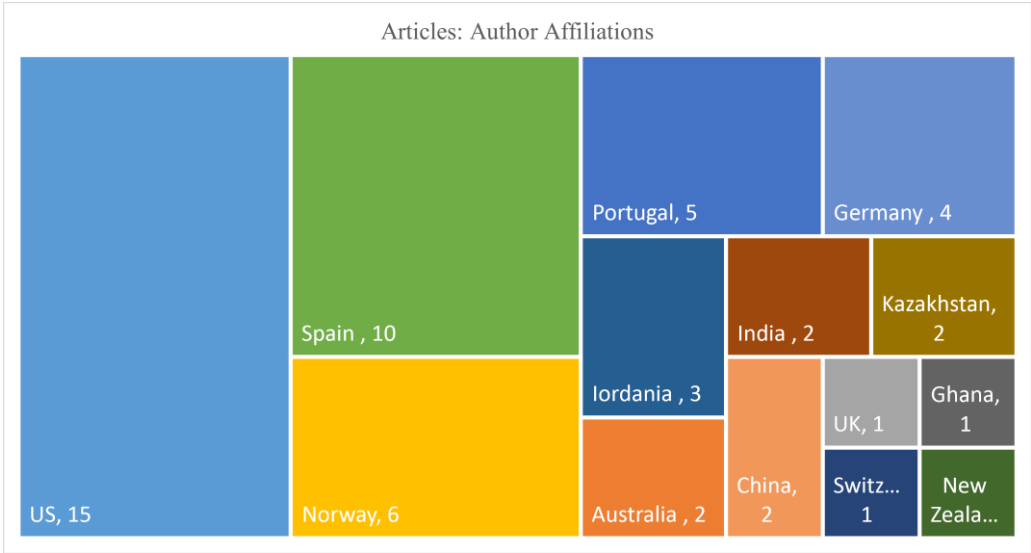


Fig. 2. The authors' university affiliations by country

Based on the results, the years with the highest number of publications were 2018, with 5 articles, and 2019 and 2015, each with 4 articles. Following those were 2016, 2020, and 2023, each with 3 articles published per year.

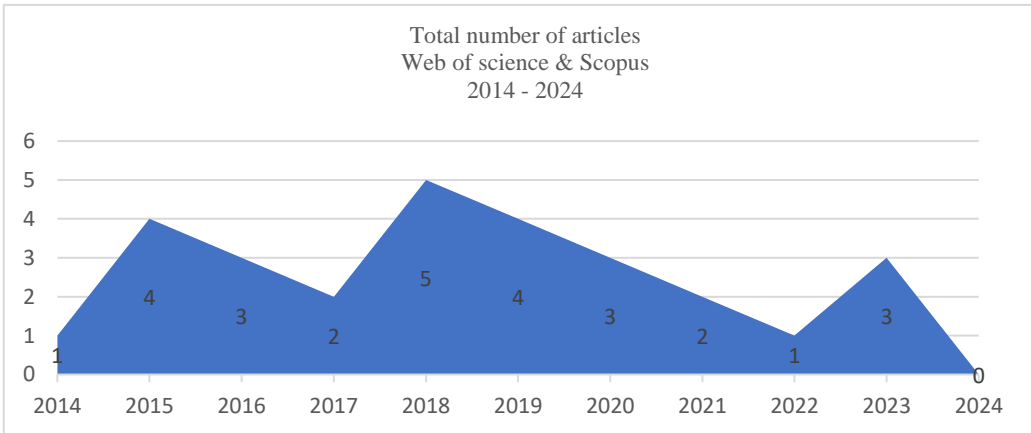


Fig 3. The distribution of articles from 2014 to 2024.

In relation to publishers, Routledge and Sage Journals are the most significant, publishing 11 and 5 articles, respectively, out of a total of 28 materials. The majority of the articles were published in Digital Journalism (*About This Journal*, n.d.) [15] and Journalism Practice (*Aims and Scope*, n.d.) [16], as well as Journalism and Mass Communication Educator (*Description*, n.d.). [17] In terms of

the number of authors, 36% of the articles had 2 authors, 32% were written by 3 authors, and 25% had a single author.

*Tab. 1. Journals in which the articles were published*

<b>Nr.</b>	<b>Journal</b>	<b>Number of articles</b>
1.	Universidad del Rosario	1
2.	Digital Journalism	4
3.	Journalism	1
4.	Electronic News	1
5.	JOURNAL OF APPLIED JOURNALISM & MEDIA STUDIES	1
6.	VISUAL Review. International Visual Culture Review	1
7.	JOURNALISM PRACTICE	3
8.	World of Media	1
9.	Journalism and Mass Communication Educator	3
10	International Journal of Interactive Mobile Technologies	1
11	Information Sciences Letters	1
12	<u>Comunicar</u>	1
13	BRAZILIAN JOURNALISM RESEARCH	1
14	MEDIA AND COMMUNICATION	1
15	Journal of Media Practice	1
16	Journal of Media Business Studies	1
17	<u>Estudios Sobre el Mensaje Periodístico</u>	1
18	SUSTAINABILITY	1
19	Communication and the Public	1
20	COMMUNICATION & SOCIETY	1
21	Learning, Media and Technology	1

After conducting qualitative content analysis, the following thematic categories were identified: a) Technology's impact on journalism (T1); b) Changes in the industry (T2); c) Dynamics of audience engagement and news distribution (T3); d) Mojo education/training – industry (T4); e) Mojo education/training – University (T4b); f) Social impact (T5); g) Ethics and responsibility (T6).

The most frequently encountered thematic categories in the analyzed articles were those referring to changes in the journalism industry (T2), the impact of technology on journalistic practice (T1), the dynamics of audience engagement and the distribution of journalistic products on social media (T3), as well as mojo education both in the industry (newsrooms, agencies, television) (T4) and in the university environment (T4b). Conversely, the least commonly encountered thematic categories were those related to the social impact of mobile journalism (T5) and those addressing the ethical and responsibility challenges faced by mojo journalists (T6).

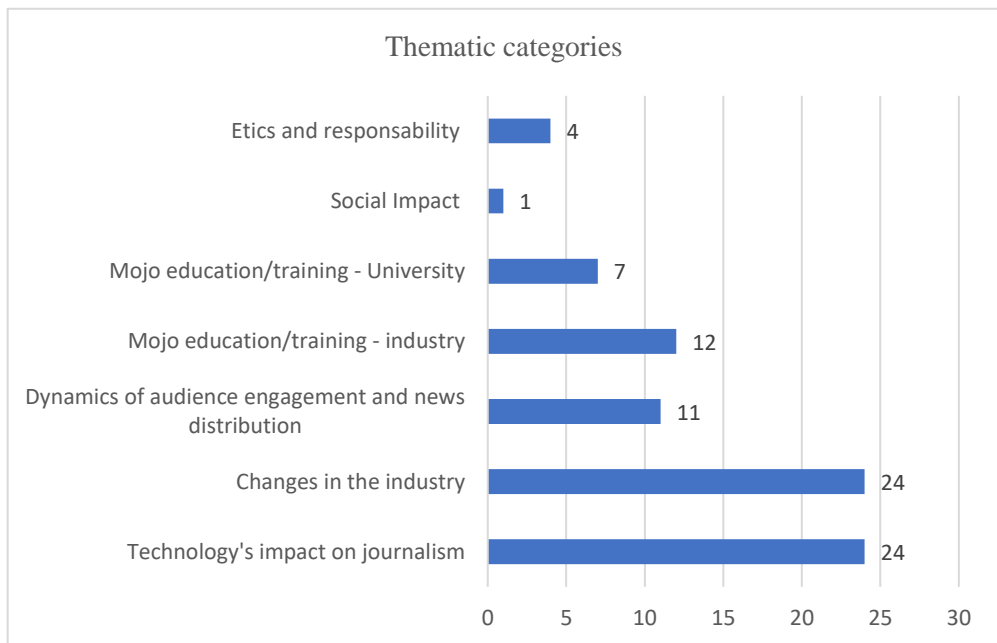


Fig. 4. The thematic categories identified in the corpus

Regarding themes, for the thematic category T1 - „Technology's impact on journalism,” the most frequently encountered were: „Advantages of using MoJo” (5), „Disadvantages of using MoJo” (5), „Transformation of journalistic practices due to mobile and digital technologies” (4), „Journalistic products are adapted to align with mobile news consumers' preferences” (3), „The use of digital devices in journalistic practice” (2), „Development of mojo skills (technical) for journalists” (2), „The use of mobile apps in journalistic practice” (3).

For example, one of the advantages of using MoJo expressed in an article referred to the fact that the smartphone does not make interviewees feel uncomfortable as when they have a camera, lights, microphones, and an entire journalistic team in front of them. “With the smartphone you are really communicating (...); you put yourself at the same level as the people you are interviewing, using



the same technology. You do not come with a microphone, a camera (...) that creates a barrier” (Sacco et al., 2018). [18] Among other advantages, reduced costs could be mentioned (Abuhasirah & Oreqat, 2023) [19], portability (Rodrigues et al., 2021) [20], or “freedom in reporting breaking news” (Walck et al., 2015). [21] As disadvantages, some authors mention that the use of MoJo in direct relation to Social Media has “maximized the unauthenticity of incidents and news content” (Jamil & Appiah-Adjei, 2019). [22] Other identified disadvantages include: „Poor quality of materials produced with mobile phones” (Rodrigues et al., 2021) [23] or reduced efficiency in performing the profession, as “splitting their attention among multiple tasks reduced their overall competence” (Blankenship, 2016, p. 7). [24]

In the thematic category T2 - „Changes in the industry,” the following themes were included: „Adapting to Digital and Market-Driven Changes: Multi-skilled Journalists and the Impact of Mojo” (10), „Journalists' perspective on MoJo: negative” (6), „Mojo usage in start-up and small newsrooms” (3), „Social Media use for Mojo” (2), „Mojo workflow” (2), „Factors that influence the use of mobile journalism” (1), and „Journalism students adapt better to mobile technology” (1).

The thematic category T3 - „Dynamics of audience engagement and news distribution” includes the following themes: „The role of social media in sharing content created using Mojo” (7), „Mobile journalism: preferred by the audience” (2), „Mojo changes news consumption and public interaction” (1), „Mojo’s importance in producing and distributing news” (1).

An important theme encountered in the articles highlights the intrinsic connection between MoJo and Social Media (Kumar & Mohamed Haneef, 2018) [25]; (Richardson, 2017) [26]; (Sacco et al., 2018) [27]; (Wenger et al., 2014) [28], as one of the major advantages of mobile journalism practice lies in the speed with which content created can be shared on social networks making it “more accessible to the audience, which helps increase their readership” (Perreault & Stanfield, 2019, p. 10). [29]

From the thematic categories T4 - „Mojo education/training – industry” and T4b - „Mojo education/training – University,” the following themes are included: „Development of mojo skills (technical) for journalists” (4), „Mojo contributes to adopting visual thinking” (1), „Integrating ethical and legal awareness” (1), „Journalism education programs are adapting to mojo industry shift?” (1), „Mojo Education lacks critical thinking” (1), „Mobile technology has impacted learning in journalism and communication schools” (1), „MOOCs can prove to be a successful tool for mobile journalism training” (1), „Development of mojo skills (technical) for journalists” (4), „Mojo mindset” (1), „Multimedia storytelling” (1), „Social Media courses for journalism students” (1).

Another very important aspect that the authors reviewed relates to the technical skills that MoJo journalists must acquire through education (either in universities or privately), especially since “the newsroom of today is made up of journalists who are able to create content on multiple platforms and can pull it all together to post quickly online” (Wenger et al., 2014). [30] Also, a problematic aspect highlighted in the analyzed articles refers to the fact that “Journalism schools are equipping their students with the technical skills and sensibilities to navigate and manage the changing landscape and functionalities of mobile technology while doing little to equip students with a critical eye to challenge the drivers and outcomes of mobility in the field” (Bui & Moran, 2020, p. 8). [31] It seems that the emphasis is placed on the “technological aspect of mobile journalism” (Cervi et al., 2020, p. 3) [32] and less on “a change of mindset” (Rodrigues et al., 2021, p. 293). [33]

The penultimate thematic category T5 - „Social impact” includes a single theme, namely „The role of mobile journalism in documenting protests and social movements” (1). The final category T6 - „Ethics and responsibility” includes the following themes: „Mojo contributes to the emergence of a new form of militant journalism and advocacy” (1), „Mojo Ethic challenges” (1), „MoJo challenges: fake news risk” (1), „Respecting journalism ethics” (1).

## **Discussions**

The quantitative analysis results highlight a relatively low number of materials published between 2014 and 2024, indexed in Web of Science and Scopus, that contain the phrase „mobile journalism” in the title. Although Mobile Journalism is a current topic, the 69 materials (17 in Web of Science and 52 in Scopus) suggest that the field is still not exhausted in the academia.

Furthermore, the results regarding the affiliations of authors who signed scientific articles on MoJo during 2014 – 2024 are interesting. None of the authors are affiliated with an academic institution in Central and Eastern Europe, which may underline a notable absence of this region in global academic discussions about MoJo. The USA leads the podium with 15 representatives, followed by Spain with 10 authors, Portugal with 5 authors, and Germany with 4 authors, which are also the only countries representing the Southern, Southwestern, and Western regions of Europe, indicating a concentration of research on the MoJo theme in these more developed areas of Europe. The results are similar to those identified in research conducted by a team of authors from Spain, who performed a systematic literature review of “those studies that address the relation between mobile devices and communication and journalism” (López-García et al., 2019, p. 9). [34] They analyzed 199 articles indexed in Web of Science from 2008 to 2018. The results showed that the authors “come from universities based in 30 different countries” (López-García et al., 2019, p. 12). [35] Like in our case, “The

United States is the country with the greatest presence throughout the revised corpus” (López-García et al., 2019, p. 12). [36] Australia and the UK completed the podium; however, the authors do not mention any state from Central and Eastern Europe.

This situation can be attributed to several factors, including a lack of necessary infrastructure for research, limited financial resources, or low interest from the academic community in this region. Mobile Journalism requires a high level of digital skills, a multimedia approach deeply anchored in the Social Media era, and access to advanced technology. This could explain why researchers from more developed countries like the USA, Australia, or the UK are better represented in the field.

This disparity between regions, caused by various factors that we can only speculate about (different technological development, media infrastructure, or cultural and economic differences between the studied regions), raises some questions and possible directions for future research. It is interesting to see to what extent Mobile Journalism is perceived differently in Central and Eastern Europe by professionals or actors involved in media (such as students, professors, and journalists), compared to other more developed regions.

The most frequently encountered thematic categories were „Changes in the journalism industry” and „The impact of technology on journalistic practice.” This reflects global concerns about the rapid digitization of the press and journalists' adaptation to new mobile technologies. Journalism is undergoing radical changes, not so much from the perspective of journalistic rules, which remain, with minor variations, the same, but from the perspective of how journalists must adapt to audience demands, how information is consumed and distributed, and how journalistic products are adapted based on consumption patterns, etc. The modern journalist must be multimedia, presenting information through all available means (text, still images, moving images, sound) and on all available platforms to reach increasingly digitalized and “mobilized” audiences. To do this, they must keep pace with changes in the industry and transform themselves. These are global trends that resonate in academic writings in the literature from the USA, Southern and Western Europe but are apparently lacking in the academic discourse from Central and Eastern Europe.

Education in the field of MoJo, both in newsrooms and in universities, is an essential aspect in several studies but remains unexplored in most of the analyzed articles. Also, just like in the case of all identified thematic categories, Central and Eastern Europe is not represented in the academic literature on this topic. This may indicate an opportunity for researchers from CEE to theorize the subject in scientific articles and a gap regarding the integration of MoJo into the educational curricula of universities in the region.

Regarding limitations, the study focused exclusively on articles indexed in the Web of Science and Scopus databases, which predominantly include works in English. This may lead to excluding research published in other languages or local journals, thus underestimating the number of publications on Mobile Journalism in Central and Eastern Europe. Another limitation is that the search was carried out only using the phrase „Mobile Journalism” and exclusively in the titles of the articles. This criterion was chosen to allow for a qualitative analysis of the results. Additionally, although the analyzed period covers the years 2014–2024, articles published in recent years may be underrepresented due to delays in publication or indexing, representing a point for improvement for future follow-up analyses.

### Conclusions

The findings support the hypothesis that there is a significant lack of published research on mobile journalism by scholars from Central and Eastern Europe, as no articles were found from authors affiliated with universities in this region. This underrepresentation indicates a significant opportunity for future research in the region, suggesting the need for universities and research centres to invest more in this emerging field to increase the global visibility of regional research. Furthermore, the results partially confirm the second hypothesis: although a few articles explore journalists' perspectives on Mobile Journalism, the approach from the perspective of students and educators is lacking, representing an important direction for future research. At the same time, the mobile applications used in journalism have not been sufficiently theorized in the analyzed works. The main conclusion is that there is unexplored potential in Mobile Journalism education, both in the industry and in the academia. Integrating this discipline into university programs and initiating training courses for journalists could stimulate academic interest in Central and Eastern Europe.

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