



“Educablog”: contribution to social education from the professional profile

“Educablog”: contribución a la educación social desde el perfil profesional

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Abstract

This research is part of a larger study and aims to analyze the case of EducaBlog, a professional blog of social education, from a phenomenological perspective to analyze its contribution to the professionalization, identity, and professional development of social education. This report presents the quantitative results and compares them with qualitative ones, both collected through a virtual questionnaire that was aimed at professionals from the third social sector who follow EducaBlog.

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The analysis was performed using SPSS V.26 software (INC., Chicago, IL) for quantitative data and NVIVO 12 V. Release 1.5 for qualitative data. The results showed that EducaBlog users identify it as a professional learning space that contributes both to professionalization, to identity and to professional development.

Keywords

Social education; Social media; Identity; Education professionals; Profesionalización; EducaBlog.

Resumen

La presente investigación es parte de un estudio de mayor alcance y tiene como objeto el estudio del caso “EducaBlog”, blog profesional de la educación social, desde una perspectiva fenomenológica que pretende analizar su contribución a la profesionalización, a la identidad y al desarrollo profesional de la educación social. En este informe, se exponen los resultados cuantitativos y su contraste con los cualitativos, recogidos ambos por medio de un cuestionario virtual que se dirigió a profesionales del tercer sector social que siguen EducaBlog.

El análisis se realizó por medio de los programas SPSS V.26 (INC., Chicago, IL) para los datos cuantitativos y NVIVO 12 V. Release 1.5 para los datos cualitativos. Los resultados obtenidos mostraron que las personas usuarias de EducaBlog identifican este como un espacio de aprendizaje profesional que contribuye tanto a la profesionalización como a la identidad y al desarrollo profesional.

Palabras clave

Educación social; Medios sociales; Identidad; Profesionales de la educación; Profesionalización; EducaBlog.

Introduction

The topic of this article will be framed within the evolution of the information society, Web 2.0, and identity, professional development and the professionalization of social education. Subsequently, the methodological design and analytical strategy will be explored; finally, the results, the discussion and the main conclusions will be presented.

Evolution of the information society

The current technological society has been given various names: information (Burch, 2005), informational (Castells, 1998), knowledge (Balart Carmona & Cortés Fuentealba, 2018), communication (Cardoso, 2009), network (Castells, 2001), and learning society (Sánchez, 2016). Globalization and the communication capacity provided by technologies are mechanisms that enable the so-called knowledge society, in which the communication model and access to knowledge have changed and autonomous learning is key (Balart Carmona & Cortés Fuentealba, 2018). Sánchez (2016) points out, in relation to the different denominations, that “the challenge of the eighties was to transform data into information, that the dilemma of the 90s was to convert information into knowledge, and currently, it is to manage that knowledge” (p. 233).

Information therefore becomes the foundation of the economic system, mediated by the technologies that precisely enable the structure on which it is distributed, relying on nodes and social networks (Sánchez, 2016). In this author’s opinion, today’s society makes more sense under the “umbrella” of the concept of “knowledge society”, since, understanding that the production of information does not stop growing exponentially in the network, the protagonism has migrated to the structure and networks that allow them to manage information and generate knowledge.

In today’s society, people can generate content, share it, exchange it, and build it together. In fact, it can be said that we are facing a learning society in which learning is not enclosed in educational institutions, is not the exclusive property of formal education, and does not occur only synchronously. Likewise, skills related to autonomous learning and learning to learn mediated by the competent management of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) are especially important (Balart Carmona & Cortés Fuentealba, 2018; Sánchez, 2016). In short, advances in ICTS have transformed the lives of people worldwide, affecting, for instance, education, work, and communication (Buenaño et al., 2021).

Social networks, blogs, and social media

The emergence of Web 2.0 marked the beginning of a profound change in society because it transformed the way we relate, the way we share and communicate, and gave rise to a multitude of networks at the global level (Canaza-Choque, 2018). Specifically, blogs, therefore, the blogosphere (Aguaded Gómez & López Meneses, 2009; Cerezo, 2006), have been a space to inform and socialize with people from the professional collective (Aguilar-Idáñez et al., 2018).

According to Martínez-Clares et al. (2020), blogs are a privileged tool to promote the construction of connections on any topic. In this sense, the Edusosphere and social media have enabled the visibility of social education, while promoting the generation of professional networks and professional development. In fact, authors such as Hipólito Ruiz et al. (2017) present EducaBlog as an example, among other Web 2.0 spaces:

The opportunities generated by Web 2.0 or social Web means that we can work collectively to promote the visibility of the profession, but, at the same time, use this shared social space for individual promotion as part of our career. Some examples of the promotion and collective visibility of Social Education include the work that the CGCEES is doing on Facebook, as well as the different professional associations to disseminate Social Education or the already well known web Eduso.net; another examples are the Alaska Social Educator blog (<http://eeducadorsocialenalaska.blogspot.com.es>) or EducaBlog (<http://www.educablog.es/>). (p. 574)

Regarding the few studies on professional blogs that can be analyzed, works such as that of Aguilar Idáñez et al. (2019) point out in relation to a nearby professional field i.e., social work, on the one hand, that its impact, although notorious in the field they write about, is not among the most far-reaching globally, therefore, they represent a small part of the blogosphere. On the other hand, the lack of studies on the blogosphere and the reduced possibilities of contrasting the results with the field of social work or with similar areas, as in the case of social education (Aguilar Idáñez et al., 2019; Bernal, 2015).

Regarding social networks, social media have gained in importance in recent years; thus, the media we use to inform ourselves have diversified and traditional media is not exclusive. In this way, social media are gaining ground as information platforms (Alonso González, 2019; Masip et al., 2015), despite the need to pose new challenges so that digital social media are also associated with educational purposes (Angulo-Armenta et al., 2021).

Finally, in terms of their use in conjunction with blogs, these are suitable platforms to offer a more personal mark on an area; Facebook and Twitter, for their part, are very effective for the dissemination of the content published on them. Likewise, blogs and social media contribute to generating an identity brand and a reputation on the internet, while sharing our experiences in a personal way (Caldevilla Domínguez, 2010; Marauri-Castillo et al., 2018).

Professionalization, identity, and professional development of social education

Social education is a pedagogical profession by nature that has a strong link with the promotion of human rights, as corroborated in the book *Documentos profesionalizadores [Professionalizing Documents]* (Asociación Estatal de Educación Social [ASEDES], 2007). In this sense, from an integrative perspective, social pedagogy would be the theoretical-practical science on which social education in a complex society is based. A society in which traditional educational institutions are overcome and their action is necessary is understood as an “educating society” (Martínez-Otero, 2021, p. 4; Vilar Martín, 2018).

Starting with *professionalization*, it is linked to the professional collective, its history and the development of its culture. Likewise, other agents such as the state or other professions participate in this process, so tensions arise, for example, with the institutional assignment, which indicates the political nature of professionalization (Sáez Carreras, 2005; Sánchez-Valverde, 2014).

With regard to the professionalization of social education, Vilar Martín (2018) differentiates four stages: “Pre-professional, introspection, opening, and consolidation stage” (pp. 21-24). These range from unqualified work of a charitable-care nature, which is carried out within closed institutions, to the present day where a diploma is converted into a degree. This equates it with other university degrees, the creation of own postgraduate and doctoral programs, and continue holding state congresses.

Other notable aspects, from the point of view of Vilar Martín (2018), are the observed signs of weakening and slowing down in the professionalizing process of social education. In this sense, the author focuses on different challenges, such as moving from a local perspective to a more global one covering the origin of the problems and building cooperative, networked, interdisciplinary responses adapted to contextual needs (not pre-established), in resuming the presence and importance of the political and ethical nature of the action, and enhancing the intervention with tangible results. According to Sáez Carreras (2022), social education, like any other social profession, faces uncertain horizons to increase opportunities to professionalize and reprofessionalize.

Regarding the *professional identity* of social education, in addition to the books *Documentos profesionalizadores* (ASEDES, 2007) and *El libro blanco. Título de grado en pedagogía y educación social [The White Book. Degree in pedagogy and social education]* (Agencia Nacional de Evaluación de la Calidad y Acreditación [ANECA], 2005), the creation of professional associations, and the development of the diploma and its conversion into a degree (Viana-Orta et

al., 2020), a paradigmatic change is taking place with respect to professional action that happens to have a broad perspective of reality, added to the cooperative networking that currently has an impact on it (Vilar Martín, 2018).

At the same time, there is a strengthening of the collective identity given by a broader definition of the profession and differentiation from other professions (Aquín, 2003; González Orozco et al., 2019). For example, Rodríguez (2022) highlights some of the most significant elements of professional identity, included in *El Código Deontológico de la Educación Social. Una visión desde la práctica profesional* [The Code of Ethics of Social Education. A vision from professional practice] (Pantoja et al., 2018), namely: critical thinking, the educational relationship, the community dimension, and teamwork.

As for *professional development*, this is linked to lifelong learning and, in this sense, it is necessary to create a culture of learning throughout life, which must include the competence learning to learn, since participation in continuous training is limited due to lack of time and family burdens (Belando-Montoro, 2017).

In addition, authors such as Ávalos (2007) point out, on the one hand, the need for support among professionals in lifelong learning, and reflect on the practice in a collaborative way; on the other hand, the need to take successful experiences as a basis for the design of training, as well as institutionalizing lifelong learning in relation to the creation of structures both within the specific entities and in relation to the professional collective.

Finally, ICTS, specifically blogs and social media with a professional theme, can be tools that favor professional development both individually and collectively (Mann, 2018; Santillán García, 2015). Hence, they can also favor the creation of networks for reflection and collaborative learning about practice and professional development (Khan, 2017; Pinya & Rosselló, 2016). Considering the above, ICTS should be present throughout the training process of professionals from a lifelong learning perspective (Cordón Sierra, 2017). Given this scenario, educators and social educators should join forces so that the profession continues to progress (Rubio, 2022).

Methodology

Design and procedure

This research is part of a doctoral thesis. Moreover, it was favorably informed by the Human Research Ethics Committee (CEISH BY ITS SPANISH ACRONYM) of Universidad del País Vasco/Euskal Herriko Unibertsitatea with the code M10_2020_218.

Once the questionnaire was created, the content of its items was validated. To do this, four experts in the area were contacted and consulted, they were explained the objective of the study and given instructions to assess each item and were invited to participate in the study. Thus, the experts had to grade each item (clarity, coherence, relevance, and writing) of the questionnaire on a validation sheet with a scale from 1-4: three of the four experts observed two poorly written items and suggested small modifications.

The sampling is non-probabilistic because the sample was chosen through the non-random procedure of the researcher, using the snowball method to reach a greater number of people who meet the characteristics of interest to analyze. Moreover, participants are asked to disseminate the questionnaire among their contacts. The type of questionnaire has been disseminated online and self-administered between May 11 and July 11, 2021.

For dissemination; first, an entry was published on EducaBlog, as well as on the social media Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. This phase lasted 60 days and reminders were sent weekly to encourage responses. In this vein, complementary strategies were used, such as sending an email to people who had commented on the blog until 2021, recording and disseminating a video in which participation was demanded, contacting leading sites in the field of social education, both on Facebook and Twitter, and with different state professional associations and entities of the third social sector to disseminate the link to the questionnaire.

The people who received the questionnaire were informed about the objective of the investigation, as well as the time of completion and the contact information. In addition, Organic Law 3/2018, which establishes provisions on the “Protection of Personal Data and Guarantee of Digital Rights” (Jefatura del Estado, 2018, Ley 294/2018), were complied with, and the voluntary nature of the participation and the need for participants to give their consent was informed before

they started to answer the questionnaire. Likewise, once the questionnaire was completed, the invited person had no possibility of entering again, thus guaranteeing that only one questionnaire could be completed per person.

Due to its voluntary nature, once different strategies were applied to encourage the response, it was decided to close the deadline to participate. The questionnaires were answered by a total of 114 people. After analyzing the database in Microsoft Excel (<https://products.office.com/>), the questionnaires showed a pattern of lack of responses of more than 50% in several blocks of the matrix. For this reason, all responses with no replies above the average were excluded, with a total of 16.

Participants

The total number of participants in this study was 114 people from different *backgrounds*. 93.9% came from Spain ($n = 107$); 5.3% from other European countries ($n = 6$), and 0.9% from non-European countries ($n = 1$). Regarding the autonomous communities of origin, 50.4% ($n = 54$) of people came from the Basque Country; 12.1% ($n = 13$), from Catalonia; 8.4% ($n = 9$), from Castilla y León; 7.4% ($n = 8$), from Andalusia; 6.5% ($n = 7$), from Madrid; 4.6% ($n = 5$), from Galicia; 2.8% ($n = 3$), from Cantabria; 1.8% ($n = 2$), from Murcia, the Canary Islands, and Asturias; and 0.8% ($n = 1$), from Valencia, La Rioja, and Extremadura.

Likewise, 62.3% ($n = 71$) identified with the female *gender*, and 37.7% ($n = 43$) with the male gender. In relation to *age*, 25.4% ($n = 29$) were young adults (people between 18 and 36 years of age), and 74.6% ($n = 85$) were adults (people 36 years of age or older). The youngest person in the sample was 21 years old, and the oldest was 62 years old ($M = 42.7$; $SD = 9.5$).

Instrument

Ad hoc questionnaire. This instrument gathered information on the socio-demographic data of the participants: gender, age, origin, province in which they reside, academic training, work activity, job position, field, and years of experience in it.

Regarding the research instrument, a questionnaire was designed consisting of 57 items, divided into 6 categories. For this study, a total of 49 closed items and 5 open items were used. The first block was composed of 9 items, which describe the socio-demographic profile of the

participants: “gender, residence, training, etc.” The second block, with 22 items, describes how users use the site: “year of start of use, connection time, frequency of access, use of EducaBlog sections, etc.” The third block, with 8 items, describes the reasons for using the blog: “out of professional interest, because they learn, etc.” It was answered with a Likert scale: from little to a lot. The fourth block, with 9 items, describes the usefulness of the site: “to know what social education consists of, to know the current situation around social education, etc.,” a response scale from little useful to very useful was used. The fifth block, with 6 items, describes the contribution to professionalization, identity and professional development; collected responses went from little to a lot of contribution. Finally, the sixth block, with 3 open items, describes proposals for improvement regarding innovation, content, and structure.

Data analysis

On the one hand, for the analysis of quantitative data, the statistical software SPSS V.26 (INC., Chicago, IL) was used. Descriptive analyses of the sociodemographic variables under study (mode, reasons, and usefulness of EducaBlog and contributions to professionalization, identity, and professional development) and associations between variables were made. Responses were re-coded into two categories to then equate them with the help of the chi-square statistic and calculate the magnitude of the effect between the variables that show significant associations.

On the other hand, the NVivo 12 V.1.5 software was used for qualitative analysis. The categorial system was constructed inductively-deductively and helped to categorize the information. Likewise, different analytical tests were carried out such as text searches, word frequencies, clusters, and word clouds to identify the focal points and key ideas, and hierarchical maps, group queries, coding matrices, and cross-references were used to establish relationships between the categories.

Results

Socio-demographic data of professionals in the third social sector who are users of EducaBlog

Regarding the *vocational training field*, with respect to academic training, most people are social educators, which represents 62.3% ($n = 71$) of the sample. Of them, 41.2% have social education training, and 21.1% ($n = 24$) also have other training, 37.7% ($n = 43$) have only other formations. Similarly, in relation to the *employment situation*, 90.4% ($n = 103$) are active, while 9.6% ($n=11$) are unemployed.

Regarding the *job position*, 42.1% ($n = 48$) work as social educators, 12.3% ($n = 14$) are coordinators; 8.8% ($n = 10$), technicians; 5.3% ($n = 6$), assistants or caregivers, and 21.9% ($n=25$) work in professions other than those mentioned above. Continuing with the *areas of work*, 20.2% ($n = 23$) reported having worked in several areas; 11.4% ($n = 13$), with childhood; 9.6% ($n = 11$) with disabled people; 7.9% ($n = 9$) with adults; 7.0% ($n = 8$) with young people and adolescents; 4.4% ($n = 5$) with exclusion-risk and immigration-MENAS; 3.5% ($n = 4$) with minors and social services; 1.8% ($n = 2$) with older people; and 14.0% ($n = 16$) in other areas.

Finally, in relation to the *years of experience*, 19.3% ($n = 22$) have between 20 and 25 years; 16.7% ($n = 19$), between 15 and 20 years; 15.8% ($n = 18$), between 5-10, and 10-15 years; 14.0% ($n = 16$), over 25 years; 5.3% ($n = 6$), between 2 and 5 years; and 3.5% ($n = 4$), between 1 and 2 years.

Use of EducaBlog

Regarding the *year in which they started using the blog*, 12.3% (n = 14) began to use it in 2006; 8.8% (n = 10), in 2007; 7.9% (n = 9), in 2008; 7% (n = 7), in 2015; 6.1% (n = 7), in 2010; 5.3% (n = 6), in 2018; 4.4% (n = 5), in 2011 and 2012; 3.5% (n = 4), in 2016, 2017 and 2020; 2.6% (n = 3), in 2009, 2013, 2014 and 2019; and 0.9% (n = 1), in 2021.

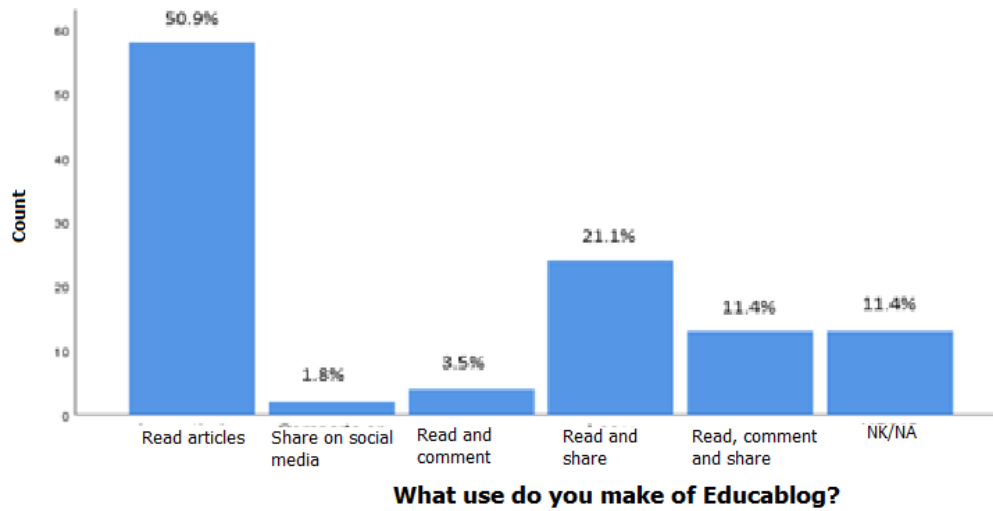
Continuing with the *last access* to the blog, 33.3% (n = 38) accessed it in the last month; 29.8% (n = 34), in the last year; 11.4% (n = 13), in the last seven days; 9.6% (n = 11), longer ago; 3.5% (n = 4) never accessed it; and 1.8% (n = 2), the day before completing the questionnaire. Similarly, the frequency of access is less than once a month in 49.1% (n = 56) of the sample, 24.6% (n = 28) accessed several times a month, 19.3% (n = 22) do not access it; and 3.5% (n = 4) do so several times a week.

In relation to the *frequency of access to EducaBlog's social media*, starting with *Facebook*, 29.8% (n = 34) use it less than once a month; 28.1% (n = 32) do not use it; 24.6% (n = 28), several times a month; 7.9% (n = 9), several times a week; 5.3% (n = 6), every day or almost every day; and 0.9% (n = 1), several times a day. Continuing with *Twitter*, 57.9% (n = 66) of the people surveyed do not use it; 16.7% (n = 19), less than once a month; 12.3% (n = 14), several times a month; 8.8% (n = 10), several times a week; and 1.8% (n = 2), every day or almost every day. Finally, in relation to *Instagram*, 65.8% (n = 75) do not use it; 21.1% (n = 24), less than once a month; 7.0% (n = 8), several times a month; and 1.8% (n = 2), several times a week.

Regarding the *connection time* spent in the blog, 44.7% (n = 51) browse between 15 and 30 minutes; 22.8% (n = 26), less than 15 minutes; 14.9% (n = 17) do not browse; and 9.6% (n = 11), between 30 and 60 minutes. Next, regarding the connection time to EducaBlog's social media, specifically Facebook, 36.8% (n = 42) browse less than 15 minutes; 33.3% (n = 38) do not browse; 17.5% (n = 20) and 5.3% (n = 6), between 30 and 60 minutes. Regarding Twitter, 58.8% (n = 67) do not use it; 29.8% (n = 34), 6.1% (n = 7) and 1.8% (n = 2), between 30 and 60 minutes. And finally, in relation to Instagram, 66.7% (n = 76) do not use it; 25.4% (n = 29) browse for less than 15 minutes; 2.6% (n = 3), between 15 and 30 minutes; and 0.9% (n = 1), between 30 and 60 minutes.

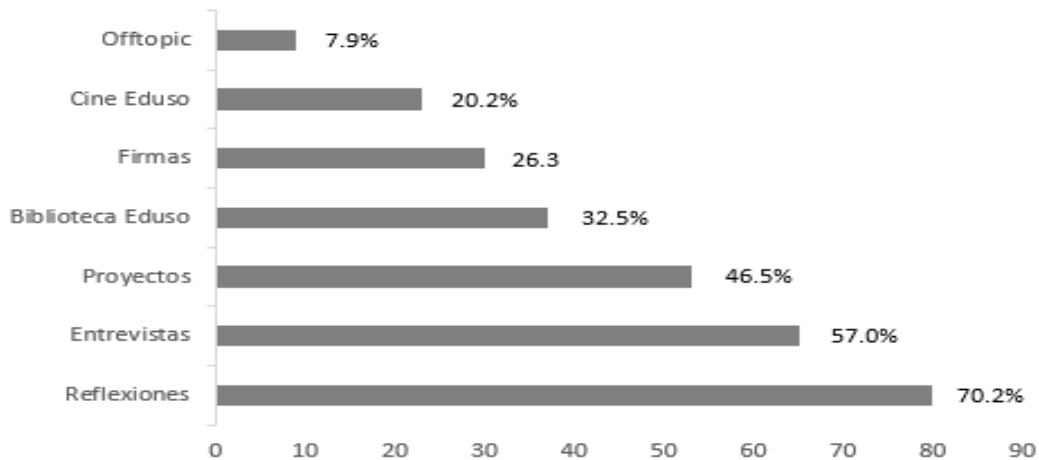
Lastly, in relation to the *uses* given by users to EducaBlog, the majority n = 58 (50.9%) read articles, as presented in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Use of EducaBlog based on platform users



As for the sections of the blog, both the number of *sections* used and those that are not used are analyzed. In this sense, the most browsed section is “Reflections”, with 70.2% (n = 80), as shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2. Comparative Use of EducaBlog Sections



Reasons for using EducaBlog

As presented in Table 1, in all categories most people report that EducaBlog contributes much or a lot, with a percentage between 70.2% and 86% of the people surveyed.

Table 1

Percentages of reasons for using EducaBlog

Reasons	Contributes a Lot %	Contributes much %	Total %
Degree of professional interest	50.9	35.1	86.0
Degree of interest of the addressed topics	46.5	30.7	77.2
Degree of actuality of the addressed topics	40.4	36.0	76.4
Degree of learning	46.5	26.3	72.8
Degree of satisfaction with the writing style	43.0	22.8	65.8
Degree of Entertainment	36.8	14.0	50.8

Note. This table shows the percentages that contributed the most to EducaBlog.

In regard to *professional interest*, 50.9% (n = 58) indicate that “EducaBlog” attracts a lot of interest; 35.1% (n = 40), that it is quite interesting; 10.5% (n = 12) have a neutral opinion about it; 0.9% (n = 1) consider that it is somewhat interesting; and 2.6% (n = 3), that it is little interesting.

Regarding the *interest of the addressed topics*, 46.5% (n = 53) think that the topics are quite interesting; while 30.7% (n = 35) think that they are very interesting; 16.7% (n = 19) give a neutral rating; 3.5% (n = 4) say they are somewhat interesting; and 2.6% (n = 3) say they are little interesting.

Continuing with the *actuality of the topics*, 40.4% (n = 46) consider that EducaBlog develops current topics; 36.0% (n = 41), quite current; 18.4% (n = 21) makes a neutral assessment; and 2.6% (n = 3), something current as well as not very current.

Likewise, 46.5% (n = 53) consider that they *learn* a lot using EducaBlog; 26.3%, that they learn enough; 21.9% (n = 25) give a neutral assessment; 3.5% (n = 4), that they learn something, and 1.8% (n = 2), that they learn little.

Regarding *entertainment*, 36.8% (n = 42) think it is quite entertaining; 35.1% (n = 40) rate it as neutral; 14.0% (n = 16) consider it very entertaining; 7.9% (n = 7.9), somewhat entertaining; and 6.1% (n = 7), not very entertaining.

If we refer to the *writing style*, 43.0% (n = 49) say that they like it a lot; 27.2% (n = 31) are neutral; 22.8% (n = 26) like it a lot; 4.4% (n = 5) like it a little; and 2.6% (n = 3) like it very little.

EducaBlog's Usefulness

In relation to the usefulness to *reflect* on social education, 47.4% (n = 54) indicate that it is very useful; 40.4% (n = 46), that it is quite useful; 9.6% (n = 11) value its usefulness in a neutral way; and 1.8% (n = 2) find little usefulness.

If we refer to *experiences linked to reality*, 53.5% (n = 61) of the people surveyed think that EducaBlog is very useful; 30.7% (n = 35) say it is quite useful; 13.2% (n = 15) give a neutral assessment; 1.8% (n = 2) find it not useful; and 0.9% (n = 1), somewhat useful.

In relation to *current knowledge of this sector*, 43.0% (n = 49) indicate that it is quite useful; 36.0% (n = 41), that it is very useful; 15.8% (n = 18) make a neutral assessment; and 2.6% (n = 3) said both somewhat useful and not very useful. Continuing with the usefulness regarding knowing what the work of social education consists of, 41.2% (n = 47) indicate that it is quite useful; while 36.0% (n = 41), very useful; 18.4% (n = 21) make a neutral assessment; 2.6% (n = 3) somewhat useful; and 1.8% (n = 2), little useful.

Regarding the usefulness to *explain what the social function of the profession is*, 39.5% (n = 45) indicate that it is quite useful; 34.2% (n = 39), very useful; 20.2% (n = 23) value usefulness in a neutral way; 3.5% (n = 4) somewhat useful, and 2.6% (n = 3), a little useful.

The people surveyed consider that EducaBlog is quite useful to *know the areas of social education*, as indicated by 41.2% (n = 47); 29.8% (n = 34) indicate that it is very useful; 24.6% (n = 28) value usefulness in a neutral way, 2.6% (n = 3) consider it not useful, and 1.8% (n = 2), somewhat useful.

Finally, regarding the usefulness of EducaBlog to *know what social education consists of*, 39.5% (n = 45) indicate that it is quite useful; 29.8% (n = 34), very useful; 25.4% (n = 29) rate it neutrally; and 2.6% (n = 3), somewhat useful and not useful at all.

Table 2 below shows how the people who participated indicate, for the most part, that it is quite or very useful regarding the indicated issues:

Table 2
Percentages of EducaBlog Usefulness

Usefulness	Very useful %	Pretty useful %	Total %
Reflect on social education	47.4	40.4	87.8
Collect experiences linked to reality	53.5	30.7	84.2
Get to know the latest news in the sector	36.0	43.0	79.0
Know what the work of social education consists of	36.0	41.2	77.2
Explain the social function of the profession	34.2	39.5	73.7
Know the areas of social education	29.8	41.2	71.0
Know what social education consists of	29.8	39.5	69.3

Note. This table shows the percentages that contributed the most to EducaBlog.

Contribution to professionalization, identity, and professional development

Finally, respondents were asked about the contribution of EducaBlog to the professionalization, identity, and professional development of social education. The results are presented in Table 3.

Table 3

Percentages of EducaBlog's contribution to social education

Reasons	A lot of contribution %	Reasonable contribution %	Total %
Professional Identity	38.6	43.0	81.6
Professional Development	35.1	43.0	78.1
Professionalization	36.8	41.2	78.0

Note. This table shows the percentages that contributed the most to EducaBlog.

In relation to *professionalization*, 41.2% (n = 47) indicate that it has contributed a lot; 36.8% (n = 42), much; 15.8% (n = 18) value its contribution in a neutral way; 4.4% (n = 5), something; and 1.8% (n = 2), little.

Regarding *professional identity*, 43.0% (n = 49) think it has contributed a lot; 38.6% (n = 44), much; 12.3% (n = 14) make a neutral assessment; 3.5% (n = 4), little; and 2.6% (n = 3), something.

Finally, in relation to *professional development*, 43.0% (n = 49) think that EducaBlog has contributed a lot; 35.1% (n = 40) much; 16.7% (n = 19) make a neutral assessment; 3.5% (n = 4), something; and 1.8% (n = 2), little.

Associations between the variables under study

In addition, Table 4 shows the statistically significant associations: $\chi^2 = 9.95$, $p = .041$, V Cramer = .29, for the use of Educablog's Twitter as a function of time and gender, with a moderate effect size.

Table 4

Responses on EducaBlog’s Twitter connection time and gender

Time browsing EducaBlog’s Twitter	Fem.	Male	χ^2 (p)	V Cramer
Less than 15	12.3 % (n = 14)	17.5% (n = 20)	9.95 (.041)*	.29
15-30	4.4% (n = 5)	1.8% (n = 2)		
30-60	1.8% (n = 2)	-		
Do not use it	41.2 % (n = 47)	17.5 % (n = 20)		
Do not know	2.6% (n = 3)	0.9 % (n = 1)		

Note. ***p < .001**p < .01; *p < .05.

Moreover, there are statistically significant associations between the use of EducaBlog’s Facebook and professional occupation (among social educators and others), with a moderate effect size: $\chi^2 = 8.76$, $p = .033$, $V Cramer = .28$, as shown in Table 5.

Table 5

Responses on the frequency of access to EducaBlog’s Facebook and professional occupation

Frequency of access to EducaBlog’s Facebook	Social Educators	Others	χ^2 (p)	V Cramer
Often	5.3% (n = 6)	0.9% (n=1)	8.76 (.033)*	.28
Sometimes	28.1% (n = 32)	34.2% (n=39)		
Do not use it	7.9 % (n = 9)	20.2% (n=29)		
N/K; N/A (Don’t know; Don’t answer)	0.9 % (n = 1)	2.6% (n = 3)		

Note. ***p < .001**p < .01; *p < .05.

Table 6 shows the statistically significant association between Projects use and gender, with a moderate effect size: $\chi^2 = 9.73$, $p = .008$, $V Cramer = .29$.

Table 6.

Responses on the use of the “Projects” section and gender

Do you use the “Projects” section?	Fem.	Male	χ^2 (p)	V Cramer
Yes	36 % (n = 41)	10.5% (n = 12)	9.73 (.008) **	.29
No	16.7% (n = 19)	18.4 % (n = 21)		
N/K; N/A (Don’t know; Don’t answer)	9.6 % (n = 11)	8.8 % (n = 10)		

Note. ***p < .001**p < .01; *p < .05.

Likewise, the use of the Interviews section shows a statistically significant association with age, with a moderate effect size: $\chi^2 = 7.07$, $p = .029$, $V \text{ Cramer} = .24$, as shown in Table 7.

Table 7

Response on the use of the “Interviews” section and age

Do you use the “Interviews” section?	18–36	>36	χ^2 (p)	V Cramer
Yes	9.6 % (n = 11)	47.4% (n = 54)	7.07 (.029)**	.24
No	10.4% (n = 12)	14% (n = 16)		
N/K; N/A (Don't know; Don't answer)	5.3% (n = 6)	13.2% (n=15)		

Note. *** $p < .001$ ** $p < .01$; * $p < .05$.

Table 8 shows the statistically significant association between the use of the Projects section and the reason for its use, specifically in the categories of something and a lot. The statistic is significant as it shows a high effect size: $\chi^2 = 37.79$, $p = .001$, $V \text{ Cramer} = .57$.

Table 8

Responses on use of the “Projects” section and the reason for use

Do you use the “Projects” section?	Because I learn something	Because I learn a lot	χ^2 (p)	V Cramer
Yes	6.1 % (n = 7)	40.4 % (n = 46)	37.79 (.001)***	.57
No	6.1% (n = 7)	28.9 % (n = 33)		
N/K; N/A (Don't know; Don't answer)	14.9 % (n = 17)	3.5 % (n = 4)		

Note. *** $p < .001$ ** $p < .01$; * $p < .05$.

Table 9 shows the significant associations between the use of the Signature section and use ratio between something, and a lot ranges, with high effect size: $\chi^2 = 40.65$, $p = .001$, $V \text{ Cramer} = .60$.

Table 9

Responses use on the “Signatures” section and reason for use

Do you use the “Signatures” section?	Because I learn something	Because I learn a lot	χ^2 (p)	V Cramer
Yes	0.9 % (n = 1)	25.4 % (n = 29)	40.65 (.001)***	.60
No	11.4% (n = 13)	43.9 % (n = 50)		
N/K; N/A (Don't know; Don't answer)	14.9 % (n = 17)	3.5 % (n = 4)		

Note. *** $p < .001$ ** $p < .01$; * $p < .05$.

Likewise, Table 10 shows a statistically significant association between the use of the Eduso Library and the reason for use (something and a lot), with a high effect size: $\chi^2 = 42.31$, $p = .001$, $V \text{ Cramer} = .61$.

Table 10
 Answers use of the “Eduso library” section and reason for use

Do you use the “Eduso Library” section?	Because I learn something	Because I learn a lot	$\chi^2 (p)$	V Cramer
Yes	0.9 % (n = 1)	31.6 % (n = 36)	42.31 (.001) ***	.61
No	11.4% (n = 13)	37.7 % (n = 43)		
N/K; N/A (Don't know; Don't answer)	14.9 % (n = 17)	3.5 % (n = 4)		

Note. *** $p < .001$ ** $p < .01$; * $p < .05$.

Qualitative analysis of the associations between contribution categories

In the qualitative analysis regarding the categories, which are also analyzed quantitatively, 159 references emerged in relation to professional development, 146 in relation to identity, and 126 in relation to professionalization. It is noteworthy that the three categories are strongly related to each other.

In this way, the categories “Professional Development” and “Professional Identity” are strongly linked by sharing 65 references. Likewise, the category “Professional identity” shares 42 references with “Professionalization” and, finally, “Professional development” and “Professionalization” coincide in 37 references. Thus, it can be seen that the category “Professional identity” is the most intensely related to the others, as can be seen in Figure 3.

Figure 3. Shared cross-category references

	A: Professional Devepolpment	B: Profesional Identity	C: Professionalization
1: Professional Development	159	65	37
2: Professional Identity	65	146	42
3: Professionalization	37	42	122

Qualitative analysis of associations between contribution categories and sociodemographic variables, reasons for use, and usefulness

In the assessment of the relationships between the study variables and the category references used in the qualitative analysis, two associations of interest were observed.

On the one hand, in relation to the sociodemographic variable gender and the categories of contributions of EducaBlog to social education, women ask more questions about professional development (52 references): “I think that EducaBlog greatly favors reflection and constructive criticism to help be better professionals” (C5), followed by identity (47 references) and, finally, professionalization (45 references); men refer more to professional identity (36 references): “Social education is a relatively young profession, EducaBlog helps on many occasions to name and publicize the profession” (C21) and, then, in equal measure, to professional development and professionalization (33 references).

On the other hand, with respect to the sociodemographic variable of the years of experience, while the people with the most experience, between 10 and more than 25 years, refer to the three themes equally (55 references): “Visibility and approach of the profession. A space for meeting and reflection. Deployment of resources and experiences of socio-educational intervention” (C55), people with less experience, that is, with less than 10 years, refer to a greater extent to professional identity (20 references): “It helped us educators to feel part of something bigger” (C4), followed by professional development (19 references) and professionalization (15 references).

Discussion and conclusions

The quantitative data collected show significant associations between gender, age, occupation and a notorious learning and the reason for use. In this way, the proportion of women who use the blog’s Twitter is lower than that of men, although those who do use it do so for longer. This issue coincides with studies such as that of Rodríguez and Restrepo (2015), who report less knowledge and less perception of the educational usefulness of the tool on the part of women. Likewise, in relation to gender, women use the Projects section more than men.

Continuing with the quantitative analysis, in relation to the occupation, it is noteworthy that those who are dedicated to social education use EducaBlog’s Facebook more frequently than the rest of the professionals who follow the blog. If we talk about the “age” variable, we observe that people over 36 years old use the interview section more prominently than those under that age.

In relation to people who indicate that the reason for using EducaBlog is that they learn a lot, the fact that they use the “Signatures”, “Eduso Library” and “Projects” sections to a greater extent stands out. It indicates that there is a relevant relationship between the use of these sections and learning. Likewise, this research would reinforce the consideration of the usefulness of social media for lifelong learning (Baker & Hitchcock, 2017; Cordon Sierra, 2017) and, in particular, its value for collaborative learning that starts from reflection on practice (Angulo-Armenta et al., 2021; Khan, 2017; Pinya & Rosselló, 2016).

In relation to the contribution of the site to social education, it is clear from the analysis of the quantitative data that the perception of the surveyed professional people is remarkable in the three areas of analysis: professionalization, identity, and professional development. This issue corresponds to authors who point out aspects such as the visibility of the profession and the creation of professional networks (Hipólito Ruiz et al., 2017; Mann, 2018; Santillán García, 2015), or, as Rubio (2022) points out, the importance of ethics and deontology commissions or committees in social education.

In the qualitative analysis, the strong interrelation between these three categories stands out, which makes sense if we contrast it with the quantitative data that indicate a very close proportion with respect to the perception of the contribution of each area to the profession.

Continuing with gender, as indicated by the qualitative analysis, women’s interest in professional development is greater than that of men, also in the field of social education. Hence, it is worth noting two hypotheses that could be tested in future research; first, the lack of equal opportunities regarding the accessibility to continuous professional development in relation to the care role assumed by women (Rojas Fernández, 2020); second, a commitment and greater motivation to do the job (Donoso et al., 2011).

Likewise, the qualitative analysis indicates that people with more than 10 years of work experience approach the three topics of analysis equally, while those with less than 10 years of experience speak, to a greater extent, of professional identity, then about professional development and, to a lesser extent, of professionalization.

Although social networks such as Facebook or Twitter allow us to improve teaching-learning conditions in the 21st century and enable the construction of new and innovative virtual educational spaces (Salas-Rueda, 2020), the results obtained indicate that there are differences

between genders in the use of Twitter, since men use it the most. Likewise, there are relative differences with respect to the aspect they give more importance to, since women are the ones who highlight professional development the most and make greater use of the Projects section. Also, a significant difference has been found in the evaluations of the blog's contribution with respect to age, in which identity and professional development stand out among those who have less than 10 years of experience in the profession.

These and other issues make us reflect on the need to address a blog that presents a diversity of participation spaces, so that various user profiles can be reached. Attending to the different profiles according to gender, age, professional experience, and occupation is essential, as well as doing it from the continuous training spaces that exist in universities and other learning spaces. Authors such as Serrano-Puche et al. (2019), in relation to the age of users, point out important differences in the mode of use and preferences with respect to different social media. In this way, the future of spaces such as EducaBlog would go through a greater degree of personalization, therefore, it is necessary to know the expectations of followers with diverse profiles (Martín et al., 2017).

The results also indicate that EducaBlog is recognized by its users as a space for learning and professional development, thus agreeing with authors such as Hipólito Ruiz et al. (2017). But, in the absence of studies in this regard, it is necessary to analyze its impact more deeply to continue improving its performance and its contribution.

Users have indicated an unequivocal contribution of EducaBlog to professionalization, identity, and professional development. These areas are strongly interrelated, as observed and pointed out by authors such as Molina Valenzuela (2001).

It would be interesting to continue investigating the needs and uses that users of this professional blog express in the future, since it could reflect what the profession demands and the current situation of this field of work in a changing society. It will also allow us to be attentive to the necessary updates in the fields of initial training and continuous training of social education professionals.

Authorship note

Iñigo Rodríguez Torre, Co-investigator, research work: methodological design, theoretical framework construction, instrument design, data collection and analysis, article writing, review of the final version of the manuscript. María Dosil Santamaría, Co-investigator, research work:

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Conflicts of interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest with any commercial institution or association of any kind.

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