

Correlation between training in bibliographic research and media and information literacy (mil), and the quality of investigative journalism reports: a comparative study in the main axis of Bolivia

Correlación entre la formación en investigación bibliográfica y Alfabetización Mediática Informativa (AMI), y la calidad del reportaje de periodismo de investigación: Un estudio comparativo en el eje troncal de Bolivia

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ABSTRACT

Keywords:

Journalism education, bibliographic research, media and information literacy, investigative journalism, journalistic quality, source verification.

This research aims to analyze the correlation between training in bibliographic research, both in physical archives and online, and Media and Information Literacy (MIL) on the practices of journalists who published investigative reports in the cities of La Paz, Cochabamba, and Santa Cruz between February and May 2026. The study employs a mixed-methods, descriptive-correlational, and content analysis design. One hundred and fifty journalists (50 per city) were surveyed to measure their self-perceived technical skills. Twelve investigative editors (four per city) were interviewed, and thirty investigative journalism reports published during the study period were audited. The analysis cross-referenced the variables of training level with the technical quality, ethics, and documentary diversity of the final product. The findings show that 37% of the journalists interviewed received specific training. Forty-five percent stated that they received training in investigative journalism; however, 27% of that percentage acknowledged that the training was inadequate. Regarding media literacy, more than 90% of the journalists surveyed stated that they had not received any training in this area. It is concluded that integrating bibliographic research skills is vital for quality journalistic transposition, enabling professionals to confront the infodemic and regain credibility through the application of scientific rigor to journalism.

RESUMEN

Palabras clave:

Journalistic training, bibliographic research, media and information

La investigación busca analizar la correlación de la formación en investigación bibliográfica, tanto en archivos físicos como en web, y la Alfabetización Mediática e Informativa (AMI) en la práctica de periodistas, que publicaron reportajes de investigación, en las ciudades

literacy, investigative journalism, journalistic quality, source verification.

de La Paz, Cochabamba y Santa Cruz, entre febrero y mayo de 2026. El estudio propone un diseño mixto, descriptivo-correlacional y de análisis de contenido. Se encuestó a 150 periodistas (50 por ciudad), para medir la autopercepción de competencias técnicas. Se entrevistó a 12 editores de investigación (4 por ciudad) y se auditaron 30 reportajes periodísticos de investigación publicados durante el cuatrimestre de estudio. El análisis cruzó las variables de nivel de formación frente a la calidad técnica, ética y diversidad documental del producto final. Los hallazgos muestran que el 37% de los periodistas entrevistados recibieron formación específica. El 45% afirmó que se formó en el área de investigación periodística; aunque, el 27%, de ese porcentaje, reconoció que la formación fue deficitaria. En lo que se refiere a la AMI, más del 90% de los periodistas encuestados aseguraron que no recibieron formación alguna al respecto. Se concluye que integrar competencias de investigación bibliográfica fue vital para la transposición periodística de calidad, permitiendo al profesional enfrentar la infodemia y recuperar la credibilidad, mediante el rigor científico aplicado al periodismo.

Introduction

The Investigative Journalism Ecosystem in Bolivia's Central Region

Contemporary investigative journalism in Bolivia operates in an environment of high informational complexity, characterized by an infodemic, a structural crisis in the profession, and the volatility of digital data. In the cities of La Paz, Cochabamba, and Santa Cruz (the country's main hub), journalism faces the urgent need to go beyond the surface of the web to craft stories characterized by documentary depth, social responsibility, and ethical rigor (Matienzo-López, 2019).

However, the existing literature highlights a critical mismatch between university curricula and the demands of the labor market; technical training in digital production tools is often prioritized over theoretical, analytical, and in-depth research skills (López-Martín & Córdova-Cabús, 2020; Acharqui, 2023).

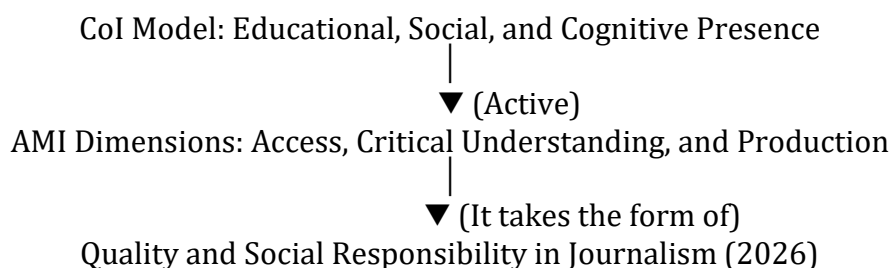
This imbalance highlights a gap in the scientific literature that this study aims to address: to assess whether proficiency in Media and Information Literacy (MIL) and training in bibliographic research serve as determining factors in the final quality of the report.

Thus, the study is based on the hypothesis that these two independent variables are not complementary, but rather necessary prerequisites for ensuring that journalistic products demonstrate factual accuracy and social responsibility in the current Bolivian context.

Journalism Education as a Community of Inquiry (CoI) and Its Connection to Access Skills

To understand how these skills are acquired, journalism education must be viewed as a comprehensive educational process that trains professionals in the collection, analysis, and dissemination of accurate information, combining ethical and humanistic principles with multimedia practice (Alonso-Betancourt et al., 2020).

This process is effectively grounded in the Community of Inquiry (CoI) model, which posits that the construction of advanced knowledge depends on the dialectical interplay between three dimensions: pedagogical, social, and cognitive (Garrison et al., 2000; Cruz et al., 2020).



From this perspective, teaching requires that educators act as designers of collaborative environments that expose students to the rigors of research and the technical aspects of the field (García-Galera et al., 2021; Mesa, 2023). By integrating social engagement—which humanizes learning through two-way, empathetic communication—dropout rates are reduced and the acquisition of complex skills is facilitated, such as navigating out-of-print historical archives or engaging in critical curation on the deep web (Rodríguez-Pallares & Segado-Boj, 2020; Hunter, 2026).

Finally, cognitive presence fosters critical thinking and problem-solving through practical dilemmas (Cuesta & Chacón, 2017; Rodríguez et al., 2023). In the field of media management and education, it is this cognitive presence that directly activates the dimension of access to and use of media literacy skills proposed by Pérez-Tornero and Varis (2012). In other words, a journalist exposed to high cognitive demands not only uses basic technical tools but also acquires the practical knowledge to utilize Boolean operators, audit government databases, and retrieve information that has been deleted from the internet (Pérez-Tornero & Varis, 2012; UNESCO, 2025).

Literature Review and MIL: The Filter of Critical Understanding

Literature and documentary research in archives and on the web is a systematic process of searching for, locating, and analyzing existing physical and digital data (Nazakat & KAS Media Program for Asia, 2018). This method provides journalists with a diachronic perspective on the current state of knowledge, enabling them to identify information gaps and formulate more incisive research questions (Hunter, 2013; Anchante & Angulo-Giraldo, 2024). However, in the age of digital misinformation, this methodological effort is insufficient unless it is combined with Media and Information Literacy (MIL).

The AMI equips journalists with the critical skills needed to evaluate, deconstruct, and act ethically in the face of information overload (DW Akademie, 2021; Aguaded, Jaramillo-Dent & Ponce, 2021). By aligning with the dimension of critical understanding outlined by Pérez-Tornero and Varis (2012)—which requires personal autonomy, ideological interpretation, and an assessment of intentions—MIL transforms literature review into a mechanism for factual quality control (Bureau & Cedeño, 2026). Journalists are no longer passive recipients but rather become critics who question the media environment as a social construct (Pérez-Rodríguez et al., 2015; Sibrian & Maureira, 2024).

This skill is essential for implementing methodological triangulation, requiring the researcher to compare testimonies from living sources with documents, contracts, and pre-existing laws, thereby exposing lies, contradictions, or algorithmic biases (García-Ruiz et al., 2014; Marta-Lazo et al., 2020; Hunter, 2026).

Quality and Social Responsibility in Investigative Journalism as a Product of Factual Accuracy

Investigative journalism is not merely an in-depth news story; it is a patient, thorough, and systematic process that seeks to shed light on an issue of significant public interest by uncovering facts that are being kept secret (Rivera, 2021; Ressa, 2023; Roger & Olivier, 2024). Therefore, the technical quality and social responsibility of this genre are reflected in the third dimension of media literacy: communication and creative production (Pérez-Tornero and Varis, 2012).

This productive dimension requires journalists not only to master transmedia aesthetics in order to adapt stories to various formats (audio, short video, streaming), but also to act as facilitators of public debate and media educators for a prosumer audience (UNESCO, 2025; Casas-Moreno & López-Paredes, 2025). Social responsibility also involves managing digital resilience and psychological safety to process sensitive content without losing empathy (Hunter, 2026), as well as the ability to work within collaborative leadership networks (Roger & Olivier, 2024).

Ultimately, the ethics and credibility of journalism rest on its ability to serve as a mechanism for checks and balances and accountability that compels institutions to be transparent (Lima da Rocha & Rufino de Sousa, 2023). By upholding the right to information enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, investigative

journalism strengthens democracy and often becomes the only avenue to social justice for marginalized groups (Cruz & García, 2024; Roger & Olivier, 2024).

Consequently, this study empirically examines how the combination of solid training in literature review and high levels of AMI correlates with the production of reports that meet these quality standards in Bolivia’s central region during the 2026 administration.

Method

Research Approach, Type, and Design

This study is based on a mixed-methods approach using a concurrent triangulation design (DITRIAC). This model allows for the simultaneous collection, analysis, and comparison of quantitative and qualitative data, providing a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon by combining the power of statistical generalization with the depth of narrative analysis.

This is a descriptive-correlational study. It is descriptive because it characterizes the current state of competencies in documentary and web-based bibliographic research, as well as Media and Information Literacy (MIL), in Bolivia’s core regions (La Paz, Cochabamba, and Santa Cruz). It is a correlational study because it seeks to statistically determine the degree of relationship and dependence between that level of training (independent variable) and the technical and ethical quality of the final journalistic product (dependent variable).

The study design is non-experimental, ex post facto, and cross-sectional, with data collection conducted strictly between February and May 2026.

Population, Sample, and Selection Criteria

The study population was geographically defined as the central region of Bolivia, encompassing the cities of La Paz, Cochabamba, and Santa Cruz. Due to the lack of an official, up-to-date census of active investigative journalists in the country, a non-probabilistic convenience sample was used, structured into three distinct units of analysis to ensure the traceability of the triangulation:

- Journalists (n = 150): Fifty (50) active journalists in each city along the main corridor, dedicated to producing in-depth investigative reports in print, television, or digital media.
- Editors (n = 12):** Four (4) editors of investigative units per city, selected based on professional qualifications (at least 5 years in the position and a track record in coordinating complex journalistic projects).
- Reports (n = 30): Ten (10) published investigative journalism reports, focusing on Bolivia: La Paz, Cochabamba, and Santa Cruz, in both digital and traditional settings during the four-month period under study (February–May 2026).

Operationalization of Variables

To ensure the study’s analytical validity, the macro variables were broken down into specific dimensions, indicators, and measurement scales, as shown in the following table:

Table 1
Dimensions, indicators, and specific measurement scales

Variable	Dimension	Indicators / Items	Scale / Instrument
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Independent Variable (IV):	Access and Technical Use	Use of Boolean operators, navigating the <i>deep web</i> , open data mining, and management of physical and historical archives.	Rating from 1 to 5 (Likert scale) Questionnaire
Training in Bibliographic Research and AMI	Critical Thinking	Assessing the source's intentions, deconstructing media biases, fact-checking (<i>fact-checking</i>).	Rating from 1 to 5 (Likert scale) Questionnaire
Dependent Variable (DV):	Documentary Rigor and Hybridization	Source diversity index (ratio of analog to digital sources), traceability of evidence, accuracy of statistical data.	Observation Form (Frequency and Compliance Metrics)
Technical Quality/Ethics of Journalism	Ethics and Responsibility	Respect for the right of reply, consistency in the use of citations (formal stylistic criteria), and the absence of unintentional plagiarism or ideological bias.	Observation Form (Dichotomous Scale or Quality Rubric)

Note. Created by the author.

Data Collection Tools

Three specific instruments were designed and administered, and were subjected to rigorous validity and reliability checks:

- Competency Self-Assessment Questionnaire (quantitative): Consisting of 22 items measured on a 5-point Likert scale (1: Strongly disagree, 5: I completely agree).
- Semi-structured interview guide for editors (qualitative): Focused on exploring the cognitive presence of the CoI model and the resolution of real-world ethical dilemmas in newsrooms.
- Literature review and content analysis (quantitative/qualitative) worksheet: A matrix applied to the 30 reports to assess the formal rigor of citations, the traceability of documentary evidence, and the integration of archives.

Validation and Reliability of Instruments

To ensure the validity of the content, the three tools were evaluated by a panel of five expert judges (two PhDs in research methodology, two AMI specialists, and an investigative journalism editor with an international track record). The Aiken V-coefficient was calculated, yielding an average value of $V = 0.89$, which confirmed the appropriateness, clarity, and relevance of the instruments.

The reliability of the self-perception questionnaire was determined through a pilot study conducted with 15 journalists who were not part of the final sample, yielding a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.84, indicating high internal consistency.

To eliminate evaluator bias in the Bibliographic Audit Form, the analysis of the 30 reports was conducted by two independent coders using a double-blind method. The inter-rater reliability index was calculated using Cohen's Kappa (κ), yielding a kappa value of 0.78, which is considered highly reliable for content analysis methodologies.

Data Analysis and Bias Control Procedures

The quantitative data were analyzed using SPSS statistical software (version 26). To minimize methodological bias and ensure the validity of the inferences, the following sequential analytical protocol was implemented:

Quantitative and inferential phase:

- Normality test: Before performing the correlation analysis, the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test (suitable for $n > 50$) was applied. Since the variables derived from the sum scores of the Likert scales did not deviate significantly from a normal distribution ($p > 0.05$), the use of parametric statistics was justified.

- **Correlation of Variables:** Pearson's correlation coefficient (r) was used to measure the strength and direction of the relationship between the Level of Training (VI) and the Quality of Reporting (VD). The effect size was interpreted according to Cohen's thresholds, with the level of statistical significance set at a critical p -value of <0.05 .
- **Analysis of Variance (ANOVA):** For the comparative study between La Paz, Cochabamba, and Santa Cruz, a one-way ANOVA was used to identify significant differences in skill levels among the three geographic regions along the main corridor.

Qualitative phase and triangulation: The data from the in-depth interviews were analyzed using thematic content analysis with the assistance of ATLAS.ti software. The categories were constructed using a combination of methods (deductive, based on the CoI model, and inductive, based on the testimonies).

Qualitative bias was controlled for through theoretical saturation and data triangulation. The journalists' statements (self-perception) were directly compared with the editors' structural assessments (interviews) and the empirical evidence gathered from print and digital texts (literature review), thereby creating a matrix of absolute traceability that validates the study's final conclusions.

Results

The following section presents the results, which summarize the findings obtained after administering the data collection instruments along Bolivia's main highway: La Paz, Cochabamba, and Santa Cruz.

Assessment of the Academic Offerings and the Current State of Training in Bibliographic Research and MIL

A review of the curricula at core journalism training institutions revealed that the systematic teaching of bibliographic research is a marginal component: only two technical institutes and two private universities explicitly include this subject in their curricula.

With regard to the sample of journalists surveyed ($N = 150$), the distribution of their educational background yielded the following quantitative data. With regard to specific training, 37.3% ($n = 56$) received formal instruction in literature review (both physical and digital). In general training, 44.7% ($n = 67$) did not receive specific bibliographic instruction, but rather generic training in journalistic research. Within this subgroup, 26.8% ($n = 18$) described this training as "inadequate" in practical terms.

When considering additional training by market, 35.3% ($n = 53$) were required to take postgraduate programs or external technical workshops after completing their bachelor's degree in order to meet the practical demands of the media.

In the area of Media and Information Literacy (MIL), the shortfall is severe: 92.0% ($n = 138$) of respondents stated that they had not received any kind of theoretical or practical training. Only 8% ($n = 12$) were able to identify the direct relationship between AMI and media literacy, and just 5.3% ($n = 8$) demonstrated a practical understanding of the dimensions of access and use.

When asked about the conceptual components of AMI proposed by UNESCO, 56% ($n = 84$) of the journalists distinguished between critical sense and critical thinking. The basis for this distinction was distributed as follows:

Table 2

The difference between a critical sense and critical thinking

Percentage of Journalists	Characterization of Critical Sense and Critical Thinking
38% (n = 57)	He defined critical thinking strictly as a receptive attitude of skepticism or distrust toward the primary flow of information.
18% (n = 27)	He defined critical thinking as the structured intellectual process of analyzing, verifying, and contextualizing the data gathered.

Note. Created by the author.

Journalists' Self-Perception of Their Technical and Digital Skills

The survey data (N = 150) reveal a disparity between basic web navigation skills and the use of advanced methodological tools:

Table 3

The gap between overall digital agility and operational technical rigor (N = 150)

Feature	Percentage
General Web Search (Highly Responsive)	85% (n=128)
Understanding Boolean Operators/Thesauri	12% (n=18)
Resistance to Access to Physical Files	68% (n=102)

Note. Created by the author.

With regard to access to analog information, 68% (n = 102) expressed reluctance to work in newspaper archives and physical archives. In response to a multiple-choice question, the participants cited the following reasons: 56% (n = 84) stated that in-person consultations take up too much time, which conflicts with the dynamics of newsrooms. 46% (n = 69) described the protocols of the historical archives as outdated and inefficient.

In light of these shortcomings, 76.7% (n = 115) sought out additional training on their own through online resources. The adoption of specialized technology had a direct impact: self-reported confidence in using document management software rose to 74.0% in this subgroup, reducing information processing times. 52% (n = 78) of the total sample identified Zotero as the most efficient open-source tool for automating citations and structuring databases (Zotero is a free, open-source reference manager designed to help researchers and scholars collect, organize, cite, and share information sources). It allows you to automatically save documents from your browser (such as Chrome or Firefox) and automatically generate bibliographies in word processors like Word, Google Docs, or LibreOffice (Silvera, 2023).

An Evaluative Perspective on Newsroom Leadership

In-depth interviews with news editors (N = 12) made it possible to compare journalists' self-perceptions with the evaluation of their work within the newsrooms. The editors reported an increase in their teams' cognitive engagement, marked by a critical methodological shift. Regarding this shift in investigative practices, an editor in La Paz noted: "*We've noticed the team has come a long way. We've gone from reporters who were simply looking for a phone call to confirm what they already believed, to investigators who dig into the glaring contradictions between statements and documents.*"

Despite this progress, 100% of those interviewed agreed that structural vulnerabilities persist due to a lack of basic training in verification. An editor from Santa Cruz said: "*We still find fundamental and serious flaws in investigative reports. There is a*

blind trust in copying information from websites or social media accounts without even bothering to verify the source of the information."

To illustrate the ethical and legal risks of this practice, the 12 editors cited the event of July 22, 2025, as a turning point, when multiple media outlets widely circulated a false report about the irrevocable resignation of Óscar Hassenteufel, then president of the Supreme Electoral Tribunal (TSE). The lack of cross-checking of documents led to instability in the electoral process at that time. An editor from Cochabamba said: "*Most journalists published their investigative reports based on a social media post that showed a letter on letterhead, without verifying the information*".

The editors unanimously concluded (100%) that the strict application of bibliographic audit methodologies reduces requests for corrections and the risk of criminal defamation lawsuits to nearly zero. They also noted that journalists who work using systematic methods experience lower levels of stress in the face of the infodemic, as they have analytical filters to cope with information overload. "*Newsrooms are no longer overwhelmed by waves of anxiety or uncertainty due to the sheer volume of information coming in. The process has been handled much better, and that has required and demonstrated an improvement in their media skills,*" said an editor from La Paz.

Literature Review and Factual Accuracy of the Report

To determine the actual impact of the training on the quality of the news content, an analytical audit was conducted on 30 in-depth investigative reports published in the main section. Pearson's correlation coefficient (r) was applied to assess the association between the author's level of methodological training and the rigor of the report.

The statistical analysis revealed a strong and statistically significant positive correlation ($r = 0.78, p < 0.05$) between the level of training in documentary research and the factual quality index (measured in terms of data handling, source diversity, and verification).

The Media and Information Literacy (MIL) variable had to be excluded from the linear correlation model because the journalists' scores were uniformly close to zero

(reflecting the complete lack of training reported in the first section), which eliminated the variance required for the Pearson correlation calculation.

When the 30 audited reports were divided into two groups—authors with low/empirical training (n = 15) and those with high/specialized training (n = 15)—significant disparities were observed in the technical quality of the text:

Table 4.

Quality indicators for the report, by level of training in documentary production (N = 30)

Factual and ethical evaluation criteria	Reports with low education levels (n=15)	Reports with advanced training (n=15)
Using archival (analog) sources (Newspaper archives, notary offices, official registries)	10%	45%
Source traceability (deep web) (Indexed databases, public repositories)	15%	60%
Accuracy in citations (correct use of APA 7 guidelines)	25%	90%
Inclusion of multiple perspectives (Cross-checking accounts and the right of reply)	40%	85%

Note. Data obtained using double-blind coding with an inter-rater reliability coefficient of kappa = 0.78.

The reports by the group of highly trained professionals revealed a phenomenon of robust documentary hybridization, characterized by the integration of historical records on physical media with structured digital databases in 2026. This technical approach expanded the temporal and factual depth of the news story.

Interregional Comparative Analysis (Statistical Significance of the Correlation)

To assess whether geographic factors influence the quality of investigative journalism in the country, a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted across the three capital cities under evaluation.

The results showed that there are no significant differences between the reports from La Paz, Cochabamba, and Santa Cruz regarding the relationship between training and technical quality (p > 0.05).

This mathematical finding confirms that the actual quality of investigative reporting in the current Bolivian context does not depend on local contextual or geographic variables specific to each city, but rather on two controllable cross-cutting factors: the development of methodological skills in the individual and technical access to document and information repositories.

Discussion and Conclusions

The discussion and conclusions of the study are presented below.

Structural Educational Deficit in Bolivia's Central Region

The findings point to a troubling convergence with the assessment made by López-Martín and Córdova-Cabús (2020) and Acharqui (2023) regarding the disconnect between university curricula and the demands of the journalism profession. The fact that only 37.3% of the sample has received formal training in bibliographic research, and that an alarming 92.0% lacks any understanding of Media and Information Literacy (MIL), reveals that higher education institutions in Bolivia’s central region continue to prioritize instrumental training and technical immediacy over fundamental analytical skills.

This structural gap supports the assumptions of the Community of Inquiry (CoI) model proposed by Garrison et al. (2000), who argues that the development of advanced critical thinking (cognitive presence) does not emerge spontaneously, but rather requires deliberate instructional planning. Empirical findings confirm that the lack of such planning at the undergraduate level forces more than a third of professionals (35.3%) to seek additional training at the graduate level, driven by the need to survive in a job market increasingly shaped by the infodemic.

The Digital Paradox and the Emergence of Documentary Hybridization

One of the most significant contributions of this study lies in its debunking of the supposed "digital native" status of the new generations of journalists. While 85% of the participants consider themselves highly capable of conducting general web searches, only 12% have a working knowledge of Boolean operators and thesauri. This finding is directly consistent with Pérez-Tornero and Varis's (2012) theory of media literacy, providing empirical evidence that journalists are stuck at the most basic level of access and technical use, lacking the complex tools required for the dimension of evaluation and critical understanding.

Furthermore, the initial reluctance of 68% of the sample to consult newspaper archives and physical archives—citing obsolescence or a waste of time—is consistent with the trend of moving away from analog sources described in the international literature. However, the data from the literature review reveal a critical nuance: journalists with advanced training demonstrated a significantly higher rate of use of analog archives (45%) compared to those with little training (10%).

This trend contradicts the assumption that the digital environment is irreversibly replacing physical media. On the contrary, it shows that when there is a strong educational presence in the learning environment (García-Galera et al., 2021), journalists perceive the historical archive as a vector of factual truth that is indispensable for counterbalancing the volatility of digital information, thereby achieving the documentary hybridization proposed by Nazakat and the KAS Media Program for Asia (2018).

Correlational Rigor and Methodological Gaps in the MIL

The key finding of the quantitative phase—the strong positive correlation ($r = 0.78$, $p < 0.05$) between documentary evidence and the factual quality of the report—provides strong empirical support for the arguments put forward by Hunter (2013) and Anchante and Angulo-Giraldo (2024). However, methodological rigor requires that we clarify the scope of this inference: since this is a descriptive-correlational and cross-sectional study, this result establishes a strong statistical association but does not support a linear or deterministic causal relationship. It cannot be categorically stated that training "leads to" quality; rather, the two variables co-evolve harmoniously in the sample studied.

A critical methodological issue that warrants discussion is the forced exclusion of the AMI variable from the calculation of the Pearson correlation coefficient. Unlike the provisions of UNESCO's theoretical framework (2025), in which AMI is presented as the central pillar of media ethics, in the case of Bolivia's core framework, the variance of this variable was zero due to the respondents' almost complete lack of familiarity (92.0%) with the concept.

This statistical zero is a finding in its own right: it indicates that AMI is currently an invisible construct in Bolivian journalism in 2026. Consequently, the high quality observed in 15% of the reports produced by the group with advanced training is attributable solely to their skills in traditional bibliographic research and empirical triangulation of sources, and not to a structured awareness of global media competencies.

Interregional Consistency and Risk Mitigation

Finally, the absence of significant differences between La Paz, Cochabamba, and Santa Cruz ($p > 0.05$) in the ANOVA analysis suggests that the dynamics of investigative journalism in Bolivia exhibit a structurally homogeneous pattern. Vulnerability to the infodemic and the commission of factual errors are not determined by geographical factors or local editorial cultures, but rather by access to documentary repositories and the researcher's methodological competence.

This cross-cutting approach lends credibility to the qualitative observations of the editors, who unanimously linked bibliographic rigor to a reduction in requests for corrections and to the legal certainty of the medium. The collective recollection of the media crisis of July 22, 2025 (the false resignation of the TSE president) serves in this discussion as empirical evidence of the institutional consequences resulting from the lack of systematic document verification protocols in the country's newsrooms.

Final Conclusions

In this regard, the study draws the following conclusions:

- It was determined that systematic training in literature review and Media and Information Literacy (MIL) is critically lacking in Bolivia's core curriculum. It is characterized by a marginal presence in university curricula and a lack of conceptual understanding of AMI, which affects 92.0% of the active journalists surveyed.
- There is a significant gap between journalists' self-perception of their overall digital agility (85%) and their actual technical proficiency in advanced information retrieval. Only 12% demonstrated the ability to use Boolean operators and thesauri to navigate the deep web.
- A strong and statistically significant positive correlation ($r = 0.78, p < 0.05$) was found between the level of training in documentary research and the factual quality index of investigative reports. Authors with specialized training performed better on key indicators such as citation accuracy according to APA 7 guidelines (90%), traceability of sources in the deep web (60%), and integration with analog archives (45%).
- The interregional comparative analysis, using ANOVA, confirmed the homogeneity of the phenomenon along Bolivia's main corridor, finding that there are no significant differences ($p > 0.05$) in the relationship between education and quality among the cities of La Paz, Cochabamba, and Santa Cruz.
- From the qualitative perspective of newsroom management, the adoption of systematic literature review methods not only enhances the robustness of reporting but also directly helps mitigate legal risks related to defamation and contributes to reducing the work-related stress associated with managing the infodemic in newsrooms.

Limitations and Future Research Directions

With regard to the methodological limitations of this study, it should first be noted that the sampling was non-probabilistic and based on convenience, which limits the generalizability of the results to the entire population of journalists in Bolivia. Second, the excessive bureaucracy and lack of digitization observed in government offices in Cochabamba and Santa Cruz hindered consistent access to analog records during the audit phase.

Finally, the four-month time frame (February–May 2026) provided a snapshot of the state of the reporting, but it is insufficient to assess whether investigative practices have taken root or whether reporters' technical resilience is sustainable in the long term.

For future research, we recommend:

- Reproduce the analytical model in small and medium-sized cities and rural areas of Bolivia to assess how the digital connectivity gap affects the application of the literature review.
- Conduct experimental or quasi-experimental studies to measure the causal impact of specific MIL intervention programs on the actual quality of local journalism.
- Develop quantitative methodologies designed to measure audience perception, assessing whether increased bibliographic rigor and transparency in citing documentary sources effectively translate into greater public trust in the media.

The study recommends revising academic curricula to provide urgent training for journalists in MIL, with a focus on producing high-quality, responsible investigative reports.

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