Technological Signaling in Management Recruitment: The Dual Path of AI Specialization and Transversal Competencies

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Abstract

This research investigates how organizations signal the need for digital competencies and AI literacy in management recruitment. We explore the duality of the current market: the emergence of specialized "AI Management" roles alongside the integration of AI-related expectations into general management positions. We specifically question if this shift reflects a true transition toward the "Augmented Manager" or if it serves as a form of technological signaling and "AI Washing". We conducted a systematic qualitative content analysis of 200 job advertisements targeting middle and senior management in Portugal, published between 2024 and 2026. Data were collected from professional networks and specialized job portals. Using webQDA software, we analyzed thematic clusters to compare how different organizational sectors communicate digital requirements. Preliminary data suggest a two-fold evolution in the labor market. While a specialized "AI Management" silo is emerging, the integration of AI as a transversal competency in general management remains fragmented. The study identifies a "competency paradox" where organizations often demand hybrid profiles, yet the signaling in recruitment remains inconsistent, balancing between concrete technical requirements and broad, rhetorical appeals to innovation. By moving beyond the binary view of "generalist vs. specialist," this study provides empirical evidence of how AI is reshaping organizational structures. These findings offer vital insights for higher education management curricula, suggesting a need to prepare professionals for both the technical demands of AI-specific roles and the ethical/strategic oversight required for general management.

Keywords: AI Management Silos; Artificial Intelligence; Augmented Management; Digital Literacy; Recruitment Advertising