



## Generation Z's Feminine Radio Journalist: The Future of Talk Radio

**Received:** 10 July 2025; **Accepted:** 27 November 2025

**Silvia Espinosa-Mirabet**  
**Faculty of Tourism, University of Girona, Girona, Spain**  
**silvia.espinosam@udg.edu**  
**ORCID ID: 0000-0002-8304-5882**

### CONTENT TABLE

- Abstract & Introduction
- Methodology
- Results
  1. The future of radio depends on the use of social media
    - a. Figure 1: Relationship with Social Media.  
Source: own elaboration
  2. Radio, fake news and technological advancement
  3. Podcasts cannot replace live radio
    - a. Table 1 provides a summary of the different perspectives on podcasting.
  4. Radio journalism as essence of radio
  5. The feminine and feminist perspective on the issues
  6. Young people do not listen to traditional radio, but they do consume radio content
  7. Negative perceptions of the job
  8. Management and gender
    - a. Figure 2. Ready for management: preferences. Source: own elaboration
  9. Work-life balance is a challenge
  10. Changes they would make in their radio stations
- Discussion
- Conclusion
- References

# Generation Z's Feminine Radio Journalist: The Future of Talk Radio

---

## Abstract

This study explores the current and future state of Catalonia's general-interest (non-local) radio landscape from the perspective of female journalists under the age of 30. This is a topic of study that has so far remained unexplored. Designing a qualitative methodology, the research is based on 18 in-depth interviews with professionals working as reporters, editors, presenters, scriptwriters, and producers, at the six most influential radio stations in Catalonia, according to official Spanish audience surveys (EGM): RAC1, SER Catalunya, COPE, ONDA CERO, Catalunya Ràdio, and Ràdio 4. The findings reveal a precarious working conditions sector with increasing professional stress, attributed to the growing pressure to produce and adapt content for social media platforms. While the participants acknowledge the need for greater inclusivity and audiovisual integration in the future of radio, many express concern over a shift away from the traditional essence of the media. Generation Z journalists argue that radio must maintain its identity as an accessible, intimate, and trusted source of information, positioning itself as a vital counterweight to misinformation. This research contributes to understanding how young women in journalism perceive the evolution of the media in transition, and how they navigate the tensions between innovation and continuity in a rapidly changing media environment.

**Keywords:** "journalism"; "general-interest radio"; "Z Generation"; "women and radio"; "radio and social media"; "future of radio".

## Introduction

The discussions about the present and future of radio have traditionally been dominated by men (mostly white established professionals) who have historically narrated the evolution of the media. Now that Spanish radio has reached its centenary, it is timely and necessary to explore how this media is interpreted by young female journalists under the age of 30, who statistically represent its future, because the past and the role of women as radio workers, has already been documented.

This article highlights the important role women have played in radio. It aligns with the current trend of making women's work in the media more visible, contributing a perspective that has not yet been studied: a future-oriented vision of radio as interpreted by young female journalists who will live that future within the radio industry. The historical tendency to explain media in Spain from a male point of view, as said, has gradually been reversed, thanks to numerous publications such as those by Franquet (1982–2001), Balsebre (2001; 2018), Espinosa (2012 to 2024), Pérez-Martínez (2016), Barrera (2018), and Blanco Fajardo (2018). All analyses agree that radio in Spain has not traditionally been a feminist medium. The pioneering female radio hosts had little in common with their listeners. They were literate women, (unlike the majority of their audience, who were often illiterate), religious, and generally came from families leaning towards the political right. Many worked

---

<sup>1</sup>

This study was carried out with the support of the 3rd Montserrat Minobis Audiovisual Communication Grant.

## Generation Z's Feminine Radio Journalist: The Future of Talk Radio

---

in radio because they enjoyed it, without necessarily needing the job for financial reasons (Espinosa, 2014).

Therefore, this article aims to highlight how female journalists under the age of 30 perceive radio as a media and as their job. To achieve this, 18 in-depth interviews were conducted with professionals from the six leading radio stations in Catalonia, as identified by the EGM, as detailed in the methodology section. To understand the perspectives of young female journalists, it is essential to first provide a brief overview of the evolution of women's roles in Spanish mainstream radio, along with key data that contextualize their relationship with the medium. The following section also outlines characteristics of Generation Z (those under 30 years old), offering background to better interpret their contributions.

Radio, as media outlet, has not historically been a feminist mean, nor has it served as a platform for feminism in Spain. The pioneering female broadcasters generally represented a conservative social stereotype, enjoying a purchasing power and academic background well above the average for Spanish women or audiences at the time. This situation was slow to change; just as the Second Republic (1931-1939) had begun to open doors, the Civil War (1936-1939) and subsequent Franco dictatorship stifled any progress for nearly 40 years. As a result, radio in Spain became a traditionally conservative media: its founders and owners in the early 20th century were entrepreneurs, members of the bourgeoisie, and even aristocrats (Balsebre, 2001).

During the dictatorship, according to Espinosa-Mirabet (2020) women's advisory programs (propaganda formats disguised as content and advertising advises, directed at female audiences) did indeed elevate female broadcasters to stardom, though never from an emancipatory or equality-based perspective with male radio workers. They voiced scripts written by men aligned with the regime.

However, women have always worked in radio, as secretaries, musical performers, or announcers. It was not until the 1960s that some women once again assumed prominent on-air roles, though always within the patriarchal norms imposed by the dictatorship and within programming formats focused on emotional support and entertainment. In none of these cases was there any indicator of opposition to the regime. Notable examples include María Matilde Almendros at Radio Nacional de España (RNE), Odette Pinto at Radio España in Barcelona, and Encarna Sánchez at COPE

---

2

This study focuses on Catalonia, the birthplace of Spanish radio and one of the autonomous communities in Spain with a high concentration of radio stations (Martí et al., 2015). It is also, after Madrid, the Spanish region with the highest GDP in terms of economic output and foreign investment, the second most economically powerful region in the country, the region with the second-highest investment in media advertising after Madrid (Infoadex), and it hosts the largest number of universities offering Journalism Studies.

## Generation Z's Feminine Radio Journalist: The Future of Talk Radio

---

Beginning in the 1980s in Spain (the new democratic era called Transition), with the emergence of free and community radio stations, the content and approaches of programming began to shift, and feminism began to find a place in some programs or sections, initially in these more underground stations, and later in mainstream general-interest broadcasters. This shift is closely tied to the arrival of democracy, which saw the emergence of the professional radio journalist (both men and women) now trained at university level. Radio content also began to change significantly, increasingly focusing on social, political, and feminist, pacifism or ecology issues (Pérez Martínez, 2016) representing a qualitative leap away from the 19th-century conservatism that had long defined the medium. Despite this progress, it would still take many years for women in Spanish radio to attain equal standing with their male counterparts and to direct or lead programs beyond entertainment or traditionally “female” content.

There was still a long road ahead before women would become audience leaders. Starting in 2012, two female journalists, Pepa Bueno and Gemma Nierga, directed *Hoy por Hoy*, Spain’s most widely listened-to radio program. Led by two women, their feminine and at times feminist sensitivity was reflected in the way certain topics were approached in the programme (Espinosa-Mirabet, 2020). In Catalonia’s public radio, Catalunya Radio, Mònica Terribas directed the most listened-to news program (2013-2020), which included a section titled “Quadern feminista” (“Feminist Notebook”), addressing social issues from a gender perspective. However in none of these cases were they explicitly feminist advocacy programmes. But, they were prime time shows led by women, something that never had happened before in Spain.

Beyond the historical overview, the current presence of women in radio sector, are most prominently represented in leadership roles within local and municipal stations, with fewer in positions of responsibility in regional or national broadcasters. A recent qualitative study by Espinosa-Mirabet, Puntí, and Serra (2024) examines the presence of women in mainstream Catalan radio (the same media companies under examination here) highlighting a strong professional moment for women in the field. Notably, they have begun to break the glass ceiling in two historically male-dominated areas: technical and executive departments. The presence of women technicians is increasing, though stark disparities persist between public and private broadcasters, as none of the private stations surveyed employ women in technical roles. Ràdio 4 stands out as the station with the highest number of women in technical and editorial positions.

For the first time, a woman leads the top-rated station in Catalonia, RAC1, and three additional networks, two public (Ràdio 4 and Catalunya Ràdio) and one private (SER Catalunya) are currently regionally directed by women outside the Barcelona metropolitan area.

This conclusion closely resembles the one pointed out by Terol (2021) when she refers to a “false feminization” in newsrooms. The author explains that although women are more present than men in newsrooms, their presence is characterized by a high dropout rate; they tend to occupy positions with little responsibility; they

## Generation Z's Feminine Radio Journalist: The Future of Talk Radio

---

are more visible in sectors considered peripheral; and their professional trajectories are often marked by shifts toward less visible professional spaces, which are, however, more compatible with private life.

The editorial decisions and production routines of this new generation of radio journalists will inevitably shape the radio of the future, a medium that will likely operate within a technological landscape dominated by generative and predictive AI tools, a context of social and political instability, and evolving audio consumption habits. Despite general uncertainty in the sector, these journalists are entering a profession increasingly supported by advertisers, whose investment in radio has risen since the COVID-19 pandemic (Infoadex, 2025).

With the consolidation of the medium in the digital era (despite predictions about its decline and its evolution) radio in Spain now faces a future where women will, in numerical terms, surpass men as workforce.

In Spain, women constitute approximately 60% of journalism graduates with around one thousand more women than men earning journalism degrees each year (Orús, 2020). It is worth noting that despite being more numerous, universities place little emphasis on inclusion, as highlighted by the WJEC (2023). This global institution points out that journalism education should be more sensitive to technological and social changes and, in this regard, promote diversity and inclusion.

With 11 universities offering degrees and master's programmes in communication, Catalonia graduates nearly 20,000 students annually (Department of Research and Universities, 2022), many of whom are women. Although women currently make up the majority of journalism graduates, Generation Z women working in Catalan radio newsrooms remain a minority. According to the Journalists' Union of Catalonia, most radio professionals are between 35 and 54 years old. Women account for 48.4% of radio listenership (EGM, 2024), yet appear as sources in only 20% of news coverage globally (Macharia, 2020). The Association of Professional Catalan Journalists registers 4,400 professionals, of whom 2,024 are women. Among these, 300 are under the age of 30. However, given that membership records do not specify the mean in which journalists are employed, it is currently not possible to determine the proportion of young female journalists working specifically in the radio sector.

Despite these promising educational figures, the transition of women into leadership roles remains a persistent challenge across the media industry, mirroring broader patterns in the business world. Women continue to be underrepresented in decision-making positions and tend to occupy roles that are structurally and symbolically distant from those held by their male counterparts. According to a 2023 report by the Reuters Institute at the University of Oxford (Ramírez, 2023), only 19% of executive roles in Spanish media are held by women, while 80% of directors are men. The report underlines that this disparity is not merely a matter of numbers, but reflects deeper systemic and cultural obstacles that continue to limit women's access to power and influence in the media landscape.



## Generation Z's Feminine Radio Journalist: The Future of Talk Radio

---

Those who set the editorial line make staffing decisions, and inevitably, project a vision of society through headlines, priorities, and the space allocated to each topic are key to the provision of information services. (Ramírez, 2023: 2)

Jiménez (2014) analyzed the presence of women in executive roles within major Spanish radio companies (the focus of our study) and found that neither Catalunya Ràdio, RNE, nor Onda Cero had a significant proportion of women in management. In all cases, the percentage of women in leadership roles failed to reach 25%, and salaries remained lower than those of their male counterparts.

Men continue to dominate the upper tiers of the radio industry, occupying three-quarters of senior management positions and two-thirds of decision-making roles related to content. This persists despite the fact that women, on average, possess higher academic qualifications and more extensive professional training in journalism (Ruipérez, 2018).

Although women are increasingly present in editorial positions, especially in digital media, where some progress has been noted, they remain underpaid and underrepresented in traditional broadcasting structures.

The precarisation of journalism has prompted many women to transition toward communication departments, a trend noted by Fanals (2021). In a related interview, Bages (2021) observed that journalists working in corporate communication report higher levels of job satisfaction, not necessarily due to salary, but because of more predictable working hours, a particularly significant factor for journalists who are mothers.

Within the broader communication field, public relations stands out as the most balanced sector in terms of gender. In Spain, women occupy over 72% of PR roles, with 56.9% in managerial positions. Nonetheless, pay disparities persist (ADC, 2020). The Journalists' Union of Catalonia (SPC, 2022) reports that only a few radio stations have implemented Equality Plans and openly acknowledges the persistence of a glass ceiling in the sector. At a roundtable held on March 8, 2024, at SER Catalunya, participants emphasized how radio journalism continues to compel women to choose between their professional and personal lives.

(...)And here the debate lies in whether women journalists are willing to give up their personal lives as some female politicians have done... which could explain the high rate of single, divorced, or separated women in the field. Or whether it is necessary to change the foundations of a patriarchal society that forces women to choose, when men have never been required to make such a choice, and thus remain in the executive offices of media organizations. (March, 2024)

## Generation Z's Feminine Radio Journalist: The Future of Talk Radio

---

This study aims to define how young women journalists under 30 perceive what radio is, and what it is becoming, through their experiences in mainstream (non-local) radio stations in Catalonia.

In this way, this work will also contribute to a better understanding of Z Generation, because normally the focus on Generation Z tends to centre on their media consumption: what they watch, buy, read (Manrique, 2025) or play (Baykal, 2023; Shliakhovchuk et al, 2021) rather than their roles as content creators. The testimonies of young women working in radio offer a rare and valuable insight into how this generation navigates a precarious, digital-first industry, often within multicultural and multilingual contexts (Marugán & Martí, 2023).

(...) with a global and highly respectful mindset. Possibly the most individualistic generation, in which each person constantly seeks self-affirmation in relation to the group, using social media to do so. (...) Socially committed and responsible, and fond of images, emojis, and memes. (...) Most are still adolescents highly susceptible to the influence of celebrities, thus immersed in the so-called 'fan phenomenon.' They are independent in seeking and finding information and consume twice as much video content as static images. It is said they have a maximum attention span of 8 seconds, due to the speed at which they receive responses online; hence, they are considered a rather impatient generation. (Marugán and Martí, 2023:36)

Chen et al. (2023) support this analysis, noting that unlike previous generations who consumed media more passively (e.g., television and radio), Generation Z seeks personalization, immediacy, and active engagement. According to these authors, this is a generation that favors digital platforms, short-form visual content (such as TikTok and Instagram Reels), and interactive communication. In Catalonia, according to data from the Generalitat, Generation Z accounts for approximately 16.1% of the population in 2025. The proportion of Generation Z in Catalonia is slightly lower than in Spain (18% of the population in 2025) and similar to the European average (between 15% and 17%), although below countries with higher birth rates such as Ireland, France, and Sweden, according to statistics from INE and IDESCAT. In this context, it is relevant to highlight Tirocchi's (2024) thesis, which points out that young people under the age of 30 have distanced themselves from traditional media outlets. According to the author, this generation shares values shaped by influencers and content creators rather than traditional media, and this shift is directly linked to their social and communicative expectations.

## Generation Z's Feminine Radio Journalist: The Future of Talk Radio

---

### Methodology

To achieve the research objective, namely, to understand how feminine Generation Z journalists currently working in mainstream radio perceive its present and future, a qualitative approach based on in-depth interviews was adopted. It was considered that in-depth interviews would provide deeper insight into the perspectives of the subjects under study. Therefore, according to Díaz-Bravo et al. (2013), flexibility and the capacity to facilitate open, reflective responses are essential features of qualitative research methods.

The 18 participants work at the six leading general-interest radio stations in Catalonia, as measured by EGM audience data: RAC1 (Grup Godó), Catalunya Ràdio (CCMA), SER Catalunya (Prisa Media), COPE Catalunya (Àbside Media), Onda Cero Catalunya (Atresmedia Radio), and Ràdio 4 (RTVE/RNE).

At the time of data collection (November 2024 and January 2025), they were working in different positions within newsrooms: sports reporter (2), news reporter (1), news and bulletin reporter (7), programme presenter (2), news editor (2), editor and presenter (2), and news programme producer (2). In two cases, sports and magazine shows, the journalists also managed their programmes' social media. Most were salaried employees; three were freelancers, and two were unpaid interns. Participants were selected based on age and with the cooperation of the station's management (except in one case), who provided lists of Generation Z journalists under contract. The selection was random. Most participants were between 26 and 27 years old, held Journalism degrees from the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (UAB), and had around three years of radio experience.

Each interview lasted approximately 90 minutes and was conducted via Microsoft Teams. All were recorded, transcribed, and anonymized to preserve confidentiality and ensure freedom of expression. Transcriptions retained the literal speech of participants, including oral and stylistic variations, to preserve the authenticity of their voices (Izcarra & Andrade, 2003).

The participants were unaware of each other's involvement. The data analysis suggests that the specific identity of the speaker is less relevant than the significant consensus observed, which can be explained by Mannheim's (1952) concept of a generational unit: shared social and cultural experiences in youth foster a collective framework of meaning and values.

The interview guide was developed through a comprehensive review of existing literature and organized into four thematic areas: (1) technology and its influence; (2) content transformation; (3) new listening and consumption habits; and (4) inclusion in newsrooms and access to leadership positions.



# Generation Z's Feminine Radio Journalist: The Future of Talk Radio

## Result

The journalists interviewed agree that the future of radio depends on its ability to adapt to new media consumption habits without losing its core principles: immediacy, factual accuracy, and a sense of companionship. At the same time, they acknowledge an increasing shift toward an audiovisual environment. Although this evolution is not widely welcomed, it is largely perceived as inevitable.

### 1. The future of radio depends on the use of social media

Social media platforms are considered essential for content dissemination, building audience relationships, and identifying emerging trends. The interviewees call for a more strategic and robust presence of mainstream radio on digital platforms. They also criticize the lack of planning and agility when it comes to delivering high-quality content adapted to social media environments. One of the main reasons identified for these shortcomings is the generational profile of many executives in charge of content and strategy.

I think we're at a point where... I don't know how to say this without it sounding... There are people who are borderline unqualified for the kind of journalism being done today. Especially when it comes to social media. So I believe we should start taking over positions that have been held for far too long by people who work in a completely different way. I think we're ready for the technologies that are coming and for the new ways of informing. (Journalist no. 6; Radio station no. 2, private)

The young journalists interviewed (Figure 1) primarily use social media to disseminate their own content, often independently of the station's official channels. Their use of these platforms reflects a proactive stance and a desire to connect directly with audiences. This generational approach is also tied to their understanding of journalism as a dynamic, participatory, and real-time activity.

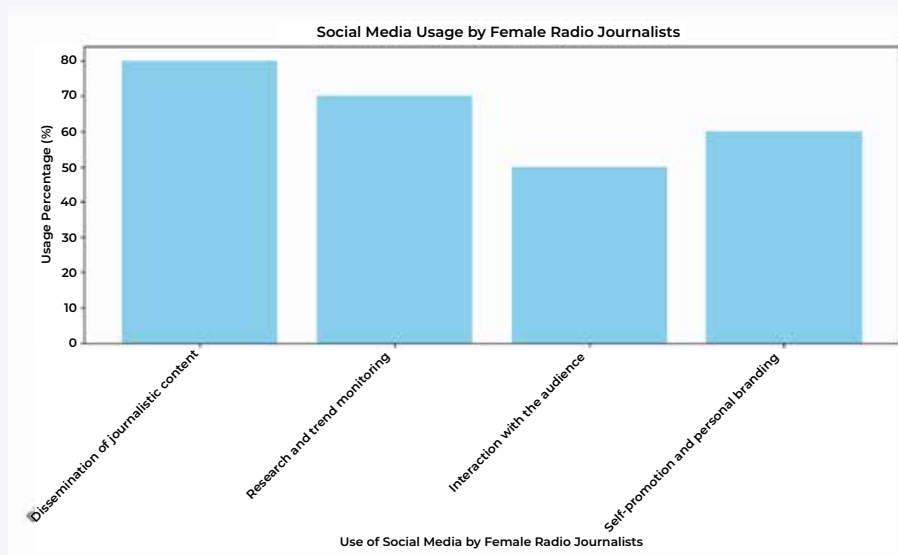


Figure 1: Relationship with Social Media. Source: own elaboration

## Generation Z's Feminine Radio Journalist: The Future of Talk Radio

---

The use of social media for content dissemination, according to the interviewees, leads to the creation of shorter and less in-depth pieces. They warn of the risks associated with compromising journalistic rigor in order to adapt to brief and viral formats.

### **2. Radio, fake news and technological advancement**

The interviewees unanimously defend radio as a trustworthy medium in an increasingly saturated digital environment marked by misinformation. They highlight its capacity to act as a filter and a verification tool in contrast to the speed and volatility of social media content.

(...) because, of course, you see something on social media and it spreads, I don't know, a thousand times more than on the radio... and then you investigate and it's not even true! So you have to go on air and debunk it, and you even have to make an extra effort, right? To figure out what's true and what isn't.  
(Journalist no. 10; Radio station no. 1, private)

Faced with these challenges, the journalists interviewed stress the need for greater investment in technological infrastructure and the implementation of coherent digital strategies. These should not only include well-trained staff but also the provision of adequate equipment to ensure the quality of both audio and video content.

(...) I think we need a well-thought-out digital strategy, with investment not only in personnel. Well trained but... and in equipment, in the cameras we were talking about, to ensure high quality not only in audio but also in video.  
(Journalist no. 9; Radio station no. 5, public)

When the data was collected (early 2025), journalists reported that AI tools were used rather infrequently and primarily for tasks such as audio transcription or drafting texts. Nonetheless, they express ambivalence, emphasizing the need to preserve the emotional and human components of journalism, a concern aligned with the reflections of Buitrago and Martín-García (2024) on the emotional dimension of AI.

Sometimes I even ask myself: Wow, what if one day... these intelligences end up doing my job? Right? What sets me apart from a machine that can report the news? And it's a bit scary. Yes, yes, fear and respect.  
(Journalist no. 2; Radio station no. 3, private)

## Generation Z's Feminine Radio Journalist: The Future of Talk Radio

---

### 3. Podcasts cannot replace live radio

The journalists interviewed defend the unique value of live radio and reject the idea that podcasts could fully replace it. They underscore the immediacy, diversity, and dynamic rhythm of traditional radio broadcasting as essential features that podcasts cannot replicate.

I mean, I see it, I see it positively because, for me, as long as people are listening, we're listening, we're consuming audio content, right? I think nothing is dead in that sense. The real problem would be if we stopped listening all together. What I do think is that you shouldn't just listen to a podcast about something you already know or are interested in (...). When you listen to the radio, you're exposed to a wide range of content, from a news bulletin that updates you on current events to a programme that talks about, I don't know, sexuality (...). That allows you to touch on many different topics. If you only listen to podcasts... that's great, but let's explore other areas too, right?

(Journalist no. 2; Radio station no. 3, private)

Table 1 provides a summary of the different perspectives on podcasting.

Positive Arguments about Podcasting	Negative Arguments about Podcasting
Allows content to be listened to at any time, without depending on live broadcasting.	May reduce the audience for live radio.
Facilitates access to information and to new (young) figures who consume audio via digital platforms.	The proliferation of podcasts may compromise journalistic quality in some cases.
Serves as a complementary tool to radio that can help expand the audience, especially in the field of educational content	The audiovisual format of video podcasts does not convince some users, who feel it undermines the essence of audio
Enables the dissemination of content that does not always have space in traditional media.	There is an oversupply of a specific type of content..
Can be better adapted to current consumption habits, including the use of social media for promotion	There is too much offer available.

While most recognize the added value that podcasting brings to the broader audio ecosystem, a minority of the interviewees question the sustainability of its current volume and growth. They express concern that the oversaturation of podcast content could eventually lead to audience fatigue or fragmentation.

It's clear that this will evolve somehow. I don't know about podcasts, because in the end, you get the feeling that everyone has a podcast and that it's very easy to make them, which is probably true, but there just isn't enough space for so many podcasts.

## Generation Z's Feminine Radio Journalist: The Future of Talk Radio

---

So, since everything changes so quickly, yes, the podcast trend is clearly here, and it's been around for years, but I think it's obvious that one day it will disappear and be replaced, maybe by radio, maybe by video podcasts, but definitely by something else. Still, I hope we manage to keep radio going in some form.

(Journalist no. 2; Radio station no. 3, private)

### 4. Radio journalism as essence of radio

The interviewees assert that live radio retains its essential value through its emotional bond with audiences, its immediacy, and its credibility. They advocate for a rigorous, carefully crafted form of journalism that remains true to radio's core identity while embracing new formats. However, they also express frustration with the pace imposed by current production routines, which they consider detrimental to journalistic quality.

I think the speed at which we have to report the news is brutal. It's the pace set by the times. And also, the ease that social media gives us for breaking news. Like I said: you see something on Twitter, you call the police, confirm it quickly, and that's it. But wow! What if we had the whole day to go to where the event happened, get closer, talk to people, see what the police say on site? I wish we had that time, but while we're trying to understand one story properly, another press release comes in. I wish we could do things with the calm and rigor they require.

(Journalist no. 2; Radio station no. 3, private)

The prevailing sense is that the current model of work is unsustainable and harmful to journalistic rigor. Many regret the normalization of multitasking, where a single news piece must be repurposed across multiple formats: a written article, social media posts, video content, and more.

I think journalism needs to return a bit more to 'slow journalism', because right now everything moves so fast and we're constantly generating news. We have to update information all the time, and sometimes a story doesn't need to go any further, or it should just be allowed to settle for the public. I think in some cases we don't need so many news items, but rather a few that are well-developed over several days. That would allow us to understand them better and give them more impact when we report them, instead of these quick ones. Like, this politician said this, that one said that. After three days, people don't even remember what we were talking about, because we're bombarded with so much information that it's impossible to retain what really matters.

(Journalist no. 4; Radio station no. 4, private)

## Generation Z's Feminine Radio Journalist: The Future of Talk Radio

---

Another major concern is the increasing intrusion of disinformation and the audience's confusion between journalistic content and opinionated or manipulated messages on social media.

With social media, with... with disinformation, fake news, etc., I think we're no longer being taken seriously, to put it one way. And... I don't know, I mean... I don't know what else we could do to be believed more than someone who picks up a phone, records themselves, and says whatever. But I do think, in a way, we're being trivialized. Still, I also believe people turn to traditional, mainstream media to verify that information.

\*(Journalist no. 1; Radio station no. 1, private)

Despite these challenges, the journalists insist on radio's social responsibility. While most reject political activism in journalism, they affirm its potential as a vehicle for social transformation, especially in the defense of equality and human rights

Political activism, no. But for other causes... Feminist activism, for example, or LGBTBI activism, I think yes, and I think it's necessary for causes that are... In the end, we should all want, every journalist should want a more equal world, where there's no gender pay gap, where my male colleague doesn't earn more than me just for being a man, or ultimately, where we all want a world without LGBTBI violence. So I think when it comes to social and human rights issues, activism is possible and necessary. But for other topics, like political ones, I think it gets a bit more complicated.

(Journalist no. 13; Radio station no. 6, public)

### **5. The feminine and feminist perspective on the issues**

The interviewees consistently advocate for the inclusion of a gender perspective in both the selection and treatment of news topics. They report having to justify their proposals more thoroughly than their male colleagues when suggesting content they consider important. Most agree that women journalists tend to approach reality differently, with heightened sensitivity to social and gender-related issues.

Topics with a gender perspective that perhaps weren't addressed before, maybe because there weren't enough women in the newsroom. (...) This gender perspective can help identify issues that have traditionally been pushed into the background, and also influence the way news is produced.

(Journalist no. 1; Radio station no. 1, private)



## Generation Z's Feminine Radio Journalist: The Future of Talk Radio

---

This perspective is particularly evident in the coverage of gender-based violence and related issues. The journalists describe a differentiated, more careful approach, rooted in shared experiences and greater personal involvement.

(...) We are more sensitive to the issue of gender-based violence, not to say that men aren't, but I do think we look at it from a perspective that affects us personally. (...) Sometimes we focus on different people, on those who have been more directly affected by gender-based violence or sexual abuse, and we approach it more carefully. I'm not saying men don't do this, but I really believe there is a feminine perspective on this. (Journalist no. 13; Radio station no. 6, public)

In a professional environment that still exhibits gender biases, the interviewees often feel compelled to exceed standards of accuracy and rigor, particularly when covering topics traditionally considered male-dominated, such as sports.

I feel like if we frame it differently, it has to be at a level of perfection. (...) But at the beginning, when I was explaining something, preparing a topic, working on background material, for example, I had to make absolutely sure that everything I said made sense and was 100% accurate. Because I don't know, maybe it's those micro-misogynies we internalize just by existing... Being a girl talking about football, I felt I had to make it much clearer to everyone that I knew what I was talking about. Because there would always be some level of distrust. (Journalist no. 17; Radio station no. 5, public)

### **6.- Young people do not listen to traditional radio, but they do consume radio content**

Radio reaches young audiences, but not through traditional channels. Social media, podcasts, and digital platforms are key to delivering radio content to new audiences. The interviewees question what will happen if a habit of listening is not cultivated among young people now.

Young people don't really listen to live radio. So, something needs to be rethought here, because they do listen to a lot of podcasts and a lot of content, how to put it... a lot of repackaged content, maybe. I get the feeling they don't listen much to news bulletins. Nor to talk shows or anything like that. They listen to interviews with people they're interested in, or well-produced investigative reports or true crime series, but a political analysis roundtable, not so much, I think. So I believe that the audience we are now, as young people, might not have the habit of listening to radio in a few years, and therefore, consumption needs to be approached differently. I think this is quite a cross-cutting issue across all stations, both in Catalonia and Spain, and that there needs to be a shift in focus, and everyone needs to step up their game on social media. (Journalist no. 8; Radio station no. 4, private)

## Generation Z's Feminine Radio Journalist: The Future of Talk Radio

---

Therefore, most believe that in order to reach younger audiences, radio must increase its presence on social media platforms. This requires working with a clear strategy.

### **7.- Negative perceptions of the job**

The journalists express widespread worry about the professional intrusion they denounce. Another major concern involves working conditions: low salaries, instability, heavy workloads, and lack of recognition. Nearly half of the women in the study, despite sharing housing, are able to live on their current income. Journalists working at public broadcasters are recognized as being better paid. Freelancers are losing purchasing power. The two journalists with internship contracts receive no financial compensation. Eleven journalists from the four private stations consider themselves poorly or underpaid relative to the level of dedication and demands of their roles in their jobs.

In two of the private stations included in the study, the lack of human resources leads, according to the interviewees, to production routines that revolve almost entirely around press offices and press conferences. 80% of the interviewees believe that this trend will increase in the future, impacting the types of stories covered on the radio.

### **8.- Management and gender**

They observe that there are very few women in leadership positions in mainstream radio and believe that their generation will occupy these roles confidently. In some cases (a minority), they would accept such a position today. In others (the majority), they do not yet feel ready, but believe they will be in the near future.

I think we're increasingly ready. And it's not just about being prepared because, as I said, I believe my colleagues who are 30 years older than me are also ready to take on those roles. But I think it's about awareness: like, hey, I also want to lead, or I want to hold a position of power, or I want to share that power with you. And I think there's a generational gap between my colleagues and me, not that they don't want it, but maybe they wouldn't dare to say it. There will come a time when my colleagues and I will say: 'Hey, wait a minute, what about us?' It's really hard to do, but I think that's the big difference. It's not that they're not capable, far from it, but I think we are capable and we have this mindset of: 'Hey, we exist too, and we also want these roles.' Yes. (Journalist no. 2; Radio station no. 3, private)

While sharing an interest in management, most are aware that achieving it will not be easy.

## Generation Z's Feminine Radio Journalist: The Future of Talk Radio

I think we're more than ready. Now, whether they see it... that's more complicated, because whenever a man comes along, he often gets ahead of a woman or has more opportunities to reach a position or get better conditions. But I think we're just as capable, or even more so, than they are. (Journalist no. 4; Radio station no. 4, private)

Figure 2 presents the journalists' preferences regarding the management of radio companies, content departments, or programmes, or having the ability to decide on the topics covered in their own shows. In this regard, most of the women interviewed expressed a desire to have greater decision-making power within the programmes they work on.

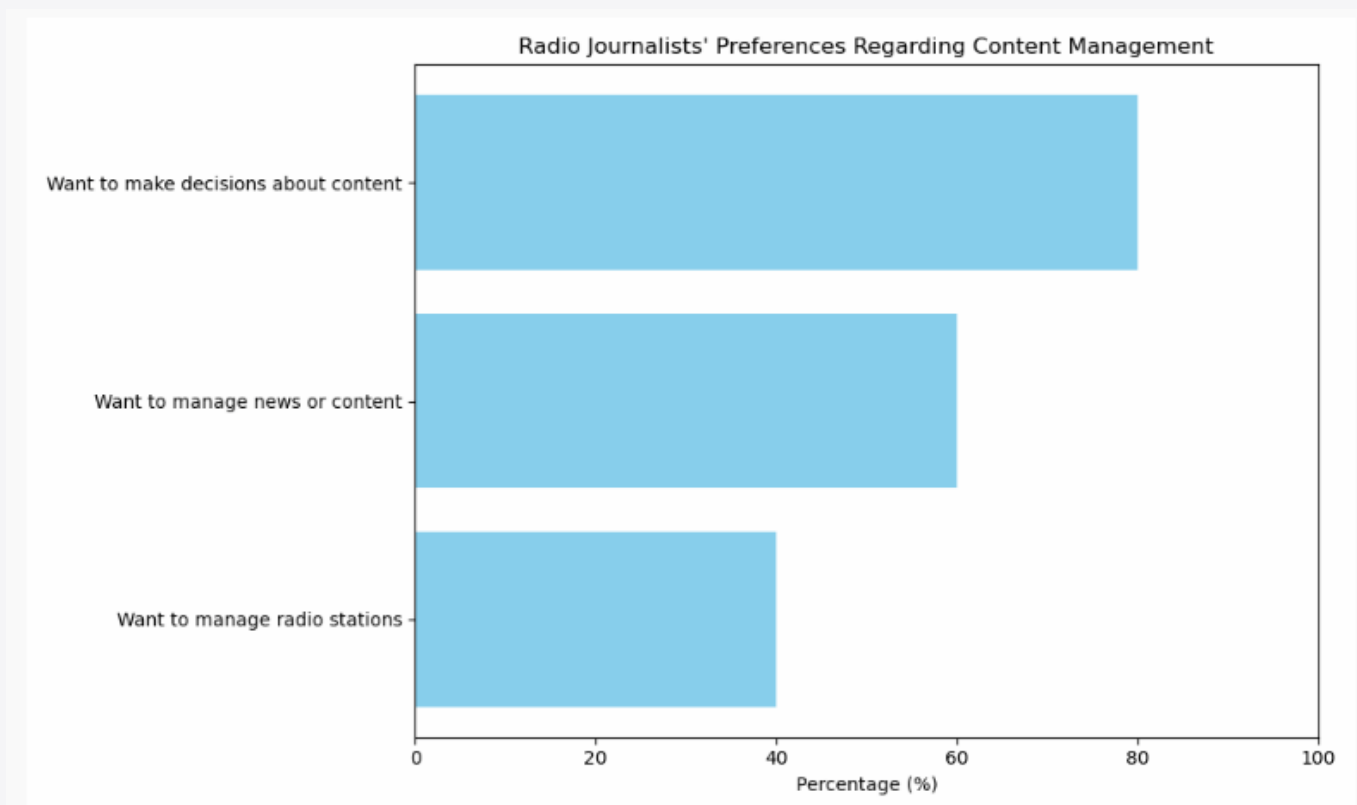


Figure 2. Ready for management: preferences. Source: own elaboration

### 9.- Work-life balance is a challenge

The difficulty of achieving work-life balance is a recurring topic. The journalists believe that the system forces them to choose between personal life and professional career, and they see motherhood as an obstacle that is not collectively acknowledged. Certain ideas related to this issue have become normalized, such as: "Journalism is a very demanding job and very difficult to combine with personal life," or "There's a real lack of policies to make reconciliation possible." They believe this is an issue that affects both men and women. "When you try to reconcile, you realize you don't have time to delve into topics the way you'd like to." This perception is shared by employees in both public and private radio stations.

## Generation Z's Feminine Radio Journalist: The Future of Talk Radio

---

I'm 27 years old, it's not such a crazy age to be thinking about starting a family, but it is, considering my schedule, you know what I mean? I mean, if I start at 10:00 and finish at 7:00... I mean, it would be impossible. It's practically impossible for me to even go to the gym, so just imagine having a child.(Journalist no. 1; Radio station no. 1, private)

### **10.- Changes they would make in their radio stations**

The interviewees suggest slowing down production routines, increasing investment and technological agility, implementing changes in corporate culture (with more focus on a gender perspective), and adapting audiovisual formats to be broadcast on social media. This means using new storytelling approaches, less informationally dense, shorter, and with language closer to that of social platforms. They want more innovation without losing the essence of radio.

Well, maybe not losing the essence, right? You know what I mean? Because I think there's a real risk of... like I said, right? That at some point, a station might prioritize, well, social media, one-minute clips, short and easy-to-consume content... so I'd say, seeing how things are evolving, we really need to keep the essence of Radio. Always Radio. (Journalist no. 15; Radio station no. 3, private)

They demand to be heard and call for the issue of job insecurity in the sector to be addressed so that the future may be less precarious.

Well, I think we definitely need more people because I don't think we can manage everything with the staff we have. For example, I do the society section all by myself!! It's unmanageable for one single person. So, more staff, more resources, better pay, a schedule that would allow for better work-life balance. (...) In fact, I think... it will all continue to be a bit precarious.(Journalist no. 1; Radio station no. 1, private)

### **Discussion**

Although the women who participated in this study do not constitute a statistically representative sample, nor do they act as official spokespersons for their respective radio stations, the convergence of their perspectives offers a compelling and realistic snapshot of the current state of generalist radio. Their reflections also provide valuable insight into how the medium is perceived and envisioned by feminine journalists under the age of 30. This aligns with the central aim of the research: to explore how female radio journalist of Generation Z engage with and imagine the evolution of generalist radio (non-local).

The findings reveal a notable degree of alignment in participants' perceptions, despite the diversity of the Catalan radio landscape in terms of ownership structures, editorial orientations, and resource availability. This convergence transcends institutional affiliations and employment conditions. Whether

## Generation Z's Feminine Radio Journalist: The Future of Talk Radio

---

employed in public or private broadcasters, participants articulated strikingly similar views regarding both the present and future of this media. The consistency of their responses across key thematic areas, despite the fact that they did not know one another, suggests the presence of a shared generational consciousness. This observation resonates with Mannheim's (1952) theory of generational unity, which posits that common historical and social experiences can shape a collective outlook among members of the same age cohort.

One particularly silent topic is the strong identification of these young women with radio as a sound-based medium. While they acknowledge the growing importance of audiovisual content, approximately half of the participants expressed ambivalence or dissatisfaction with this shift. They were concerned that the digital transition risks undermining the traditional strengths of radio. Participants recognize the strategic necessity of adapting to social media and visual platforms in order to engage younger audiences, yet they voice concern that such transformations may erode the distinctive qualities of radio journalism if the medium becomes overly visual or subordinated to the logic of storytelling of digital platforms. For these journalists, the essence of radio lies in the craft of sound storytelling, investigative depth, and the intimate connection fostered through the human voice, elements they fear may be compromised.

Moreover, their reflections align with the broader concerns about the precarisation of journalism and the emotional toll of digital acceleration, as discussed by Fanals (2021) and Ramírez (2023). The tension between innovation and continuity is not merely technological but also deeply cultural and professional, shaped by gendered experiences and generational expectations.

### Conclusion

This study confirms that young women journalists working in Catalonia's general-interest radio sector hold a critical yet constructive view of this media, which they defend with conviction. They aspire to play an active role in shaping its future, but emphasize the need for institutional support and trust to consider a long-term career in radio as viable, an aspiration that many currently regard as unrealistic. These findings are consistent with Espinosa-Mirabet, Puntí, and Serra (2024), who highlight the persistent structural barriers that hinder women's professional advancement in radio stations as March (2024) gathered from participants in a roundtable discussion on women and radio.

Participants underscore that without effective work-life balance policies, achieving career sustainability will remain highly challenging. They do not express this from a feminist perspective, but rather thinking that work-life balance should apply to everyone. Neither does their demand or concern for greater decision-making power over the content produced at their stations appear explicitly feminist, rather, it seems quite reasonable. As one of the interviewed journalists states, "if not now, when?" referring to the fact that we are living through a historically sensitive social moment, prepared to accept gender changes in leadership positions as normal. This perspective differs significantly from the conclusions drawn by Terol (2021), who



## Generation Z's Feminine Radio Journalist: The Future of Talk Radio

---

explains that women journalists often struggle to perceive and identify gender bias within journalistic work routines. The five-year gap between the collection of viewpoints may help explain this discrepancy. Additionally, the generational difference between Generation Z radio journalists and those from À Punt featured in Terol's study could also be a contributing factor. In fact, Terol (2021) notes that the youngest journalist she interviewed, aged 29 (Generation Z), is the one who reports the highest number of sexist behaviors and attitudes in her study.

Although some stations have implemented reconciliation plans, these are not consistently applied across workplaces. This inconsistency, along with perceived salary disparities, reflects broader patterns of inequality in the sector, as previously documented by Jiménez (2014) and Ruipérez (2018), who noted the underrepresentation of women in leadership and the persistence of gender pay gaps.

The journalists also call for structural reforms that would enable the integration of innovation, digital tools, and specialized technological roles to enhance newsroom efficiency and strengthen the digital presence of radio stations. However, they stress that such innovation must not come at the expense of radio's core identity.

Interviewed journalists reaffirm the essential role of radio as a bulwark against misinformation, emphasizing its responsibility to serve as a trustworthy source of journalism. They also stress the importance of adapting to new listening habits, particularly to engage younger audiences who primarily access content via social media platforms. Finally, they express deep concern about growing professional intrusion and the widespread lack of media literacy among certain segments of the public.

Considering Catalonia's economic and media landscape, particularly its high number of both local and non-local radio companies and its leading position in this regard, (Martí, 2015) the findings of this regional study could well be expanded by incorporating the perceptions of young female radio journalists from other parts of Spain, in order to obtain a more comprehensive overview. And why not, a similar study could be conducted in various European countries in order to draw more robust conclusions about how Generation Z female journalists perceive radio across Europe.

## Generation Z's Feminine Radio Journalist: The Future of Talk Radio

---

### References

- Buitrago, Álex, Martín García, A., & Torres Ortiz, L. (2024). La alfabetización en inteligencia artificial: propuesta articulada de dimensiones e indicadores. *Communication Papers. Media Literacy and Gender Studies.*, 13(27), 118–139. [https://doi.org/10.33115/udg\\_bib/cp.v13i27.23086](https://doi.org/10.33115/udg_bib/cp.v13i27.23086)
- ADC (2020) "La mujer en comunicación y RR.PP. en España'. 2ª edición del estudio. <https://www.asociacionadc.org/publicaciones-adc/>
- Balsebre Torroja, A. (2001). *Historia de la radio en España (Vol. 1: 1874–1939)*. Madrid, Espanya: Cátedra.
- Balsebre, A., & Fontova, R. (2018). *Las cartas de Elena Francis: Una educación sentimental bajo el franquismo*. Madrid: Cátedra
- Baykal, B. (2023) Mobile game preferences of Generation Z consumer profile. [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/374056481\\_MOBILE\\_GAME\\_PREFERENCES\\_OF\\_GENERATION\\_Z\\_CONSUMER\\_PROFILE](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/374056481_MOBILE_GAME_PREFERENCES_OF_GENERATION_Z_CONSUMER_PROFILE)
- Bages, Siscu. (2021) "Laura Fanals: "Els mitjans de trinxeres no ajuden a un debat tranquil sobre quin ha de ser el present i el futur de Catalunya" a: Catalunya Plural. <https://catalunyaplural.cat/ca/els-mitjans-de-trinxeres-no-ajuden-a-un-debat-tranquil-sobre-quin-ha-de-ser-el-present-i-el-futur-politic-de-catalunya/>
- Barrera López, B. (2018). Disciplinar desde las ondas. Proyecto y discurso radiofónico de la Sección Femenina durante la posguerra. *Alcores: Revista de Historia Contemporánea*, (22), 47–64.
- Blanco Fajardo, S. (2018). La radio, compañera del hogar. Uso y consumo del espacio y el horario doméstico durante el primer franquismo (1939–1959). *Alcores: Revista de Historia Contemporánea*, (22), 67–86.
- Chen, L., Martínez, R., & Singh, A. (2023). Understanding Generation Z: Media consumption and communication preferences compared to previous generations. *Journal of Media and Communication Studies*. <https://www.webofscience.com/wos/woscc/full-record/WOS:000961281500001>
- CONSELL DE L'AUDIOVISUAL DE CATALUNYA. Butlletí d'informació sobre l'audiovisual a Catalunya (BIAC). Núm. 26. Barcelona: CAC, gener del 2024. [https://www.cac.cat/sites/default/files/2024-01/BIAC%2026\\_CA.pdf](https://www.cac.cat/sites/default/files/2024-01/BIAC%2026_CA.pdf)
- COL.LEGI DE PERIODISTES DE CATALUNYA. Els gabinets de comunicació Criteris de bones pràctiques professionals, 2013. [https://cic.periodistes.cat/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/MANUAL\\_BONES\\_PRACTIQUES.pdf](https://cic.periodistes.cat/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/MANUAL_BONES_PRACTIQUES.pdf)

## Generation Z's Feminine Radio Journalist: The Future of Talk Radio

---

Díaz-Bravo, Laura; Torruco-García, Uri; Martínez-Hernández, Mildred y Varela-Ruiz, Margarita (2013) 'La entrevista, recurso flexible y dinámico'. *Investigación en Educación Medica* 2013;2(7):162-167

Espinosa Mirabet, Sílvia; Puntí Brun, Mónica i Serra Simón, Jordi (2024) *Les dones a la ràdio 100 anys després. Quaderns del CAC*, ISSN 1138-9761, ISSN-e 2014-2242, N.º. 50, 2024 (Monogràfic: La ràdio: memòria, resiliència i transformació), pàgs. 19-30)

Espinosa-Mirabet, S. (2020). *La radio: una historia en femenino*. En B. Sánchez-Gutiérrez & I. Liberia Vayá (Coords.), *Aquelarre. La emancipación de las mujeres en la cultura de masas* (pp.102-119). Sevilla, España: Advook Editorial.

Espinosa Mirabet, S. (2018). *De profesión, locutora de radio. Las voces femeninas de la radio española anteriores al franquismo*. Alcores: *Revista de Historia Contemporánea*, (22), 21-44

Espinosa, S. (2016). «En Femenino Y Singular: La Mujer En La Radio española Desde Los "felices años veinte" Hasta El Final De La Guerra Civil». *Arenal. Revista De Historia De Las Mujeres* 23 (1):5-34. <https://doi.org/10.30827/arenal.v23i1.4993>.

Espinosa, S. (2014): *Dones de ràdio*. Barcelona: Albertí editors

Espinosa-Mirabet, S. (2013). *Cuando María Cinta Balagué radió el primer magazine*. En *Historia y comunicación social*, Vol. 18. pp. 157-167

Espinosa Mirabet, S. (2012). "Las primeras locutoras y la historia de la radio. El caso de Cataluña, 1924-1939" en *ZER: revista de estudios de comunicación*. Vol.: 16. Núm.: 31. pp.109-127 . ISSN:1137-1102

Fanals Gubau, Laura. (2021) *Precariedad laboral i ètica periodística: una anàlisi de la relació entre condicions de treball i deontologia professional a Catalunya*. Tesis Doctoral. Universitat Pompeu Fabra. <http://hdl.handle.net/10803/670815>

Franquet, R. (1982) "Por un discurso no andocéntrico de los medios e comunicación" en *VVAA: el sexisme en la ciència*. Barcelona: UAB. pp.115-126

Franquet, R. (2001). *Història de la ràdio a Catalunya al segle XX: de la ràdio galena a la ràdio digital*. Barcelona: Generalitat de Catalunya, Direcció General de Radiodifusió i Televisió. ISBN: 978-84-393-5450-5

Departament d'Universitats (2022). Generalitat de Catalunya. URL: <https://recercauniversitats.gencat.cat/ca/>

EGM, AIMC (2024) URL: [https://www.aimc.es/a1mc-c0nt3nt/uploads/2024/01/Marco\\_General\\_Medios\\_2024.pdf](https://www.aimc.es/a1mc-c0nt3nt/uploads/2024/01/Marco_General_Medios_2024.pdf)

## Generation Z's Feminine Radio Journalist: The Future of Talk Radio

---

Jiménez, C. (2014) 'Sostre de vidre o de formigó?' Capçalera, URL:  
<https://www.periodistes.cat/capcalera/article-465534-1-10-20170616.pdf>

Infoadex (2025) Estudio de la inversión publicitaria en España2024. URL:  
<https://www.infoadex.es/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/Estudio-InfoAdex-2024-Resumen.pdf>

Macharia, S. (2020) [co-ordinator of] WACC's Global Media Monitoring Project (GMMP) URL:  
<https://waccglobal.org/research-on-gender-equality-in-the-news-needs-adequate-funding/>

Mannheim, K. (1952). The Problem of Generations. In P. Kecskemeti (Ed.), *Essays on the Sociology of Knowledge* (pp. 276-320). London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.

Manrique Sabogal, W. (2025). Cómo las generaciones Z y alfa se convirtieron en las mejores aliadas de la lectura. *El País*. URL:  
<https://elpais.com/cultura/2025-03-25/como-las-generaciones-z-y-alfa-se-convirtieron-en-las-mejores-aliadas-de-la-lectura.html>

March, Mercè. (2024) Amb veu de Dona: 90 anys de Ràdio Lleida. Taula Rodona  
<https://cadenaser.com/cataluna/2024/03/01/mes-visibility-zacio-de-les-dones-en-tots-els-ambits-radio-lleida/>

Marugán Solís, F. y Martín Critikián, D. (2023). Redes Sociales y Generación Z. *Doxa Comunicación*, 36, pp. 381-399. <https://doi.org/10.31921/doxacom.n36a1707>

Martí-Martí, J.M.; Monclús-Blanco, B.; Gutiérrez-García, M.; Ribes, X. (2015). "La radio, modelo de negocio en transición: estrategias de oferta y de comercialización en el contexto digital". *Quaderns del CAC*, v. 41, n. 18, pp. 13-22.  
[https://www.cac.cat/pfw\\_files/cma/recerca/quaderns\\_cac/Q41\\_Marti\\_et\\_al\\_ES.pdf](https://www.cac.cat/pfw_files/cma/recerca/quaderns_cac/Q41_Marti_et_al_ES.pdf)

Pérez Martínez, J.E. (2016). Mujeres en la radio española del siglo XX (1924–1989). *Arenal. Revista de Historia de las Mujeres*, 23(1), 35–58. URL:  
<https://doi.org/10.30827/arenal.v23i1.4996>

Orús, A. (2020) 'Principales problemas de la profesión periodística por edad. España 2018' *A Statista*. URL:  
<https://es.statista.com/estadisticas/864335/principales-problemas-de-la-profesion-periodistica-por-edad-espana/>

Ramírez, M. (2023) Las directoras que faltan en España. URL:  
<https://www.cuadernosdeperiodistas.com/las-directoras-que-faltan-en-espana/>

Ruipérez Moslares, M. (2018) Estudio sobre la presencia de las mujeres en la prensa Madrid: Consejería de Políticas Sociales y Familia. Dirección General de la Mujer

## Generation Z's Feminine Radio Journalist: The Future of Talk Radio

---

Sindicat de Periodistes de Catalunya (2022) Radiografia dels mitjans de comunicació a Catalunya. URL:  
[https://sindicatperiodistes.cat/wpcontent/uploads/2023/02/Radiografia\\_mitjans\\_Informe\\_finalOK.pdf](https://sindicatperiodistes.cat/wpcontent/uploads/2023/02/Radiografia_mitjans_Informe_finalOK.pdf)

Shliakhovchuk, E., Oliynyk, R. and Muñoz García, A. (2021) 'Gen Zers' video game preferences and learning outcomes: toward designing better games', *Int. J. Technology Enhanced Learning*, Vol. 13, No. 2, pp.208–236.  
[https://www.academia.edu/50977448/Gen\\_Zers\\_video\\_game\\_preferences\\_and\\_learning\\_outcomes\\_toward\\_designing\\_better\\_games?utm\\_source=chatgpt.com](https://www.academia.edu/50977448/Gen_Zers_video_game_preferences_and_learning_outcomes_toward_designing_better_games?utm_source=chatgpt.com)

Terol Trenzano, E. (2021). *Gènere i cultura periodística. Experiències de dones periodistes en la redacció d'À Punt* [Treball Final de Màster, Universitat de Barcelona]. Dipòsit Digital de la Universitat de Barcelona. URL:  
<https://hdl.handle.net/2445/182824>

Tirocchi, S. (2024). Generation Z, values, and media: From influencers to BeReal, between visibility and authenticity. *Frontiers in Sociology*. URL  
<https://doi.org/10.3389/fsoc.2023.1304093>

World Journalism Education Council, WJEC (2023). 'Journalistic roles, values and qualifications in the network era. How journalism educators around the globe view the future of journalism' URL:  
<https://wjec.net/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/WJEC-survey-.pdf>