

Journalists and Well-Being on TikTok: a Comparison Between Spain and the UK

PERIODISTAS Y SALUD EMOCIONAL EN TIKTOK: COMPARATIVA
ENTRE ESPAÑA Y REINO UNIDO

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Abstract This article analyzes the digital narrative surrounding the emotional well-being of journalists in the United Kingdom and Spain. A comparative qualitative analysis of TikTok content is used to explore personal narratives, representations of work-related stress, and discourses on mental health. We adopt a mixed-methods approach by combining automated data collection techniques, artificial-intelligence-assisted content analysis, and statistical and network analyses to examine narratives around stress, pressure, and job insecurity or precariousness in journalism as presented on TikTok in Spain and the United Kingdom. The results reveal that the cultural and professional context influence how journalists express their emotional state, while social media serve as a space for both professional and personal expression. The results also allow a reflection on what impacts the emotional well-being of those working in journalism.

Keywords: Mental Health; Emotional Well-Being; Journalist; Burnout; Social

Resumen: Este artículo analiza la narrativa digital en torno al bienestar emocional de los periodistas en Reino Unido y España. A través de un análisis cualitativo comparado de contenido publicado TikTok, se exploran narrativas personales, representaciones del estrés laboral y discursos sobre salud mental. El enfoque metodológico es mixto, combinando técnicas de recolección de datos automatizadas, análisis de contenido asistido por inteligencia artificial y análisis estadístico y de redes para examinar las narrativas sobre el estrés, la presión y la precariedad en el periodismo difundidas a través de TikTok en España y el Reino Unido. Los resultados revelan que el contexto cultural y profesional influye en el modo en que los periodistas se expresan sobre su estado emocional. Y que las redes sociales funcionan como espacios de expresión profesional y personal. Permiten además reflexionar sobre las causas que generan impacto en el bienestar emocional de quienes ejercen la profesión periodística.

Palabras clave: salud mental; bienestar emocional; periodista; burnout; Redes sociales; TikTok.



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1. Introduction

The emotional well-being of journalists is attracting increasing attention from academia. Of information professionals, 75% acknowledge that this is a serious issue in the sector (APM, 2023). Recent publications in English have begun to highlight the mental health conditions faced in this field (Bèlair-Gagnon *et al.*, 2023A; Bèlair-Gagnon *et al.*, 2023B; Ferreira *et al.*, 2025; Kim & Buzzelli, 2024; Springer & Rick, 2025; Ragsdale & Newman, 2024). One of the most recent publications on this topic, Happiness in journalism (Bèlair-Gagnon *et al.*, 2023A), explores the happiness of journalism professionals by addressing issues such as trauma, harassment, inequality, digital security, mental health, job insecurity, resilience, and emotional literacy. These clearly interesting aspects should be expanded to include the advent of artificial intelligence, which has introduced a new dimension to explore from an emotional and psychological point of view (Vidal-Carretero, 2023): ethical challenges and issues related to disinformation, dependence on technology, the need for constant retraining, task automation, and the resulting job uncertainty or information fatigue.

The aim of this article is to explore how journalists represent and negotiate their emotional well-being on TikTok, focusing on the differences and similarities between the contexts of Spain and the United Kingdom. On the basis of a corpus of 389 videos, the study combines thematic analysis and the detection of narrative communities to identify the discursive patterns used to articulate experiences of stress, job insecurity, and resilience in the journalism profession. This comparison between two countries allows us to observe not only the dimensions of well-being seen on this platform but also the structure of the underlying cultural and employment frameworks. This work thereby hopes to contribute to the understanding of emotional well-being in journalism as a phenomenon transcending the individual sphere to be framed within collective, structural, and democratic dynamics while also highlighting the role of TikTok as an emerging forum for professional expression and public debate.

2. Emotional Well-Being and Mental Health in Journalism

The journalism profession faces significant challenges related to mental health: 70% of workers in the sector in Spain consider this to be a serious problem (APM, 2023), in particular regarding job insecurity, long working hours, and high levels of stress. Given the important social role of this profession in the democracy of any country, this combination of unfavorable characteristics «impacts on journalistic quality, thus undermining a right that belongs to society as

a whole, viz. the right to information» [*«repercute en la calidad periodística, atacando un derecho de toda la sociedad como es el de la información»*] (Lecchi, 2024: 193). As pointed out by Cabra & Martitegui (2025), one could even argue that «mental health is a silent epidemic affecting the journalism industry» [*«la salud mental es una epidemia silenciosa que está afectando a la industria del periodismo»*]. In such a society with weakened journalism flooded with generative AI, there is an increased risk of ‘content with low added value or that is repetitive in nature» [*«contenidos de bajo valor añadido o naturaleza repetitiva»*] (Peña-Fernández *et al.*, 2023: 8) and a reduced capacity to combat disinformation and filter out fake news or discourse that is exclusionary, automated, antidemocratic, or based on hate. Meanwhile, a lack of media independence can also affect the pressures that journalists face when doing their job (Oceja, 2024). One should also not ignore the potential problems of increased job insecurity that the adoption of AI-generated processes could cause in a profession already strongly affected by the various economic crises that have occurred since 2008 (Díaz-Noci, 2023). «This leads not only to the disappearance of voices but also that those who remain in the profession sometimes become overwhelmed and overworked. It becomes very difficult to produce high-quality journalism when you have a very low salary and live in a pit of stress and anxiety» [*«Esto no solo lleva a que desaparezcan voces sino también a que quienes se quedan en la profesión lo hagan en ocasiones saturados y sobrepasados. Es muy difícil hacer periodismo de calidad cuando se tiene un muy bajo salario y se vive en un pozo de estrés y ansiedad»*] (Lecchi, 2024:193).

Studies related to journalists’ mental health increased as a result of the pandemic, as have those related to other groups such as healthcare professionals. In the case of journalists, overwork, lack of motivation, and disconnection from the values of their media outlets have intensified burnout, reducing performance and well-being (Miret-García, 2021). Researchers at the Universidad Técnica Particular de Loja in Ecuador explored how the pandemic affected groups at risk on the frontline, such as healthcare workers and journalists. They concluded that journalists were the most invisible yet vulnerable group (Bustamante-Granda *et al.*, 2023).

The Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism and the University of Toronto concluded that 70% of professionals showed symptoms of some type of psychological distress (Selva and Feinstein, 2020). Unlike other professions where teamwork or a sense of community might help mitigate such impacts and ease the burden, as may happen in the healthcare sector, these mechanisms often fail in journalism (Miret-García, 2021). Other studies related to the emotional and

psychological state of communication professionals have primarily considered job insecurity, including aspects such as difficulties with work–life balance, long working hours, low salaries, unstable positions, etc. (Deuze, 2023) or the psychological effects of trauma when working in locations with a high incidence of violence, social conflict, or war (Idås & Backholm, 2023; Osmann, 2021).

3. Social Networks as Hybrid Spaces for Emotional Expression

During the last decade, social media have come to fill a central role in shaping the identity, work, and emotional discourse. Although initially conceived as spaces for informal socialization, their use has evolved to turn them into hybrid platforms on which the professional and personal converge (Papacharissi, 2015). Indeed, they provide a space where emotional content tends to be prioritized over other types of information more closely linked to rigor or scientific information (Pérez-Dasilva *et al.*, 2025). Through their interactions, people ‘generate processes of identification and recognition among themselves’ [*generan procesos de identificación y de reconocimiento entre ellas*] (Marín-Cortés *et al.*, 2022: 13).

This phenomenon can be interpreted within the perspective of emotional activism, a concept understood as a deliberate display of vulnerability in traditionally rigid contexts (Gill & Orgad, 2018). However, recent studies have emphasized that displaying emotions does not necessarily imply a loss of professional credibility, but rather may generate new types of authority based on authenticity (Wahl-Jorgensen, 2019).

Mental health and emotional well-being have gained prominence in the public debate, especially in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. A study examining nearly 200,000 tweets from front-line healthcare workers before and during the pandemic clearly identified expressions of anxiety, loneliness, and emotional support, demonstrating how such professionals use social media to share their emotional experiences at work (Agarwal *et al.*, 2023). These emotions are even expressed on corporate social media (Oksa *et al.*, 2021). Another analysis of more than 2000 tweets tagged with the hashtags #stress and #relax found that work, along with education, were the most frequently cited causes of stress (Doan *et al.*, 2017).

In the journalism sector, this emotional transparency began to appear during a period of structural uncertainty in newsrooms (Bélair-Gagnon *et al.*, 2023A; Thomson, 2021) and also began to increase dramatically after the pandemic, as seen in other fields (Posetti *et al.*, 2021). Increasingly, we are seeing

how journalists are using digital channels and social media to share their emotional experiences and even build support networks (López & López, 2017). These platforms act as spaces to increase awareness of work-related stress and normalize issues related to mental health (Doan *et al.*, 2017), thereby helping to remove the stigma associated with discussions of such issues in journalism.

Far from undermining credibility, this emotional tone maintains or even increases the level of trust that the public have in communicators (Xue, Zhang & Zhang, 2025). Open communication about stress and well-being through these digital spaces can improve the sense of community and reduce the isolation that affects professionals, especially in competitive environments or those under intense pressure (Wheatley, 2024; Šimunjak & Menke, 2023). Journalists often become the target of harassment and hate speech (Peña-Fernández *et al.*, 2025), and such public expression of emotions through social media could be a strategy to obtain solidarity and support from the audience. For women, this visibility can also place a spot-light on the problem of harassment in journalism. Nevertheless, this additional emotional burden can also exacerbate stress and burnout, risking the mental health of professionals and highlighting the need for more robust protection mechanisms both within and outside media organizations (Miller & Lewis, 2022).

Although most studies have focused on X (formerly Twitter) as the main platform for externalizing discontent in the workplace and sharing self-care strategies (Agarwal *et al.*, 2023; Ortiz, 2019; Doan *et al.*, 2017), this awareness has spread to other networks such as TikTok, which has seen the emergence of new narratives that subvert the traditional model of the journalist as objective, detached, and emotionally neutral (Negreira-Rey *et al.*, 2022).

TikTok is characterized by its spontaneous nature, vertical and immediate format, and powerful algorithm that can make emotionally charged content go viral (Zulli & Zulli, 2022). These factors have led to the appearance of videos in which journalists share their emotions, work routines, lived anxiety, and even small everyday joys, acting as a route to connect with their audience while also providing a conduit for personal catharsis (Negreira-Rey *et al.*, 2022).

This activism on TikTok often takes individual and performative forms, appealing to empathy and mutual recognition (Zhao & Abidin 2023). This social media platform has therefore developed into a privileged environment for emotional expression, even among journalists, a group historically characterized by emotional restraint and reporting about others rather than themselves. As reported by Al Rawi (2024) in relation to a mixed analysis of content and interviews with 17 journalists active on TikTok, these professionals use the format

of this platform to share personal anecdotes, work routines, and their own emotions. Bolz (2023) also reported a growing emphasis on emotional and personal formats on this platform, where communicators report on their work with a light, educational, and emotional voice.

Most such studies cover the situation in countries such as Ireland, the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, Finland, New Zealand, and Germany. No research focusing on the expression of emotions by Spanish journalists on social media has been found.

4. Methodology

This research adopted a mixed methodological approach by combining automated data collection techniques, artificial-intelligence-assisted content analysis, and statistical and network analyses to evaluate narratives about stress, pressure, and job insecurity in journalism as spread through the TikTok platform in Spain and the United Kingdom.

4.1. Data Acquisition and Filtering

Data collection was carried out using the Apify tool, a web-based data extraction platform. Geographic filters were set up for Spain and the United Kingdom with the aim of limiting the sample to content relevant to the contexts of these two countries. Although this approach minimizes the inclusion of false positives, it is important to recognize that it is not foolproof and may include, for example, Spanish media content with a Latin American reach or theme. The search focused on videos containing the following keywords, in both Spanish and English: 'Periodismo estrés,' 'Periodista estrés,' 'Periodismo presión,' 'Periodista presión,' 'Periodismo precariedad,' 'Periodista precariedad,' 'Journalism stress,' 'Journalist stress,' 'Journalism pressure,' 'Journalist pressure,' 'Journalism precariousness,' and 'Journalist precariousness.'

An initial sample of 973 unique videos (eliminating duplicates) published after 2022 and up to May 20, 2025 was obtained, with 620 corresponding to Spain and 353 to the United Kingdom. The analysis only included those videos for which subtitles could be acquired, using the Python library `yt_dlp`.

Each video then underwent individual content analysis using OpenAI's large language model `gpt-4o-mini`. This model was used to process the information from each video (description, hashtags if available, and subtitles) using a specific prompt designed for this research. This prompt asked the model to evaluate three main aspects and return the information in a structured JSON format:

1. **Topic_identification:** Determine whether the video dealt primarily with stress, pressure, or job insecurity linked to the journalism profession. The possible answers were 'Yes,' 'No,' or 'I don't know' (for cases that were ambiguous or contained insufficient information).
2. **Video_narrative:** If the topic received a 'Yes' answer, the model had to generate a detailed explanation of the video narrative (approximately 200 words), describing its key points, main message, and how topics of interest were represented. Otherwise, this field was left blank.
3. **Qualitative_labels:** If the topic received a 'Yes' answer, the model had to propose a set of four to eight concise labels to qualitatively classify the video (e.g. 'Workplace complaints,' 'Journalists' mental health'). If the topic received a 'No' or 'I don't know' answer, an empty array was returned.

Following this analysis process using artificial intelligence, the videos were filtered to retain only those where the subject of interest was identified with a 'Yes' answer. This resulted in a final sample of 389 videos relevant to the study: 252 for Spain and 137 for the United Kingdom.

4.2. Data Analysis

The extracted data was analyzed out in several phases. First, the qualitative labels generated by the AI model were reviewed, grouped, and mapped into a more limited and coherent set of thematic categories.

Secondly, descriptive and inferential statistical analyses were performed. The frequency of general and country-specific thematic tags was examined. To determine whether there were significant differences between Spain and the United Kingdom in the distribution of these labels, Pearson's chi-squared test was applied. This statistical test evaluates whether the distribution of categories observed in a contingency table differs significantly from what would be expected if there were no relationship between the variables (in this case, topic and country). Cramér's V was also calculated to estimate the strength of the association between the variables. The standardized residuals of the chi-squared test were also analyzed. These residuals indicate the specific cells of the contingency table in which the observed frequencies are significantly higher or lower than expected, which helps to interpret the nature of the differences identified.

Third, a network analysis was performed to explore the relationships between the narratives identified in the videos. The textual descriptions of the

narratives in the videos (generated by gpt-4o-mini) were transformed into numerical representations (vectors) by using the nomic-ai/nomic-embed-text-v1.5 model. This process, known as text embedding or vectorization, allows a quantification of the semantic similarity between different texts. On the basis of these vectors, the cosine similarity between each pair of narratives was calculated. The cosine similarity is a measure of the similarity between two texts in terms of their content and thematic orientation, with a value ranging from -1 (completely different) to 1 (identical). These similarities were then used to construct a graph where each video (and its narrative) was represented by a node. A connection (edge) was established between a pair of nodes if their cosine similarity was greater than or equal to 0.86 . The value of this threshold was determined iteratively as the lowest value that revealed a clear and meaningful community structure in the graph, as measured through its modularity. Specifically, we sought to achieve a modularity of at least 0.3 . According to Newman (2006), this threshold suggests a robust division of the graph into communities. The Louvain community detection algorithm was applied to the resulting graph. This algorithm groups nodes (videos) into clusters or 'communities' such that videos in the same community are more thematically similar to each other than to videos in other communities. The giant component of the graph, i.e., the largest connected subnetwork, was analyzed to identify the predominant clusters of narratives. Finally, the differences between Spain and the United Kingdom in the distribution of these narrative communities were examined, again using the chi-squared test and standardized residual analysis. Regarding validation of this methodology, the gpt-4o-mini model was chosen on the basis of its ability to interpret the semantic subtleties and informal language that are typical of TikTok, offering an optimal balance between inferential accuracy and computational efficiency. Similarly, the similarity threshold of 0.86 was not arbitrary, but rather determined iteratively to maximize the network modularity, thereby ensuring that the detected communities represented dense and conceptually distinct narratives while filtering out the noise from weak connections. The entire process was subject to human-in-the-loop supervision whereby the generated tags were qualitatively reviewed and their consistency with the audiovisual content validated prior to the statistical analysis.

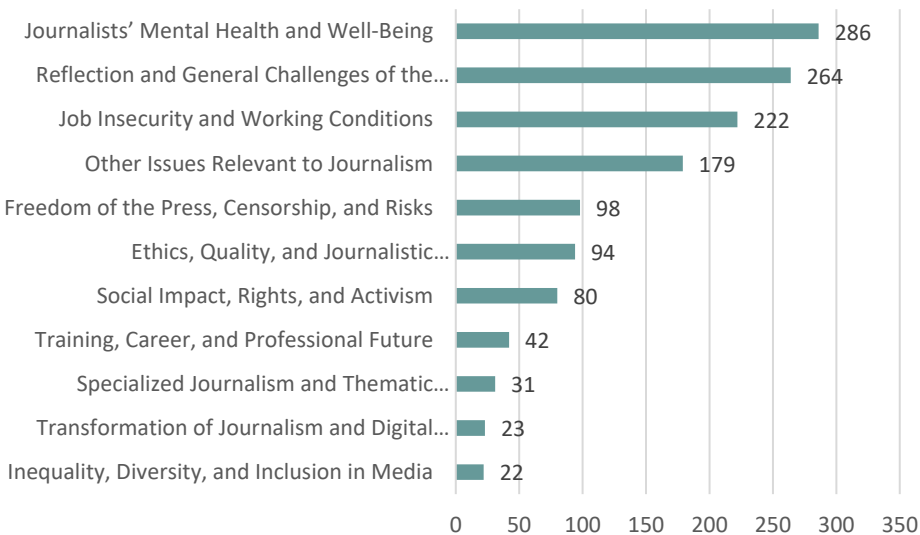
5. Results

The analysis included the 389 TikTok videos identified as relevant to this study on stress, pressure, and job insecurity in journalism. It revealed distinctive thematic patterns and significant differences between the contexts in Spain and the United Kingdom.

5.1. General Thematic Distribution

On the basis of the qualitative labels generated and then mapped, various recurring themes were identified in the analyzed videos. The most frequent topics overall (Fig. 1) were 'Journalists' Mental Health and Well-Being' (with 286 occurrences), followed by 'Reflection and General Challenges of the Profession' (264 occurrences) and 'Job Insecurity and Working Conditions' (222 occurrences). Other topics with notable presence included 'Other Issues Relevant to Journalism' (179), 'Freedom of the Press, Censorship, and Risks' (98), and 'Ethics, Quality, and Journalistic Responsibility' (94).

Figure 1. *Most frequent thematic tags in the overall corpus of videos analyzed*

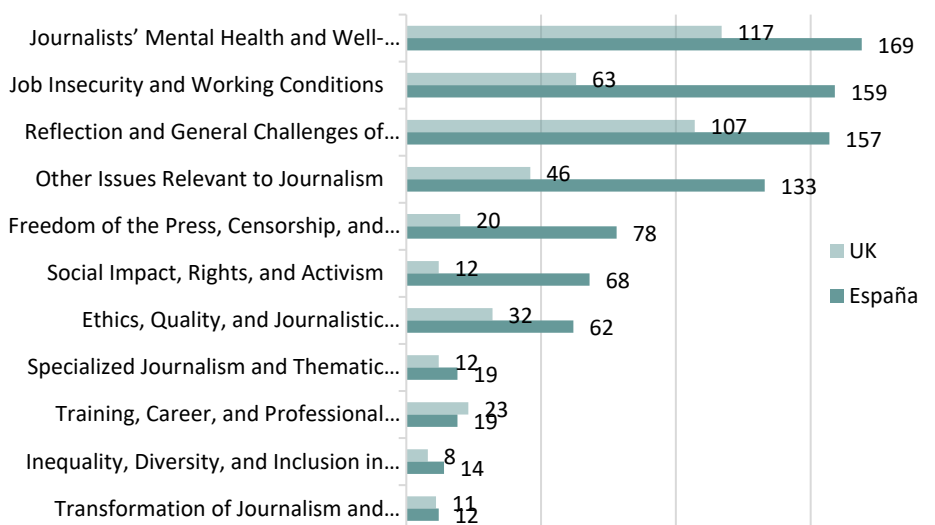


Source: Authors' own creation

5.2. Thematic Differences Between Spain and the United Kingdom

Breaking down the frequency of these labels by country (Fig. 2), different distributions appeared. For example, 'Journalists' Mental Health and Well-Being' showed a high frequency in both countries but was mentioned proportionally more in videos from the UK. Meanwhile, 'Job Insecurity and Working Conditions' and 'Freedom of the Press, Censorship, and Risks' seemed to feature more prominently in the Spanish content.

Figure 2. Frequency of the most common thematic tags by country (Spain and United Kingdom)



Source: Authors' own creation

To evaluate these differences formally, a chi-squared test was performed. The results indicated a statistically significant ($p < 0.00001$) association between country and the distribution of thematic tags. The value of Cramér's V (0.1955) suggested a small but not negligible association strength.

The analysis of standardized residues (Table 1) provided further information regarding the specific issues contributing to this overall difference. Standardized residuals measure the deviation of the frequency observed in each cell (combination of label and country) from the frequency expected in the absence of an association. Absolute values greater than 2 are usually considered

to indicate a significant deviation, suggesting that the category appears more (positive values) or less (negative values) than expected.

Table 1. *Standardized residuals from the chi-squared test for the distribution of thematic labels by country*

	Spain	UK
Mental Health and Well-Being of Journalists	-1.51	2.12
Reflection and General Challenges of the Profession	-1.38	1.93
Job Insecurity and Working Conditions	0.96	-1.35
Other Topics Relevant to Journalism	1.3	-1.83
Freedom of the Press, Censorship, and Risks	1.61	-2.26
Ethics, Quality, and Journalistic Responsibility	-0.05	0.07
Social Impact, Rights, and Activism	2.05	-2.87
Education, Career, and Professional Future	-1.68	2.36
Specialized Journalism and Thematic Coverage	-0.35	0.49
Transformation of Journalism and Digital Challenges	-0.84	1.17

Source: Authors' own creation

The interpretation of the most notable residuals suggests the following:

1. **Mental Health and Well-Being of Journalists:** This theme appears significantly more frequently than expected in the United Kingdom (residual of 2.12) but less frequently than expected in Spain (residual of -1.51).
2. **Reflection and General Challenges of the Profession:** This theme shows a similar trend, with greater presence in the United Kingdom (residual of 1.93), although at the conventional limit of statistical significance.
3. **Social Impact, Rights, and Activism:** This theme is a priority in Spain (residual of 2.05) but is significantly underrepresented in the United Kingdom (residual of -2.87).
4. **Education, Career, and Professional Future:** This issue showed a much more pronounced focus in the United Kingdom (residual of 2.36) compared with Spain (residual of -1.68).
5. **Freedom of the Press, Censorship, and Risks:** This is a more relevant issue in Spain (residual of 1.61) but showed a significantly lower presence in the United Kingdom (residual of -2.26).
6. **Other Topics Relevant to Journalism:** This question received more attention in Spain (residual of 1.30) but less in the United Kingdom (residual of -1.83).

These observations suggest that, despite concerns shared between the two countries, the thematic emphasis varied: in the UK, there seems to be a more individual focus on the health and professional development of journalists, while in Spain, there is greater emphasis on the structural aspects, rights, and conditions that affect journalism as a whole.

5.3. Narrative Communities on TikTok

The analysis of the video narratives using text vectorization and Louvain community detection on the cosine similarity graph revealed the existence of coherent thematic clusters. The structure of these communities is revealed by the giant component of the graph (Fig. 3).

Figure 3. Visualization of the giant component of the narrative similarity graph, showing the communities detected by the Louvain algorithm. Each color represents a different community.



Source: Authors' own creation

Six main communities were identified, each being assigned a descriptive name in addition to the original numbering to facilitate interpretation:

1. Community 1: Warnings and Resistance: Risks, Structural Pressure, and Journalistic Ethics (81 nodes, 29.2%). This cluster comprises narratives that describe journalism as beset by (physical and legal) violence, censorship, and financial instability. The risks of the profession, the dependence

of media on external interests, as well as job insecurity and its impact on mental health are emphasized, along with a call for resilience and collective action to protect freedom of the press.

2. Community 2: The Internal Conflict: Stress, Burnout, and the Pursuit of Well-Being (80 nodes, 28.9%). In contrast to the first cluster, this one focuses on the internal impact of the profession, addressing chronic stress, burnout, and the search for mental and emotional balance. These narratives are often confessional, using humor and vulnerability to describe the continuing pressure and accumulated emotional burden, while exploring microstrategies for resilience.
3. Community 0: Structural Job Insecurity: From Vocation to Survival (66 nodes, 23.8%). This cluster centers on the idea that financial insecurity has become normalized in journalism. It describes subsistence wages, the difficulty of balancing vocation and survival, the need for multiple jobs or retraining, and the resulting emotional strain, linking these working conditions to a systemic risk to democracy.
4. Community 14: Existential Crisis: Trust, Business Model, and Sensationalism (24 nodes, 8.7%). The narratives in this cluster converge on the crisis of confidence and model currently seen in journalism. This includes topics such as the collapse in credibility, the impact of 'platformization' and influencers, the broken business model, the drift toward sensationalism, and the courage required to report in hostile contexts.
5. Community 42: The Munaretto Case: Viral Job Insecurity Stories (15 nodes, 5.4%). This cluster almost entirely deals with one issue, viz. the case of Argentine reporter Tomi Munaretto, who denounced his low salary live on air. These videos reproduce, comment on, and analyze this event, turning it into a catalyst for discussion about job insecurity, censorship, and mental health in journalism.
6. Community 47: Social Impact of Job Insecurity: Working Poverty in Post-Pandemic Spain (11 nodes, 4.0%). This cluster broadens the focus to portray job insecurity and 'salaried poverty' as the new normality in post-pandemic Spain, using testimonies that, although not always from journalists, resonate with the crises described in other clusters and place mental health at the center of this social debate.

5.4. Distribution of Narrative Communities by Country

Analyzing the distribution of these narrative communities in Spain and the United Kingdom, statistically significant ($p < 0.00001$) differences were again found, with a Cramér's V of 0.5099, indicating a considerable association.

The standardized residual analysis for this distribution (Table 2) also reveals specific patterns of association:

Table 2. *Standardized residuals from the chi-squared test for the distribution of narrative communities by country*

Community	Spain	UK
47	1.56	-2.02
42	1.82	-2.36
14	-2.34	3.04
2	-3	3.9
1	2.54	-3.3
0	0.39	-0.51

Source: Authors' own creation

The interpretation of the most significant residuals is as follows:

1. Community 1 ('Warnings and Resistance'): Highly overrepresented in Spain (residual of 2.54) but significantly underrepresented in the United Kingdom (residual of -3.30).
2. Community 2 ('The Internal Conflict'): Strongly underrepresented in Spain (residual of -3.00) but markedly characteristic in the United Kingdom (residual of 3.90).
3. Community 0 ('Structural Job Insecurity'): The distribution of this cluster is close to the expected value in both countries (with residuals of 0.39 for Spain and -0.51 for the UK), showing no strong association with either.
4. Community 14 ('Existential Crisis'): Significantly less frequent in Spain (residual of -2.34) but highly overrepresented in the United Kingdom (residual of 3.04).
5. Community 42 ('The Munaretto Case'): This cluster showed a tendency toward overrepresentation in Spain (residual of 1.82) but was absent (and therefore significantly underrepresented) in the United Kingdom (residual of -2.36).
6. Community 47 ('Social Echo of Job Insecurity'): Slightly more frequent in Spain (residual of 1.56) but significantly less frequent in the United Kingdom (residual of -2.02).

These results confirm that some dominant narratives in the TikTok content are distributed very differently between Spain and the United Kingdom. The narratives grouped in communities 1 ('Warnings and Resistance'), 42 ('The Munaretto Case'), and to a lesser extent, 47 ('Social Echo of Job Insecurity') are more characteristic of the Spanish context. In contrast, communities 2 ('The Inner Conflict') and 14 ('Existential Crisis') are clearly associated with content from the United Kingdom. Community 0 ('Structural Job Insecurity') appears to be a shared concern, with similar presence in both countries. These differences suggest distinct narrative approaches and concerns in how the challenges of journalism are discussed on TikTok in each of the countries analyzed.

6. Discussion and Conclusions

This study reveals how TikTok is configured as a virtual space for articulating narratives around journalists' emotional well-being, highlighting both individual experiences of stress and exhaustion as well as the underlying structural dynamics. This comparative analysis of Spain and the United Kingdom shows that the discourse on emotional well-being is not uniform, but rather takes different forms depending on the socio-work and cultural context. This idea has already been proposed in some studies related to mental and emotional health in the journalism profession suggesting that subjective well-being can vary by culture and context (Bélair-Gagnon, 2023B).

In the case of the United Kingdom, the prevailing narratives tend to focus on the individual experience of discontent, with an emphasis on mental health, burnout, and the search for self-care strategies. The overrepresentation of communities on themes such as 'The Internal Conflict' and the prominent presence of tags linked to education and professional future suggest that emotional well-being is primarily conceived as a personal challenge that requires individualized management. These narratives, often confessional or humorous in tone, reflect a cultural framework in which talking about mental health is more readily accepted and where distress is addressed through practices of resilience and adaptation.

In contrast, in Spain, emotional well-being appears to be strongly linked to structural job insecurity, censorship, and working conditions, as recently highlighted by some reports (APM, 2023) and authors (Oceja, 2024; Peña-Fernández *et al.*, 2023). The 'Warnings and Resistencia' and 'El Caso Munaretto' communities, which are overrepresented in this context, demonstrate how the emotional dimension is intertwined with collective complaints and the perception of journalism as being under siege from external factors. Here, expressions

of discontent are not limited to the individual, but are reinterpreted as a symptom of a systemic problem that affects the entire profession and, by extension, the health of the democracy. However, this emphasis on structural aspects does not eliminate references to individual attrition, but rather places them within a narrative framework of vindication and struggle.

The finding that 'Structural Job Insecurity' appears as a shared cluster in both countries reinforces the idea of a common backdrop of deteriorating working conditions that permeates the emotional experience of journalists. However, the narrative applied to this backdrop differs: while in the United Kingdom, it translates into stories of anxiety and self-care, in Spain, it becomes a collective complaint that links emotional well-being to the requirement for social and professional transformation.

These results invite a reflection on how emotional well-being in journalism cannot be understood solely as a matter of individual health, but rather as a phenomenon deeply influenced by actual working conditions and cultural frameworks that legitimize certain ways of talking about discontent. In this sense, TikTok provides a discursive laboratory in which journalists can publicly negotiate their professional and emotional identity, while exposing tensions that have historically been invisible in traditional media spaces.

Among the limitations of the study, it is worth mentioning that the analysis focuses on tagged, relevant videos during a specific period, in turn defined by relevance criteria and the platform's algorithmic logic, which may have excluded marginal or minority voices. Future research could broaden the comparative scope of this work or explore other approaches, such as the role of audience reception of such narratives.

Ethics and Transparency

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Conflict of Interest

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Author Contributions

Contribution	Author 1	Author 2	Author 3	Author 4
Conceptualization	X			
Data curation			X	
Formal Analysis			X	
Funding acquisition	X			
Investigation	X	X	X	X
Methodology	X	X	X	
Project administration	X			
Resources	X		X	
Software			X	
Supervision	X	X		
Validation		X	X	
Visualization	X			X
Writing – original draft	X	X		
Writing – review & editing	X	X		X

Data Availability Statement

For data availability, the authors should be contacted.

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