

Can I become a social media specialist? A descriptive content analysis on the skills and qualifications necessary in job postings in Türkiye

Mustafa Cıngı

Asst., Prof., Dr., Erciyes
University, Kayseri /Türkiye
ORCID: [0000-0002-9688-8627](https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9688-8627)
E-Mail:
mcingi@erciyes.edu.tr

September 2023

Volume:20

Issue:55

DOI: 10.26466/opusjrs.1341187

Citation:

Cıngı, Mustafa. (2023). Can I become a social media specialist? A descriptive content analysis on the skills and qualifications necessary in job postings in Türkiye. *OPUS- Journal of Society Research*, 20(55), 592-611.

Abstract

The increase in the demand for digital skills has attracted attention in job postings published in the communication sector in recent years. The aim of this study is to reveal the frequently demanded skills and qualifications for the position of social media specialist, which is directly related to digital skills, in the context of Türkiye. For this purpose, descriptive content analysis was employed on 244 job postings published on Bigumigu.com and Mediacat.com, which publish the job postings of agencies in Türkiye. As a result of the analysis, it is possible to say that the most dominant demand of the job postings is experience in terms of years. Having agency experience, being fluent in English, being able to work in a team and having high communication skills are among the most demanded qualifications. Digital content management, digital advertising management, data analytics, design, reporting, and presentation skills are also among the most frequently requested skills. The most surprising result of the research is that agencies do not require a university education. It is important for universities to revise their curricula on the basis of these demands to respond to the needs of the sector and to train qualified graduates.

Keywords: Job postings, social media specialist, digital competencies, digital skills, university education

Öz

Dijital becerilerdeki taleplerin artışı iletişim sektöründe son yıllarda yayınlanan iş ilanlarında dikkati çekmektedir. Bu çalışmanın amacı da dijital becerileri doğrudan ilgilendiren sosyal medya uzmanlığı pozisyonu için sıklıkla talep edilen beceri ve nitelikleri Türkiye kapsamında ortaya koymaktır. Bunun için Türkiye'deki ajansların ilanlarını yayınlayan Bigumigu.com ve Mediacat.com sitelerinde yayınlanmış olan 244 ilan üzerinde betimsel içerik analizi uygulanmıştır. Analiz neticesinde ilanların en baskın talebinin yıl bazında tecrübe olduğunu söylemek mümkündür. Ajans tecrübesine sahip olmak, akıcı İngilizce konuşabilmek, takım çalışmasına yatkınlık ve yüksek iletişim becerisine sahip olmak ilanlarda en çok talep edilen niteliklerin başında gelmektedir. Dijital içerik yönetimi, dijital reklam yönetimi, veri analitiği, tasarım, raporlama ve sunum yapabilme becerileri de en sık talep edilen becerilerdendir. Araştırmada elde edilen en sürpriz sonuç, ajansların bir üniversite eğitimi şart koşmuyor olmalarıdır. Yaklaşık her beş ilandan dördü diploma şartını aramamaktadır. Sektörün ihtiyaçlarına cevap verebilmek ve nitelikli mezunlar yetiştirebilmek için üniversitelerin eğitim müfredatlarını bu taleplere göre güncellemeleri önem arz etmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: İş ilanları, sosyal medya uzmanı, dijital yeterlilikler, dijital beceriler, üniversite eğitimi

Introduction

The number of students graduating from universities in Türkiye is constantly rising due to the increasing number of universities and departments. In 2023, the number of university graduates reached approximately one million (<https://www.yok.gov.tr/>, 2023). However, since the need for employment has not increased at the same rate, this has negatively affected the employment of university graduates for many years (Uzun, 2007; Yalçıntaş & Akkaya, 2019). The fact that university education remains slow in the face of the speed of technological developments in the fields of work also increases this negativity. This situation has led to research comparing the demands of the sector and university education not only in Türkiye but also globally. Studies investigating the demands of the sector from university graduates have been conducted in engineering (AbdElall et al., 2012; Fourati-Jamoussi et al., 2021; Shi, 2008) health sciences (Saruan et al., 2015), tourism (Kokt & Strydom, 2014; Wang & Tsai, 2014), banking (Güler, 2020), education (Heggart & Dickson-Deane, 2022), real estate (Ting & Su, 2008), energy (Plaksina et al., 2017), business (Mozahem, 2021), industry (Gazquez et al., 2021), architecture (Kim et al., 2012), social services (Morales-Trujillo & Garcia-Mireles, 2019), agriculture (Kassem et al., 2021), textiles (Christine, 2008), forestry (Lindberg, 2000) and communications (Bernhard & Russmann, 2023; Ciochina et al., 2019; Daugherty, 2011; Flynn, 2014; Jashari et al., 2022; Lane & Johnston, 2017; Meganck et al., 2020; Todd, 2014).

Demands of the communications sector in Türkiye

Since the 1990s, the communications sector in Türkiye has been a subject of rigorous scholarly investigation (Dağtaş & Kaymas, 1998; Gülsünler, 2008; Nalçaoğlu, 1998; Özer, 2006; Tokgöz, 2003). Büyükaslan and Mavnacioğlu (2017) conducted a comprehensive assessment of the sector's demands, focusing on the curricula of communication faculties. Their findings reveal a conspicuous disparity between theoretical and

practical coursework, underscoring a misalignment with industry expectations. In response, it is recommended that the curriculum be adjusted to incorporate a greater emphasis on vocational English courses, foster closer collaboration between academic institutions and the industry, and enhance the efficacy of internship programs.

Üçler and Büyükçelikkok's (2021) research into job postings within the media sector accentuates that the employability of communication program graduates transcends conventional knowledge in areas such as news production, language proficiency, and corporate communication. The ability to actively engage with communication-oriented digital technologies is paramount for securing employment opportunities in this dynamic field. A comparative study by Arslan and Duğan (2019) scrutinized job postings in both the United States and Türkiye. Notably, job postings in the United States featured an extensive array of professional prerequisites, encompassing proficiency in communication technologies, strategic planning, report writing, presentation skills, crisis management, positivity, interpersonal communication, and teamwork. In stark contrast, the requirement of a bachelor's degree in communication was often absent in Türkiye's job postings, as elucidated by their research.

Meganck et al. (2020), in their meticulous analysis of one thousand job postings within the public relations field, underscore the burgeoning demand for digital communication skills, particularly among entry-level positions. Correspondingly, Bernhard and Russman's (2023) examination of vacancies corroborates the emphasis on digital communication skills within the field.

The emphasis on digital communication skills in job postings in the field of communication is noteworthy. van Dijk & van Deursen (2014) examine digital communication skills under two main headings as "media-related skills" and "content-related skills" and in the following six categories:

1. *Operational skills*: Entering an address on the web, using menus, viewing

files such as photos, videos, PDF files and downloading them to the device.

2. *Formal skills*: Navigating and surfing on and between websites without losing the starting point and target direction.

3. *Information skills*: Knowing which website to search for information and how to search for it and being able to evaluate the results.

4. *Communication skills*: Being able to communicate with other users on the Web, to establish a network, to send and receive messages through this network, to negotiate and make decisions together with those who are followed and those who follow them.

5. *Content production skills*: Ability to produce a variety of content such as text, music, photos, videos, etc.

6. *Strategic production skills*: To be able to move towards a goal, take the right steps towards that goal, get there, and reap the intended benefits.

On the other hand, considering the demands in job postings in the communication sector, it is possible to see that communication skills and qualifications used in the communication process with the target audience such as developing strategies for digital media, digital content design, digital content management, digital advertising management, data analytics, SEO, SEM, social media networks, social media marketing are emphasized as digital communication skills (Ciochina et al., 2019; Kılınç & Akyol, 2018; Meganck et al., 2020; Özarslan, 2019; Şentürk & Fidan, 2016). There is a professional field that directly demands these digital communication skills, and that is "social media expertise". In job postings, it can be seen that both personal and professional digital communication skills and qualifications are directly demanded in positions related to social media expertise.

Social media specialization

The skills and qualifications demanded in social media specialization are frequently mentioned in

sectoral publications. Gollin (2020) lists the positions in the field of social media and states that a social media specialist should have skills such as strategy creation, development and execution, increasing brand awareness on social media, driving traffic, campaign execution, copywriting, community management, comment moderation. In its report on the subject, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics adds qualities and skills such as creating, sharing, tracking, measuring, using analytics tools, understanding, and interacting with target audiences, and collaborating with other professionals to these skills. The report also mentions education, stating that it is advantageous to have a bachelor's degree in communication programs, particularly in public relations and journalism, or in business administration. On the other hand, it adds that experience is more important in recruitment (Torpey, 2016). In the Australian Government National Skills Commission Emerging Occupations Report (<https://www.nationalskillscommission.gov.au/>, 2020), one of the main skills and qualifications for social media specialization is to develop, implement and manage strategies, content, and campaigns for brands' social media presence. In parallel with the literature, the most essential expectations are to have skills in social media platforms, social media tools, digital marketing, social content, social media marketing, Adobe Photoshop, community management and copywriting. In addition, according to the Social Media Center (2018) a unit of the Academy of Art University, among the most intensive demands of a business are skills such as time management, storytelling, strong visual aesthetics, following trends, using different social media platforms, social media ad management, SEO, KPI determination, analysis and interpretation. As highlighted by one of Türkiye's most popular career websites, producing meaningful content on social media platforms and resolving customer criticism/complaints quickly and sensitively are the most prominent skills for social media specialists (<https://www.kariyer.net/>, 2023). The website lists other responsibilities as creating online content such as original text, images, and videos daily; editing and publishing them;

conducting research; analyzing data; preparing analytical reports; benchmarking them; monitoring social media traffic; staying on top of social media trends; creating a marketing plan for social media; creating an editorial calendar; acting on the basis of this calendar; and collaborating with other departments.

Although the skills and qualifications required for social media specialization are mentioned in various sectoral reports and websites, the number of academic studies is quite limited. The aim of this study is to reveal the skills and qualifications that are frequently demanded for social media specialization scientifically within the context of Türkiye. For this purpose, I developed the following research questions:

- **RQ1.** What are the key skills and qualifications demanded from social media specialists?
- **RQ1.1.** What are the most demanded skills?
- **RQ1.2.** What are the most demanded qualifications?

The fact that the position of social media specialist consists of a number of levels (Gollin, 2020; Verma et al., 2021), may also enable us to identify and compare the expectations of each level of position. This is important because the skills and qualifications demanded from a person who has just graduated from university and a person who has years of experience in the field are different both in terms of their position and their salary. Based on this, I formulated the research question:

- **RQ2.** How do skills and qualifications vary by positions?
- **RQ2.1.** What are the most demanded skills by position?
- **RQ2.2.** What are the most demanded qualifications by position?

As a result of finding out the key skills and qualifications expected from social media specialists, we can see what digital communication skills are in more depth. In addition, considering that users who use social media platforms intensively but in an amateur way could consider

themselves as social media specialists, we can also understand how deep skills and qualifications this position actually requires.

Method

Data collection

I analyzed 244 job postings to find out what businesses in the communications sector demand from their candidates in terms of digital skills, qualifications, and competencies. I obtained the postings by conducting a complete census of job postings for social media specialization on the websites Bigumigu.com¹ (105 postings) and Mediacat.com² (139 postings) for 24 months from January 2021 to December 2022. The main reason for conducting the analysis on these websites is that they only contain job postings from communications agencies. I limited the job postings to those of communication agencies because the requirements in different sectors (a hospital, a school, or a café) can vary significantly depending on their field of activity. In addition, depending on their size, businesses may ask social media specialists to perform tasks in different departments (secretarial, modeling, e-commerce, errands, etc). The qualifications and skills that communication agencies expect from their employees are much more homogeneous. In addition, although social media is a field of work, I excluded job postings such as "digital project manager", "digital account manager", "digital media sales specialist", "digital talent manager" or "influencer manager" from the scope of the analysis and included job postings such as "digital content manager" or "digital marketing specialist" that a social media specialist can easily handle. I also considered only one repeated job posting by the same agency for the same position on different dates. I excluded 45 such postings (Bigumigu.com: 24; Mediacat.com: 21) from the analysis.

¹ <https://bigumigu.com/is-ilanlari/>

² <https://mediacat.com/kariyer-merkezi/>

Measurement

I conducted descriptive content analysis to analyze the job postings. Content analysis is a popular technique used to examine the words in a document and present them in patterns (K. H. Krippendorff, 2003; Neuendorf, 2001). In descriptive content analysis, the main objective is to identify trends in the analysis (Cohen et al., 2007). Content analysis is one of the most frequently used methods by researchers in terms of identifying the demands of the sector (Bernhard & Russmann, 2023; Meganck et al., 2020; Todd, 2014; Verma et al., 2021). I collected the job postings on social media specialist from the relevant websites with the *WebCollector* tool of the MAXQDA Pro Analytics software (Gizzi & Rädiker, 2021) and coded the criteria in the job postings. The main purpose of the coding process is to reach codes, then categories, and then to reach some thematic findings by analyzing the relationships between codes and categories (Saldana, 2015). While coding the criteria mentioned in each job posting, I relied on studies that reveal the demands in social media expertise (Gollin, 2020; <https://www.kariyer.net/>, 2023; <https://www.nationalskillscommission.gov.au/>, 2020; Social Media Center, 2018; Torpey, 2016). During the coding process, I first coded separately for each item in the job postings. Then I combined the codes close to each other under a single code³. For consistent and reliable coding, First, I analyzed 20 job postings by the skills and qualifications specified in the literature. We can see that the study has a deductive approach in this form. After completing the analysis, I analyzed the same 20 job postings again to reveal the consistency between the resulting codes (K. Krippendorff, 2004; Lacy et al., 2015). As a result of the analysis in *Intercoder Agreement* section in MAXQDA, the consistency was 0.92 over the Cohen's Kappa coefficient. I preferred Cohen's Kappa coefficient because the MAXQDA software provides values based on this coefficient. Considering that the recommended range is between 0.85-0.90, we can see that this

coefficient value is quite high (Creswell, 2015). The main reason for the high coefficient may be that the criteria in the job postings are stated so clearly that they are not open to interpretation. According to this analysis, I created the coding book and analyzed all the job postings on Bigumigu.com. In the following sections of the analysis, I needed to develop some new codes that were not included in the literature. From this point of view, the study gains an inductive feature. I also needed to code these new codes in the previous job postings. Therefore, I re-scanned the previous job postings with keywords using *Lexical Search* section in MAXQDA and coded the results with the new codes. I did the same analysis again for all the job postings in Bigumigu.com from the beginning and the consistency ratio between the two coding was 0.61. This ratio is below the recommended range (Creswell, 2015). Therefore, I compared the two coding files to see the difference. The main reason for the difference was due to the multiple codes I assigned to the same criterion. I eliminated these differences and increased the consistency rate in Bigumigu.com postings to 0.85 by re-coding. I carried out the same process on the postings on MediaCat.com. I increased the initial consistency rate of 0.77 to 0.85 by re-coding. As a result of this study, with the consistency rate of 0.85, I analyzed a total of 244 job postings and made a total of 4080 coding.

Analysis

I grouped the 4080 coding under five main categories: "positions" (colored in red), "year experience" (colored in dark blue), "competencies" (colored in blue), "social media skills" (colored in blue) and "personal qualifications" (colored in green). I also clustered 244 job postings by position variables through the documents. This way, I was able to see which skills and qualifications were prominent for which position while revealing the skills and qualifications required for social media expertise. In this process, I used the features of the software such as *set creation according to variables*,

³ For example, codes that are close to each other such as "being able to lead the team well" and "having a leader's spirit" are combined under the code "team management".

Code Matrix Browser, Code Relations Browser and Code Map. I visualized the data then. After categorizing the positions into groups, I analyzed the experience requested based on skills and qualifications. In the last step, I visualized the most required skills and qualifications in job postings through the Hierarchical Code-Subcodes Model and Code Co-occurrence Model on the same software and ended the analysis both descriptively and based on positions.

Results

As a result of the analysis of the job postings on social media specialization, we can see that the yearly experience requirement is a requisite in almost all the postings and that the positions are formed by years of experience. For this reason, I started the analysis by classifying the positions by their years of experience. As can be seen in Figure 1, the 39 positions for social media specialists are arranged according to years of experience. The blue dots in the figure indicate the years of experience requested in the job postings; the red dots indicate the position of the job posting; the numbers in parentheses indicate the number of postings; the line between two dots, the number above the line and the thickness of the line indicate the density of the relationship between the two dots; and the size of the dots indicates the number of postings.

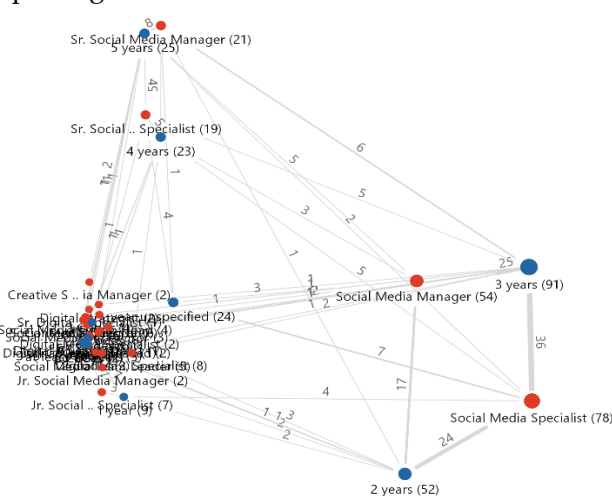


Figure 1. Positions by year

⁴ The numbers in parentheses indicate the number of times the criteria are coded in the job postings. The number of codes is not equal to the number of postings because some criteria may be coded 2-3 times under the same code in a posting. For example, in the job posting numbered JP163M, which

As we can see in Figure 1, with 2-3 years of experience, social media specialist (78) and social media manager (54) job postings are located close to each other, while with 4-5 years of experience, Sr. Social Media Specialist (19) and Sr. Social Media Manager (21) job postings are located close to each other. On the bottom left, there are positions requiring fewer years of experience and the positions requiring slightly more years of experience. The main reason for the relatively close positioning of these positions is that the number of vacancies is quite low compared to specialist and senior vacancies (see Appendix 1. to see how many years of experience each position requires). Based on this, I classified the positions mentioned in the job postings into four main categories: "junior", "specialist", "senior", and "director". Since almost all of the job postings require years of experience, I also analyzed what kind of experience is required in terms of qualifications and skills and presented it in Figure 2.

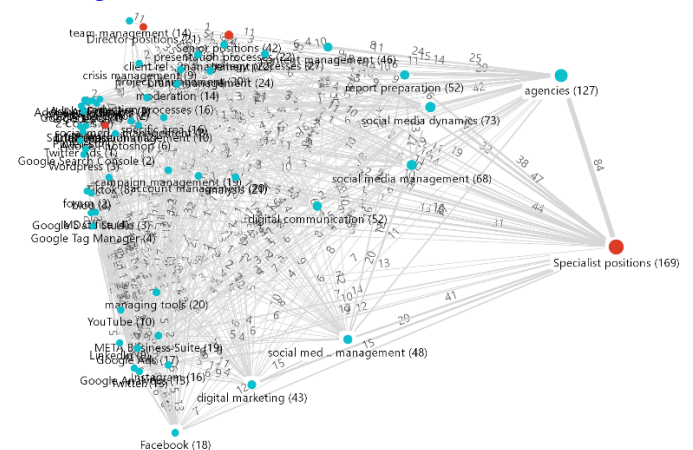


Figure 2. Locations of qualifications/experience by positions

Figure 2. presents the map of code relations related to positions and their intensely related competencies/experiences. In accordance with this map, the codes that are intensely related to each other are located close to each other. As we can see on the right side of the figure, agency (127) is one of the most intensely related competencies or experiences of the specialization positions⁴. Since the scope of the study is

was given to carry out the social media activities of a game-oriented business, the criteria "Having a good command of popular e-sports games" and "Having a good command of the dynamics, terms and general world of LoL" were coded twice under the code "specific area". While the first of

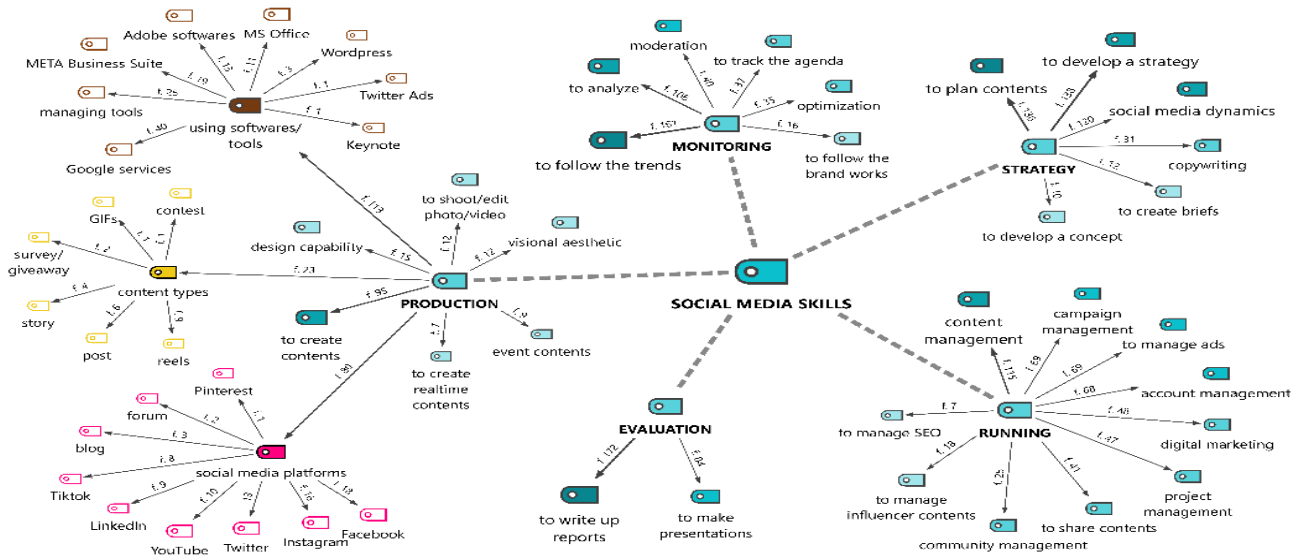


Figure 3. Social media management qualifications that candidates should have according to the job postings

communication agencies, the demand for agency experience is not surprising. Excluding this experience, the most frequently demanded competencies/experiences by agencies are having a good command of social media dynamics (73), having a good command of social media management (68), being familiar with social media reporting (52), having digital communication skills (52), having managed social media postings (48) and having digital marketing experience (43). The use of programs and tools related to social media management is one of the most demanded skills for specialist positions, although it is not obvious because it has many subcodes. Again, excluding agency experience, experience in using social media networks and tools is the most demanded skill for junior positions; mastery of social media dynamics and proficiency in digital communication skills is the most demanded skill for senior positions; and being able to work with, lead and manage a team as well as mastery of social media dynamics is the most demanded skill for director positions (See [Appendix 2](#) for detailed information of which experience is demanded by position).

Figure 3. shows which technical skills related to social media management are demanded in postings for social media expertise. As a result of the 1971 coding, I grouped the skills that share a

common process with each other into five main categories: monitoring, strategy, running, evaluation, production. While grouping, I took into account the stages and processes in the communication process (Avery, 2013; Gregory, 2015; Knights, 2010; Morgan et al., 2004; Sha, 2013; R. D. Smith, 2004). I visualized the labels of the most frequently repeated requests in the postings in large and bold. The numbers above the arrows indicating the relevant skill show the number of times that skill was mentioned (coded) in the postings.

In the Monitoring category, I listed skills that mainly involve monitoring and analysis processes on social media platforms. Following trends (161) and agenda (37), conducting analyses (106), moderating (40) and optimizing (35) social media content are the main skills in this category.

In the Strategy category, I coded the skills related to creating or developing a strategy and making plans based on the data obtained. Accordingly, developing a strategy (138) according to social media dynamics (120) and planning content based on it (136) are the most demanded skills in this category.

Creating social media contents (95) is included in the Production category. For this purpose, skills related to the use of a number of software and tools (113), especially Google (40) and Meta (19)

these criteria represents the entire field, the second one stipulates a deeper requirement by directly naming the game. Therefore, there are differences between the number of codings and the frequencies in the job postings in

Appendix 2, Appendix 3 and Appendix 4. While the number of codings may be duplicated in a job posting, there are differences between the numbers in the appendices as they only show the relationship revealed through a single job posting.

services, are demanded while preparing some types of content (23) for some platforms (80) in job postings. Skills such as using design programs while creating content (15), taking photos and videos, and editing them (12), having a visual aesthetic while doing so (12), organizing events (9) and preparing real-time content on the spot (7) are also among the skills demanded.

The Running category includes skills related to managing the contents produced. This category includes the skills of managing the content (115) and advertising (69) of an account (68) within certain campaigns (69). It is important to maintain interaction with the target audience (25) after the posts (41).

In the Evaluation category, there are skills to prepare reports (172) and present (84) the results of social media activities as part of monitoring skills (see [Appendix 3](#) for detailed information on which technical skills are required by position). As a result of the position-based analysis of social media skills in job postings, we can see that for junior positions ([Figure 4](#)), following social media trends, creating content specific to Instagram, Twitter and Youtube platforms and managing accounts are among the leading demands.

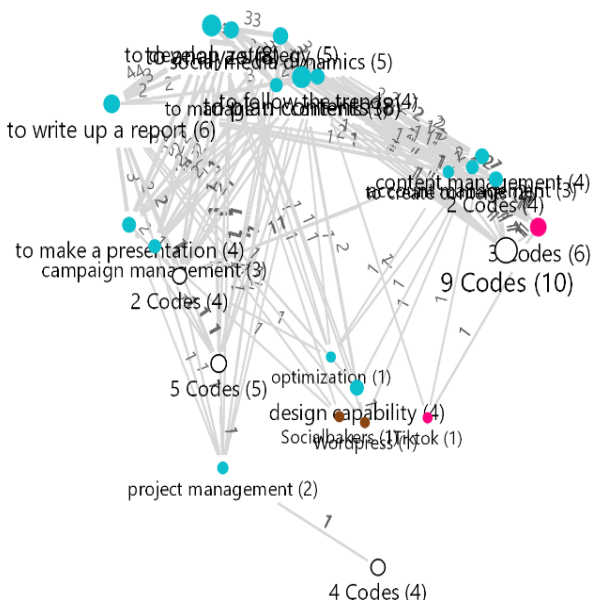


Figure 4. Junior positions

For Specialist positions ([Figure 5](#)), similar to junior positions, following social media trends and managing contents according to their dynamics are among the leading demands. The need to prepare

and present reports is the most obvious feature that distinguishes specialist positions from junior positions. Also, as we can see on the left side of the figure, unlike all other positions, there is a high demand for them to use social media software and tools.

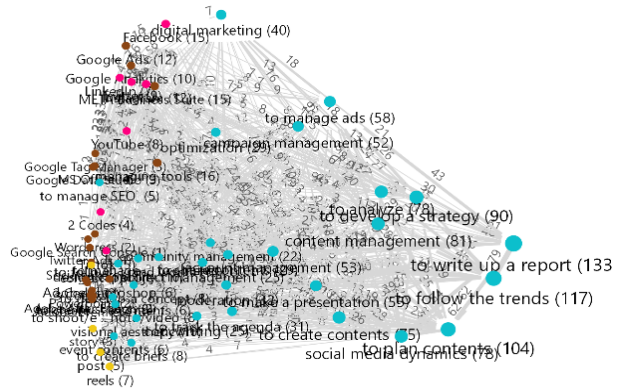


Figure 5. Specialist positions

The skills demanded from Specialist positions are often expected in Senior positions ([Figure 6](#)). The most obvious difference between the two is that senior positions are more likely to demand strategy creation/development.



Figure 6. Senior positions

In Director positions ([Figure 7](#)), it is also possible to see that the demand for project management and strategy creation/development is more intense than in other positions.

As we move from junior to director positions, we can see that the demand for practical skills such as planning, producing, and managing contents using software/tools decreases, but the demand for

that graduation is not a frequently asked for qualification in job postings. In fact, in 244 job postings, the demand for "graduation in a field" (fine arts, design, etc.) was coded 33 times and "graduation from a faculty of communication" was coded 9 times, which reveals that university graduation is not very crucial for approximately 4 out of each 5 job postings. According to the postings, what is crucial is experience, for which candidates are expected to submit a portfolio (32). Demands for qualifications in the work environment are coded under the "agency" category. Skills such as the ability to work in a team (145), high interpersonal communication skills (95) and communication skills with clients (74), the ability to follow up on work (58) and to manage time well (55) by being well organized (32) are among the main demands for the working environment. Crisis management qualification (18) is important in terms of indicating that dealing with crises is an important feature in social media management. The ability to lead a team is also emphasized, especially in senior and director positions (46).

Qualifications directly related to one's own attitudes and behaviors were also coded under the "individual" category. The most expected qualifications identified in the job postings are creativity (153) and analytical thinking (93). Taking responsibility (59) and initiative (12) in their work, being excited, dynamic, and full of energy (44), self-confident (24) and positive (16) are the personal features most frequently mentioned in the postings. (See [Appendix 4](#) for a detailed breakdown of which personal features are demanded by position).

When we analyze the personal qualities in job postings by position, we can see that interpersonal communication and teamwork skills come first in the demands for junior position ([Figure 9.](#)) with 9 coding.

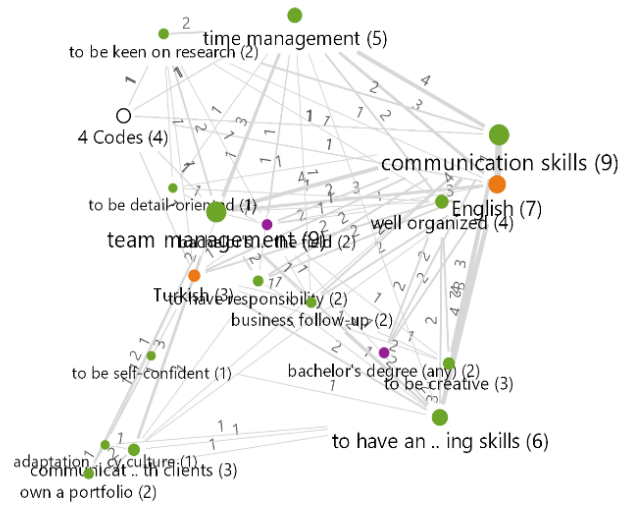


Figure 9. Junior positions

These are followed by speaking English (7) and analytical thinking skills (6). For junior positions, having a portfolio was coded 2 times, which is interesting because junior positions are for people who are just starting to work. As indicated in [Figure 1.](#) and [Figure 2.](#), even for junior positions, experience is required both in terms of years and qualifications.

Analyzing the requirements for the specialist position ([Figure 10.](#)), we can see that creativity (122) and speaking English (105) are the most prominent.



Figure 10. Specialist positions

The emphasis on being able to work in a team and lead them (85) is noteworthy, as the specialists often have to work with different departments such as the department of design. Before that, the ability to understand what the client wants and to

communicate with them correctly (61) is also frequently mentioned in the job postings. We can see most of the requirements in the Specialist positions (Figure 11.) in the senior positions, but we should also note that the ability to manage a team (28) is prominent and this is emphasized by leadership abilities (13).

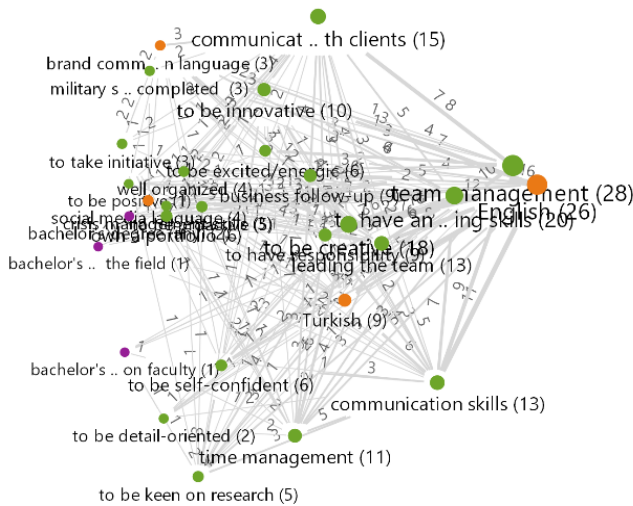


Figure 11. Senior positions

In Director positions (Figure 12.) we can also see that the demands related to team management and customer relations are more dominant.

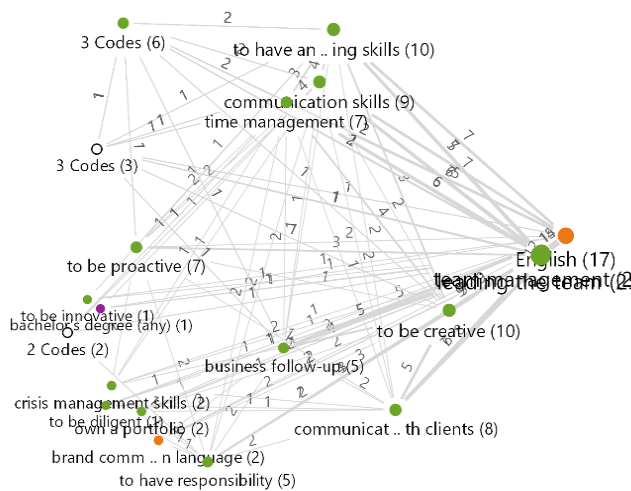


Figure 12. Director positions

Discussion and Conclusion

In this study, I conducted a descriptive content analysis on 244 job postings on social media specialization to reveal the digital skills and qualifications required by businesses operating in the field of communication.

As a result of the analysis, we can see that almost all of the job postings require years of experience. It is interesting that almost all the junior positions (some of the postings required 3 years of experience) have this condition because this position is a kind of entry position for those who have just graduated from university. On the other hand, the absence of a university graduation requirement in 4 out of each 5 vacancies is one of the clear indicators that the sector prioritizes experience over university education. This may be the most surprising finding of the study, as Torpey (2016) mentions that having a university education is an advantage when listing the skills and qualifications related to social media specialization in job postings in the US. In Türkiye, however, this demand is quite limited, and the advantage belongs to the experienced candidates.

According to Dewey (2005), there is an intrinsic connection between experience and education. Human education takes place as a result of experiences, and this process is interactive. While Dewey's famous example appears to illustrate this well (when a child's hand touches the stove, the child learns not to touch it, demonstrating the close relationship between education and experience), Dewey also asserts that experience and education cannot be directly equated, as some experiences can be mis-educative (Dewey, 1997). Therefore, it is conceivable that when someone with experience in using personal social media accounts applies this experience to managing corporate social media accounts, undesirable results may occur. Consequently, it is crucial to gain experience through practical application, but education is essential to prevent misguided experiences. This is because experience encompasses not only the practical aspects but also the theoretical, to the extent that it accumulates (Dewey, 2015). Hence, education plays a vital role in enhancing one's experiences, and the university, in addition to serving as an educational institution, can offer numerous opportunities for students to gain valuable experience. Additionally, it is also known that education has a positive impact on both entrepreneurship and earnings from it (Robinson & Sexton, 1994).

In parallel to this, university students are also aware of the importance of sectoral experience and want to gain this experience during their university education (Aşkın et al., 2020; Daugherty, 2011; Morkoç & Doğan, 2014). However, considering that social media is a very dynamic field where new developments are experienced every second, it will increase the workload of faculty members to follow the expectations of the sector instantly and train students accordingly. A more sustainable solution may be to enhance the qualifications of students through practices such as internships and mentorships with university-sector cooperation (Çelik, 2011; Daugherty, 2011; Meganck et al., 2020; Tükeltürk & Balcı, 2014).

It should be noted that students are afraid of making mistakes and damaging the organization during internships (Daugherty, 2011). Establishing social media labs in universities or conducting some social media workshops is important for students to be able to work comfortably without fear of making mistakes.

Following trends, conducting analyses, developing a strategy, planning, and sharing content in line with this strategy, and then making some optimizations in the content by correctly managing the interaction from the target audience are among the most prominent demands in job postings on social media specialization. These findings are in line with other studies in the literature (<https://www.kariyer.net/>, 2023; <https://www.nationalskillscommission.gov.au/>, 2020; Meganck et al., 2020; Social Media Center, 2018), especially Gollin (2020). In Specialist positions, the requirement to manage contents using social media software and tools is more prominent compared to other positions. There is one point that should be especially noted here, which is that almost all job postings mention the preparation of monthly reports and presentations. We can say that collecting, analyzing, and reporting all the data about the activities carried out on social media and evaluating the success in a presentation constitutes almost the common demand of all agencies.

The demand for the presentation to be made in English is specifically mentioned in many job

postings. The ability to speak and write fluent English is one of the most important qualifications in all job postings and positions. Being fluent in English is one of the only qualifications that is expected from both someone with 10 years of experience and someone who has just graduated from university. Therefore, it is imperative to improve the quality of English education in universities, especially in faculties of communication. Considering the high number of requests for Turkish grammar and spelling rules in the job postings, it is possible to conclude that although universities offer courses in English and Turkish, the quality of these courses should be enhanced.

Teamwork and communication skills are among the most demanded qualifications in the job postings. The ability to communicate with teammates, being positive and energetic are emphasized so much in the postings that one wonders what kind of working environment agencies have. This demand is also stated in Arslan and Duğan's (2019) study. The reason why it is emphasized that employees should not be asocial, bored or soulless in the work environment can perhaps be explained by the fact that young people today live more individually (Pittman & Reich, 2016; D. Smith et al., 2021; Yang, 2016). Nevertheless, the fact that this demand is included in almost all job postings, regardless of position, shows that more in-depth research is needed.

While it is possible to see that there are demands from junior and specialist positions that employees should personally carry out the practices related to social media management, it is possible to state that these demands have shifted towards team management in the approximately ten-year process of senior and director positions. It is possible to say that senior and director positions are mostly the ones who set the strategies, while specialist and junior positions are the ones who implement them.

To summarize, a student can be equipped with certain qualities such as critical thinking, problem solving, social responsibility, respect for human rights and ethical principles with the theory-based education given at the university. However, these qualifications are not sufficient when we consider

that specialization in digital communication is demanded in the sector. The study reveals that skills and qualifications such as digital content management, digital advertising management, data analytics, graphic design, reporting, presentation, and English are the most demanded qualifications in job postings. However, unfortunately, there are very few courses that respond to these demands in university curricula, and therefore this study takes its place on the side that criticizes the sectoral adequacy of university education (Büyükaşlan & Mavnacıoğlu, 2017; Üçler & Büyükçelikok, 2021). Especially in communication faculties, there is a need to revise the curriculum for social media content management, advertising management, digital data analysis and tools, strategy and concept development, professional design, professional report preparation, presentation, and especially English practice. It is possible to say that the curricula of foundation universities in Türkiye are better able to respond to sectoral expectations than those of state universities (Akyazı, 2018; Özarslan, 2019). In addition to curriculum development, workshops should also be developed in line with these needs. With the workshops operating within the school, it can also be ensured that students gain experience during their education. In addition to all these, Can (2018) emphasizes that academia and the sector should act together in order to meet the expectations of the sector in communication education, and workshops can provide the most suitable environment for this.

One of the most surprising findings of this study is the low demand for university education in job postings. Agencies do not require a university degree for their applicants, but they attach great importance to experience. They also emphasize teamwork and being positive, enthusiastic, and energetic. To understand the reasons for all of this in more depth, I recommend that future studies conduct in-depth interviews with agency professionals to gain a deeper understanding.

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Appendix 1.

Positions by years in job postings

Positions by job postings	Year(s) experience											US	Sum	
	NN	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		Frequency	%
Junior positions (5 positions)														
Social Media Intern												1	1	0,4
Jr. Digital Marketing and Social Media Manager		1											1	0,4
Jr. Social Media Analyst			1										1	0,4
Jr. Social Media Manager			2										2	0,8
Jr. Social Media Specialist	1	3	2									1	7	2,9
Specialist positions (24 positions)														
Social Media Data Analyst												1	1	0,4
Digital Content Executive												1	1	0,4
Social Media Content Executive												1	1	0,4
TikTok Content Creator												1	1	0,4
Social Media Moderation Specialist		1											1	0,4
Social Media and Account Executive			1										1	0,4
Digital Content Manager				2									2	0,8
Brand Digital Partner				1									1	0,4
Social Media Executive				2									2	0,8
Digital Brand Executive				2									2	0,8
Digital Marketing Manager				1									1	0,4
Content Creator				1	1								2	0,8
Digital Marketing Specialist			3	2	1							2	8	3,3
Digital Marketing and Social Media Manager				1									1	0,4
Digital Marketing and Social Media Specialist				1									1	0,4
Digital Media Specialist				1							1		2	0,8
Digital Strategist				1		1							2	0,8
Social Media and Content Specialist				1	1								2	0,8
Social Media Account Manager				1									1	0,4
Social Media Specialist		4	24	36	5	2						7	78	32,0
Social Media Manager			17	25	3	5	1					3	54	22,1
Content Strategist					1								1	0,4
Creative Social Media Manager						2							2	0,8
Digital Communications Specialist							1						1	0,4
Senior positions (4 positions)														
Sr. Digital Marketing and Social Media Manager				1									1	0,4
Sr. Digital Marketing Specialist						1							1	0,4
Sr. Social Media Manager			1	6	5	8						1	21	8,6
Sr. Social Media Specialist				5	5	4	1					4	19	7,8
Director positions (6 positions)														
Social Media Team Leader			1	1			1	1			1		5	2,0
Social Media Supervisor					1			2					3	1,2
Social Media Group Head						1		3					4	1,6
Social Media Director						1	1		1		3		6	2,5
Digital Communications Group Head							1			1			2	0,8
Digital Group Head											1		1	0,4
Sum	1	9	52	91	23	25	6	6	1	1	5	24	244	100

Notes: NN = not necessary; US = unspecified.

Appendix 2.

Competencies/expected experiences by positions in job postings

Competency/experience in	Positions				Sum	
	Junior	Specialist	Senior	Director	Frequency*	%
Agencies	7	84	24	11	126	13,7

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Using software/tools	10	82	13	1	106	11,5
Social media networks	10	58	8	2	78	8,5
Social media dynamics	4	47	14	7	72	7,8
Social media management	1	44	11	5	61	6,6
Digital communication	2	31	13	5	51	5,5
Report preparation	1	38	9	2	50	5,4
Social media advertising management		41	1	4	46	5,0
Content management	2	32	11		45	4,9
Digital marketing		29	4	1	34	3,7
Strategy processes		19	3	3	25	2,7
Brand management		14	4	5	23	2,5
Client relationship management		14	5	3	22	2,4
Presentation processes	1	11	6	4	22	2,4
Account management		15	5		20	2,2
Analysis	1	16	3		20	2,2
Project management		11	4	5	20	2,2
Campaign management	1	13	3	1	18	2,0
Production processes	3	10	1	1	15	1,6
Moderation		10	4		14	1,5
Specific area		11	2	1	14	1,5
Team management		2	1	11	14	1,5
Influencer management		7	1	2	10	1,1
Crisis management		6	3		9	1,0
Social media community management		7	1		8	0,9
Sum	43	652	154	74	923	100

* Independent frequency of job postings

Appendix 3.

Social media skills by positions in job postings

Social media skills	Positions				Sum	
	Junior	Specialist	Senior	Director	Frequency*	%
Monitoring						
To follow the trends	4	105	24	13	146	8,5
To analyze	5	59	13	3	80	4,7
Moderation	2	30	5		37	2,2
To track the agenda	1	30	4	1	36	2,1
Optimization	1	24	3	2	30	1,7
To follow the brand works	2	10	2	1	15	0,9
Strategy						
To develop a strategy	5	75	16	13	109	6,3
To plan contents	6	85	12	6	109	6,3
Social media dynamics	4	72	18	11	105	6,1
Copywriting		23	5	1	29	1,7
To create briefs		8	4		12	0,7
To develop a concept		8		2	10	0,6
Running						
Content management	4	70	19	7	100	5,8
To manage ads		49	4	5	58	3,4
Campaign management	2	41	9	5	57	3,3
Account management	3	44	8	1	56	3,3
Project management	2	24	7	9	42	2,4
To share contents	2	26	6	3	37	2,2
Digital marketing		29	5	1	35	2,0
Community management	1	21	1	1	24	1,4
To manage influencer contents	3	11	2	2	18	1,0
To manage SEO	1	5	1		7	0,4
Evaluation						
To write up a report	6	115	23	6	150	8,7
To make a presentation	3	50	14	10	77	4,5
Production						
Using software/tools						

Google Services						
Google Ads	1	10	4		15	0,9
Google Analytics	1	10	2		13	0,8
Google Tag Manager		3	1		4	0,2
Google Data Studio		3			3	0,2
Google Search Console		1	1		2	0,1
Google Docs	1				1	0,1
Managing tools	1	13	1	1	16	0,9
Socialbakers	1	1			2	0,1
Semrush		1			1	0,1
KWFinder		1			1	0,1
DV360			1		1	0,1
META Business Suite	1	14	3		18	1,0
Adobe Software						
Adobe Photoshop		6			6	0,3
Adobe Premiere		3			3	0,2
Adobe Illustrator		2			2	0,1
Adobe After Effects		2			2	0,1
Microsoft Office Software		4			4	0,2
MS PowerPoint	2	2			4	0,2
MS Excel	1	1			2	0,1
MS Word		1			1	0,1
WordPress	1	2			3	0,2
Twitter Ads		1			1	0,1
Keynote		1			1	0,1
To create contents	2	59	15	2	78	4,5
Social media platforms						
Facebook	1	15	1	1	18	1,0
Instagram	2	12	2		16	0,9
Twitter	2	9	2		13	0,8
LinkedIn	1	7	1		9	0,5
YouTube	2	7			9	0,5
TikTok	1	4	1	1	7	0,4
Blog		2	1		3	0,2
Forum		2			2	0,1
Pinterest	1				1	0,1
Content Types						
Reels		7	1	1	9	0,5
Post	1	5			6	0,3
Story	1	3			4	0,2
Survey/giveaway	1		1		2	0,1
Contest		1			1	0,1
GIFs			1		1	0,1
Design capability	3	10	1		14	0,8
Visional aesthetic	1	10	1		12	0,7
To shoot/edit photo/video	1	7	1	2	11	0,6
Event contents	1	6	2		9	0,5
To create realtime contents		6	1		7	0,4
Sum	88	1268	250	111	1717	100

* Independent frequency of job postings

Appendix 4.

Personal qualifications by positions in job postings.

Personal qualifications	Positions				Sum	
	Junior	Specialist	Senior	Director	Frequency*	%
Individual						
To be creative	3	94	17	10	124	9,4
To have analytical thinking skills	6	46	16	8	76	5,8
To have responsibility	2	42	9	5	58	4,4
To be energetic	1	45	6	1	53	4,0
To be innovative		32	9	1	42	3,2
To be keen on research	2	21	5	2	30	2,3
To be proactive		17	5	3	25	1,9

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To be self-confident	1	15	5	1	22	1,7
To be detail-oriented	1	11	2	2	16	1,2
To be positive		11	1	1	13	1,0
To take initiative		8	3		11	0,8
To be diligent	1	7		1	9	0,7
To have ethical concerns		2			2	0,2
Agency						
Team management	6	68	23	17	114	8,6
Communication skills	8	51	12	8	79	6,0
Communication with clients	3	45	12	8	68	5,2
Business follow-up	2	42	8	5	57	4,3
Time management	4	31	10	7	52	3,9
Leading the team		8	11	16	35	2,7
Well organized	4	21	4	2	31	2,4
Crisis management skills		12	3	2	17	1,3
Adaptation to the agency culture	1	14			15	1,1
Working format		8			8	0,6
Necessities						
Language						
English	7	104	25	17	153	11,6
Turkish	3	54	9	1	67	5,1
Social media language		18	4		22	1,7
Brand communication language		6	3	2	11	0,8
German		1			1	0,1
Graduation						
Bachelor's degree from the field	2	30	1		33	2,5
Bachelor's degree (any)	2	6	2	1	11	0,8
Bachelor's degree from communication faculty	1	6	1	1	9	0,7
Master's degree from the field		1			1	0,1
Vocational school degree		1			1	0,1
Own a portfolio	2	21	6	2	31	2,4
Military service completed		14	3		17	1,3
Free to travel	1	2			3	0,2
Age		1			1	0,1
Eco/animal friend		1			1	0,1
Sum	63	917	215	124	1319	100

* Independent frequency of job postings